

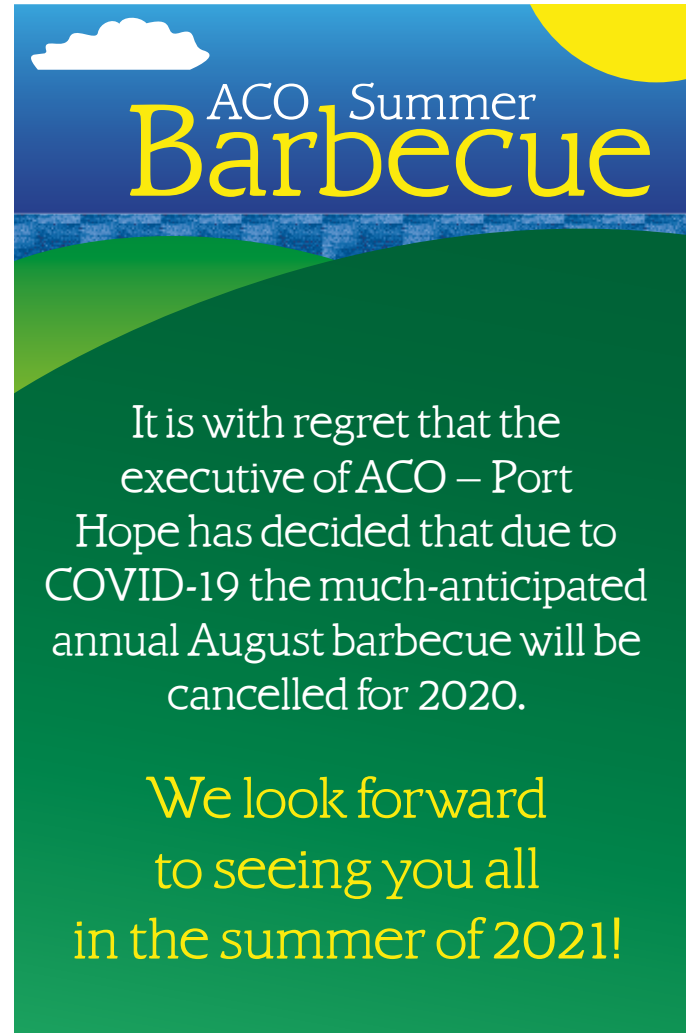
## Chair's Report

While everyone has been observing responsible distancing, our executive actually has been quite active. So too, has been the Heritage Foundation. Its **House Tour Committee** has, as we all now know, postponed the fall tour until next year, just as earlier, our own **Antiques and Artefacts Committee** cancelled this year's spring auction. Both decisions have disappointed us all, as many dozens of us volunteer to make those occasions distinctive for the hundreds who attend both. Our summer picnic is the latest casualty. However, an On-line auction may possibly come to our rescue — certainly timely good news.

Our special thanks to dozens of members who have stepped forward with donations to assist in the carrying costs for the Music Hall/Opera House/former bank at the corner of Walton and John Streets. A specially-formed **Opera House Committee** recently reviewed an interesting presentation for its restoration and revitalization. When an agreement is structured, it will come both to our chapter's Executive, and to the provincial executive of ACO, for ACO Ontario is the property's owner. This process was first set in motion for all of us at special meetings in St. Mark's church and the Capitol theatre. We wish to convene again — if updated social distancing rules may permit — to finalize what we have always intended would become the choice of our entire ACO community.

Executive members have joined in the effort to preserve the **Penryn Park Wood**. Now, most know of it as the **Victoria St Wood**, and an impressive community response to the damaging proposal by AON/Mason Homes that was presented on March 10 has developed. We know that there is broad support of this conservation movement for an important natural heritage property in Port Hope. It is also a seminal cultural property, for in Sue Stickle's apt phrase, "the Wood put the park into Penryn Park." The adjoining Penryn estates were integral to our town's history, and Penryn Park's "picturesque" design configuration, that sought to integrate architectural and natural elements now has few remaining comparators in landscape and building architecture in Canada. We, and most especially Chris Wallace and Susan Layard, have advocated that an independent professional Heritage Impact assessment of the properties adjoining Phase V of the Mason Homes proposal has been needed from the outset. This may now occur. We remain concerned about how access to the golf course and its parking needs will be configured, lest those steps disrupt the integrity of this special heritage feature.

— Bruce Bowden



ACO Summer  
**Barbecue**

It is with regret that the executive of ACO – Port Hope has decided that due to COVID-19 the much-anticipated annual August barbecue will be cancelled for 2020.

We look forward to seeing you all in the summer of 2021!

## Contents

Chair's Report .....	1
ACO Summer BBQ .....	1
Fundraising Report .....	2
High Times at The Opera House .....	3-4
On the Sidewalks of Port Hope .....	5-10
Statues Present Problems .....	11

Due to circumstances beyond our control we regret there will be no printed version of *ACO Matters* with this issue.



## Executive

### Executive Committee

**Chair**

Bruce Bowden

**Past Chair**

Julie Mavis

**Vice-Chair**

Moya McPhail (1 year term)

**Treasurer**

Hugh Parker

**Secretary**

Susan Carmichael

**Directors**

Anna Gray

Marielle Lambert

Susan Layard

Ian MacKay

Bill Bickle

**Advisor**

Phil Carter

### Committee Chairs

**Antiques**

**& Artifacts**

Peter Duck,

Sharon Hancock

**Advocacy**

Bruce Bowden,

Susan Layard

**Communications**

Marielle Lambert

**Events**

Marielle Lambert

**Fund Raising**

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

## Fundraising Report

Understandably, we have lost all opportunities for fundraising for now, including the fall trip to Berlin and Prague, which has now also been cancelled.

However, 56 supportive members and friends have donated \$8415 towards the upkeep and maintenance of the Opera House/Music Hall since February of this year. We are truly grateful for this generous help.

ACO Port Hope is committed to maintain this downtown gem until the sale of it can be finalized. The regular upkeep of this historic building does not stop even during a pandemic and so if you would like to contribute to this worthy cause, please send a cheque (made out to *ACO Port Hope*) to **ACO Port Hope, PO Box 563, Port Hope L1A 3Z4**

— Moya McPhail, Peter Kedwell, and Anna Gray

**LEE CASWELL**  
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

**BOSLEY**

---

**REAL ESTATE**

**LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL?**  
Contact **LEE CASWELL**

Lee Caswell is an established real estate sales leader and a lifetime Northumberland County resident

Always putting clients' needs first, Lee and his team focus on exceeding expectations. They offer professionalism, integrity and patience while providing an environment where clients feel fully supported through every step of the buying and selling process.

**BOSLEY REAL ESTATE LTD., BROKERAGE**  
 Located in the historic Customs House  
 14 Mill Street S | Port Hope, ON | L1A 2S5  
 905.885.0101  
 LeeCaswellSells@gmail.com  
[LeeCaswellClassicHomes.com](http://LeeCaswellClassicHomes.com)

*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.*

- Heritage makes us unique*
- Heritage gives us a competitive advantage*
- Heritage make us worth visiting*
- Heritage makes us worth investing in*
- Heritage is an economic driver*
- Heritage makes us feel better*
- Heritage gives us a community worth caring about*
- Heritage enhances our distinctiveness*
- Heritage has psychological and social benefits*
- Heritage preserves our memory*

**PLACE AN AD IN ACO MATTERS!**

Why not place an advertisement in the pages of ACO Matters? Our readership is interested in buildings and their preservation, furnishing, gardens, and everything else connected with them.

Contact Patricia Beeson at [pbeeson@eagle.ca](mailto:pbeeson@eagle.ca).



Inaugural Performance at the Music Hall, 1871. Image: porthopehistory.com

porthopehistory.com

# HIGH OLD TIMES

By Patsy Beeson

# AT THE OPERA HOUSE

**A**h, the Opera House. Much in our thoughts these days – or it was until COVID-19 put everything else on the back-burner. But let's return to it.

First of all, why is it called the Opera House? In an old photograph a flag flying over this upstairs space at John and Walton Streets proclaims it to be the 'Music Hall' and for its first thirteen years that defined the character of its presentations. It was leased to a small company "who hoped to make good use of the fine room for musical purposes." But opera is probably the costliest form of entertainment to mount. Expensive singers, an orchestra, stage sets and frequently dancers demand deep pockets. However, after being bought in 1884 and face-lifted very grandly by a Thomas Bradburn of Peterborough with four theatre boxes and a highly ornate proscenium, it was given the name of Opera House and for another thirteen years it flourished under this title. Operas were actually presented

then, among much else. Then a devastating fire in 1897 left the building a shell. It was restored but was never the same again. Nor were its offerings. However, it kept the name of Opera House, which undeniably sounds more genteel than Music Hall, and Port Hope liked to see itself as a tasteful sort of place. Still does. Whether it was or not was questionable as we shall see.

Certainly, when first opened on February 28, 1871 as the Music Hall, it started off with éclat. An etching illustrating opening night shows the large room with coved ceiling and chandeliers, packed with what looks like la crème de Port Hope. Whether the crème de Port Hope would have attended something called The Music Hall is a moot point — some viewed even theatre askance in those days. Still, the scene represents a highly decorous event. An elegant audience in evening attire listens attentively to a beautifully dressed diva and her accompanist on the raised dais. In the front row, a lady fans herself.

Opera House, continued on page 4 →



→ Opera House, continued from page 3

But, according to an account in W. Arnot Craik's entertaining *Little Tales of Old Port Hope*, a few years later the bon ton seems to have slipped... considerably.

So it was that on the evening of April 5th, 1879, a rowdy crowd of several hundred men and boys rampaged outside the theatre's John Street entrance, outraged to discover that the show they had warmly anticipated attending that night was being shut down by the local police. *Mademoiselle Fifi Fanchon and her Folly Troupe* had performed three weeks earlier and been greatly relished by a portion of the town's anything but bon ton, and, fully confident of another packed house, a return performance had been quickly booked by Mr. Rose, the Music Hall's Manager. But local Police Chief, David Marshall, backed by His Worship, Mayor Randall, in response to a report in the local Guide that the performance had been "perhaps one of the most immoral shows that ever disgraced any community" with even the audience guilty of indecent conduct, had adopted the role of guardian of the town's moral tone and decided that the performance was not to be allowed. Now he, along with Constables Gamble and Magurn and several Specials, were blocking the door to the theatre.

At this point the managers of the Troupe, which was probably being put up at the Queens Hotel over the road, made their way through the crowd and endeavoured to enter. But Marshall et al held their ground. As recounted by the Guide reporter, who in response to the racket must have scuttled to the scene from his Walton Street office round the corner, pandemonium broke out in the crowd with, the reporter recorded, rotten eggs and dead cats being hurled at the heads of Port Hope's finest.

Who knows what might have transpired if Town Councillor Christopher Hagerman and the Manager of the Music Hall, Mr. Rose, hadn't arrived on the scene. At sight of the two, cheers rose from a crowd suddenly filled with renewed hope. According to the reporter, 'the redoubtable' Chris Hagerman, obviously a well-known and popular local figure, addressed those assembled thus: "Gentlemen, no two men can run this town yet, and I know you will uphold me when I say that the Chief Constable has exceeded his authority tonight. It is not for Mr. Marshall or Mayor Randall to dictate to the lessees of the Music Hall whom they are to let in. All we ask is our rights as free and independent citizens of Port Hope." This was followed by some

derogatory comments aimed at the Police Chief, to cheers from the delighted crowd.

Mr. Rose then moved forward and opened the theatre's doors and a tidal wave of jubilant gentlemen pushed past the police, rushed up the stairs to the theatre yelling and hooting, and filled the seats. Mr. Hagerman followed them upstairs and taking to the dais, pointed out that as they hadn't paid, would they kindly return to the street and re-enter via the ticket office, with which the crowd, cheering the while, good-naturedly complied.

When all were back in their seats (the press and the law, masochists to a man, among them), Hagerman addressed them again. "Gentlemen" said he. "I am again before you. I have taken a stand tonight against the Chief Constable and I am sure you will say I have done nothing but my duty. Gentlemen," he continued, "I was born and brought up in this town and I am proud of it. I am one of you. You have returned me year after year to represent you at the Council Board and I have always tried to do my duty. You will now see a first-rate moral show and if the performers do anything on this stage tonight that is wrong, let Marshall come up and arrest them."

Hopes must have drooped somewhat at the unpromising sound of the last sentence but at that moment *Mademoiselle Fifi* and her lovelies, having watched wide-eyed from their windows and been too scared to leave earlier, appeared in the doorway, giving rise to thunderous cheers, whistles and happy stamps as they made their way to the dressing rooms to don their costumes.

Hagerman then stepped down from the dais and the performance began.

How much was changed? Apparently "the living art pictures" and the "can-can dance" which had been especially appreciated at the earlier show were not presented. What took their place? Was the performance otherwise 'clean as a whistle'? We do not know. Still, it seems no-one demanded their money back.

Eleven days later the redoubtable Chris was sued by the Police Chief for using abusive and insulting language in opposing him. Hagerman's defence was that he had "thought the circumstances were such as to ameliorate to a great extent that language." But he pleaded guilty. The case was dismissed and the episode ended.

And the last word?

"The show was a wonderful improvement on the last one given here," wrote the Guide piously



**HOLTON**  
*Flowers*

Blake Holton  
*Proprietor*

62 Walton Street ● Port Hope ● Ontario L1A 1N1  
www.holtonflowers.com 905 885 7439

**Take Cover!**  
*Custom Slipcovers & Drapery*

705 932 2201  
**Judy McBride**

FABRICS. BLINDS. CUSTOM DRAPERY. SLIP COVERS  
judy@takecoversewing.com www.takecoversewing.com



Port Hope is a fascinating time capsule because it still retains the late 1800s atmosphere of a small Ontario town due to the fact that it has seen little or no economic decline since then, and no runaway development.

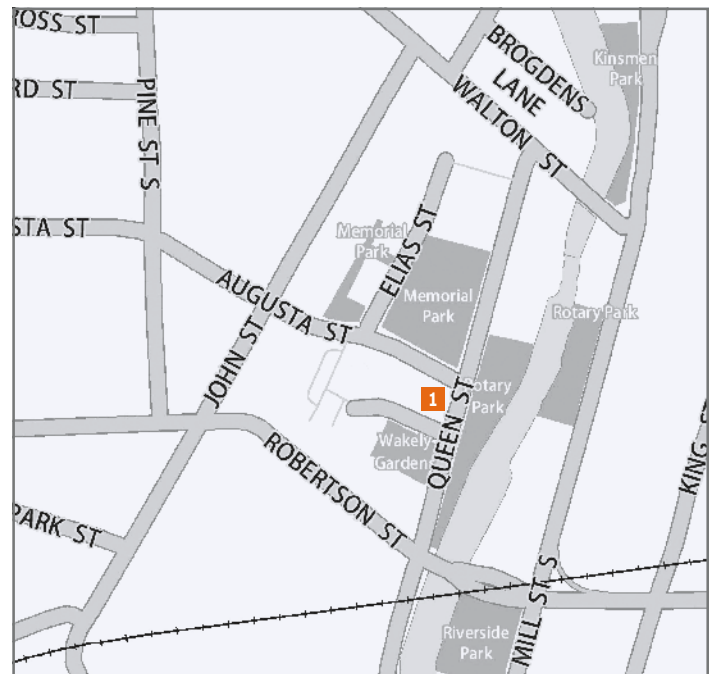
### 1 Stand in Front of Town Hall

Port Hoppers take great pride in their heritage as exemplified by this red brick **Town Hall**. It was built in 1851 while the Grand Trunk Railway (the viaduct with concrete blocks to south) to link Toronto and Montreal, was under construction, and it anticipates the boom Port Hope anticipated. With its clock and octagonal cupola and neo-classical style, it symbolises prosperity and confidence, and has been the heart of the town ever since. It was designed by the American, Merwin Austin of Rochester, the most important of many buildings he designed in Port Hope, and was built facing what was then Helm's dam, a section of the river that had been dammed by John Helm, a foundry owner. The smart shopping area of John Street was behind it and the smoking, clanking, industrial buildings on Helm's dam were in front. The Town Hall had a number of shops on the ground floor, entered by four french doors, and the Assembly hall was upstairs where meetings and social events took place. But a terrible fire gutted it about 40 years later and, when rebuilt, the ground floor shops were replaced by Municipal offices and the french doors were done away with.

The Grand Trunk Railway was completed in 1856, and the following year another line opened, the Midland Railway (the green embankment — Lent's Lane — visible behind Town Hall). Until the 1970s it ran north to Lindsay and Midland and connected Port Hope with the farming and timber lands to the north. Great prosperity resulted. The town's population doubled to 5000 and a great many extremely handsome and sophisticated shops and homes were built around the town. (Port Hope has more than 250 designated buildings, more per capita than any other municipality in Ontario). However the town soon found it couldn't compete with larger manufacturing centres such as Toronto, Peterborough and Kingston, so the boom subsided and the town settled down to a quieter existence — not such a bad thing.

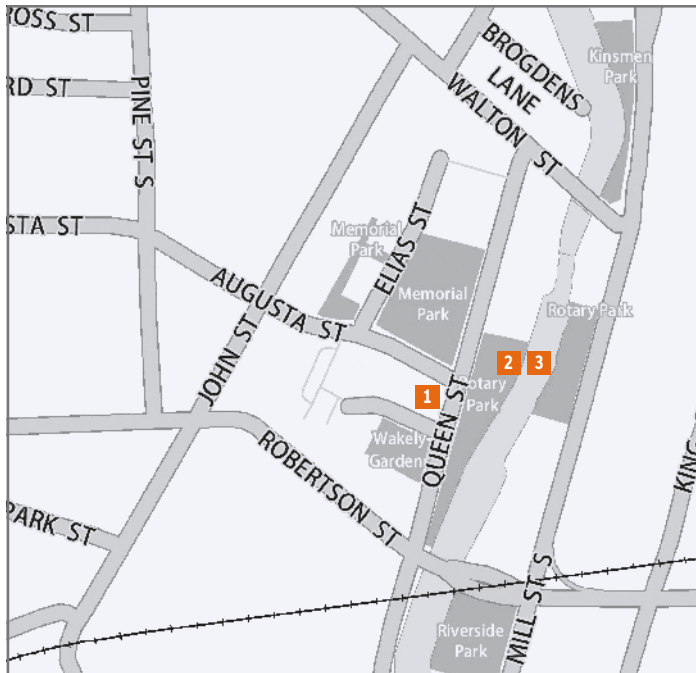
# On the Sidewalks of Port Hope

Something to do in these quiet times! Take this walking tour with you around town and learn more about our very interesting history



Behind you on the lawn is a statue of **Lt. Col. Arthur Williams**, known as 'the gallant hero of Batoche.' Arthur Williams was a member of one of Port Hope's most prominent families at the time. At 22 he married and built himself Penryn Park, still there, an impressive Gothic-style home whose grounds are now the golf course. He also became Member of Parliament for Durham and commander of the Midland Regiment which was called up at the time of the North-West Campaign in Saskatchewan connected with Louis Riel. At the final Battle of Batoche in 1885, Williams led a daring charge which won the day. But soon after, before returning home to what would have been a hero's welcome, he died of pneumonia. Port Hoppers were devastated. 15,000 attended his funeral and this statue by Hamilton McCarthy, commissioned by members of the federal government, the local community, and his regiment, was unveiled by Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald.

Tour, continued on page 6 →



## 2 Cross Queen Street and Walk to this side of the Rotary Footbridge

The **Ganaraska river** is why Port Hope came into being. Twice a year since time immemorial, great schools of trout in March and salmon in late September, struggle up to spawn, drawing successive tribes of native people here for the fishing. The indigenous people of the area called this area Cochingomink, which means “start of the carrying place” as it was possible to canoe up the river a short distance to a trail that went to Rice Lake.

In the late 17th century the Europeans arrived – first Sulpician friars, and following them, fur traders. One of them was a Peter Smith who in 1778 built a trading post on the east bank of the river.

Just four years later two Americans, Jonathon Walton and Elias Smith (no relation of Peter’s) visited the area. They were United Empire Loyalists, Americans loyal to the British crown in the recently ended Revolutionary War and now unwelcome in the new republic, and they were searching for suitable land to build a settlement. They liked the look of the river – stronger and narrower than now; good for powering mills. In exchange for undertaking to settle forty families and build a saw and grist mill, which they did, they received land grants of 12 hundred acres from the British government which comprised the entire lower reaches of the river. These forty families formed the foundation of this community. Elias Smith, who had 11 children, settled here in due course and the town was called Smiths Creek. Walton didn’t stay, but our main street is named after him.

## 3 Move to Middle of Bridge

The town grew slowly. By 1817, when there were 15 houses, 2 of them inns, a Post Office was established. But what to call it? The new postmaster, Charles Fothergill, didn’t like the name ‘Smith’s Creek’, and renamed the community ‘Toronto,’ an indigenous name (Toronto was then called York), and Toronto it remained for two years. But the Council of Upper Canada disliked it, so, as the village was the port for Hope Township (called after a former Lieutenant Governor of Quebec), it was named Port Hope.

15 years later York took the name of Toronto which had been felt not suitable for Port Hope!

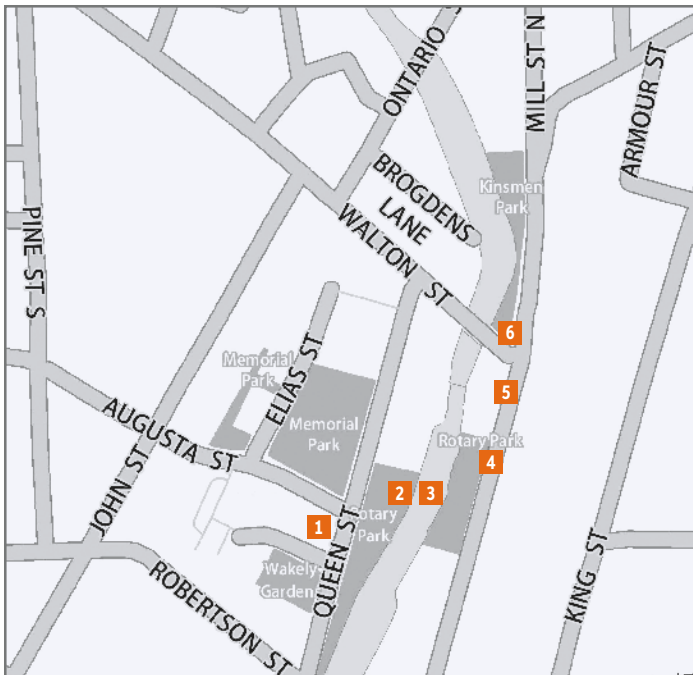
By the 1830s the little place could boast numerous smithies, inns, 8 distilleries, factories along the river for wool, malt and chairs, and a thriving harbour which exported masts for the British navy. The tall trees for these were culled from the upper reaches of the Ganaraska. But unfortunately the soil erosion that resulted came back to haunt Port Hope in the form of devastating floods.

As mentioned, in the mid 19th century the river was fringed on both sides with mills and factories. Back then, the river passed under the then narrower Walton Street bridge you see up-river, and formed the large millpond of Helm’s Dam. Then it narrowed again to a bottleneck at the actual dam south of the Town Hall. But ferocious floods swept through regularly, clearing the banks of its buildings, and destroying the dam itself. So after the last flood in 1980 the river was widened and the concrete and stone embankments which you see today were built.



Photo by Mark Harris

Tour, continued on page 7 →



**4** Go north along the East Side of river, Riverside Park

To our right is the **Farley Mowat Boat-Roofed House**, built before the death of Farley Mowat, Port Hope’s famous author, in his honour. It simulates a type of house built on the east coast by very early British walrus-hunters to help them survive the winter, whom he mentions in his book *The Farfarers*. The houses had drystone walls and a boat placed overhead.

The building across Mill Street is the **Skeena Hall** and was originally a Presbyterian Church just up the road, but was then moved here and used as a Sunday school for St. Mark’s up the hill, the two linked by steep steps called Jacob’s Ladder. Its restoration was helped by ACO. Skeena Hall is now the HQ for the local sea cadet corps. The Skeena was a destroyer which fought in the north Atlantic and was wrecked off Iceland.

**5** Walk North

**Customs House** This pink building was the Customs House to which the captains of all cross-lake shipping would have had to report on arriving here. At one time *Century Home Magazine* was published here.

Next door is **1 Walton Street**, a commercial building designed in 1845 by William Thomas, one of Victorian Canada’s most notable architects. He is better known for the Brock Monument, and for St. Lawrence Hall and St. Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto. Notice the handsome details: the windows, varying from one floor to the next, the quoins up the corners of the building, and the lantern or belvedere, on top. It has been converted into a restaurant and wine bar with accommodation upstairs. The building did not originally overlook the river. One has to remember that the river was greatly widened after this building was built.

**6** Cross road to **Farini Gardens**, but pause in the middle to take in the view up Walton Street to west and Jacob’s Ladder to east

Once on the other side notice the **Ganaraska Region Archives** across Mill Street. This was formerly the Port Hope Registry office which closed when our Registry was amalgamated with Cobourg’s. Kivas Tully, another notable Victorian architect who designed Cobourg’s splendid Town hall, produced a generic design to be used for registry offices in the area and this is one of them. Notice the date above the door.

On this north-east side of the bridge, a 4-storey commercial building once stood in Farini Gardens which was taken out by a flood in 1909. It was from this building to the Haggis Block facing it across the river that a local farm boy, William Hunt, strung his high wire and performed his first public skywalk, executing a handstand halfway across, in 1859. Apparently he was watched by a crowd of about 10,000. people. This was the beginning of an amazing career in which he was better known as Signor Farini — hence the name of this little garden.

This **bridge** was built after the last flood in 1980. There were shops on the original bridge, suspended over the river but those on the north side were washed away in the flood that took out the Farini Gardens building, and those on the bridge’s south went in the 1936 flood. In the last flood of 1980 a 2-storey building next to One Walton was swept away and the Fire Hall next to **Smith’s Creek Antiques** so damaged that it was later demolished, while the Smith’s Creek building itself was damaged. After that, both river and bridge were widened to prevent ice forming bottlenecks. The 1980 flood is remembered each April with the Float Your Fanny down the Ganny canoe and raft race.

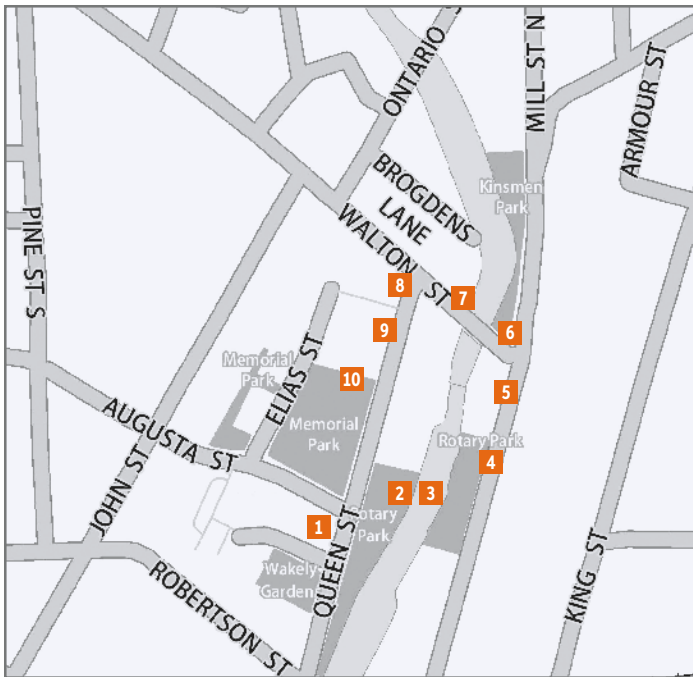
[Tour, continued on page 8 →](#)

M

MOYA MCPHAIL  
DESIGN



P 905.797.2424 C 416.457.1205 moya@eagle.ca  
www.moyamcphaildesign.com



**7** Cross bridge and walk up Walton Street

This is the best preserved 19th century streetscape in Ontario, and in 1998 from Mill Street at its foot to Pine near the top of its hill Walton was designated a Heritage Conservation District through the efforts of Heritage Port Hope. Today HPH and Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) influence the paint colour on buildings, the signs, awnings and the lamp posts of Walton. Much of it was built between 1841 and '71, the years of Port Hope's heyday. The Midland railway was bringing down a fortune in lumber and grain from the north, the harbour was filled with American ships waiting to load up with it; the town was on busy Highway 2, and the inns, hotels, taverns, and shops were thriving.

**Gillett-Patterson Block** (#33 Walton — pink building). The earliest buildings, like this one in the Greek Revival style, can be identified by facades with pilasters - flat half-columns. Notice '18 HG 45' over a corner window telling us it was built by Hiram Gillett in 1845. Note the steel rod-ends to hold the floor beams, and the 'stomacher' windows at the top (in Britain known as belly-flop windows). Also notice the elaborately detailed roof cornice. The rounded corner is a characteristic of Walton Street as are the side streets which intersect with it at oblique angles.

**Dreamers** is another rounded corner building, preserved with ACO help. It once had a 4th story but it was removed along the way.

**Lents Lane** up the street. Look up the road and on the left or south side you'll notice an opening known as Lent's Lane. Until the 1970s the Midland Railway's track crossed the street here on its route northward. Then the train steamed up the street to the right, crossed the river and headed north to Milbrook and Lindsay. Apparently in the days of carriages it sometimes terrified horses, causing chaos.

**8** Cross Walton street to Queen Street and look back

The T-intersection of Queen and Walton focuses attention on this pink-painted, pedimented building which was once the North American Hotel.

The two blocks flanking the hotel, which were probably identical when put up, were designed by Merwin Austin, architect of the Town Hall. Both are neo-classical, with pilasters, both owned by grandsons of Port Hope's founder, Elias Smith. James and John Smith built the one on the right and Elias Peter Smith that on the left. Elias's block narrowly escaped destruction. A 1980 fire gutted its interior, and it was to be torn down, but ACO, the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Heritage Port Hope (HPH), and the preservation-minded townspeople of Port Hope rescued it from the wrecking ball and the façade was restored though the interior is all new.

**9** Turn to the Capitol Theatre

The **Capitol Theatre** presents plays and films among all manner of performances. It is Canada's only remaining 'atmospheric' theatre. Inside, the auditorium resembles the courtyard of a medieval castle, and on special occasions, puffy clouds appear to float across the blue sky on the painted ceiling. Built in 1931, it was closed in the 1980s, then restored in the 1990s by a massive community effort. At the moment work is underway to expand its premises and services.

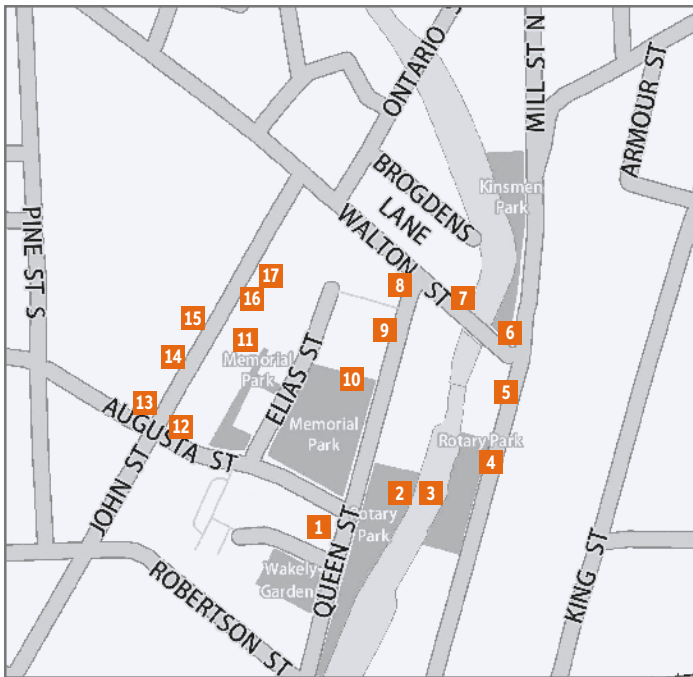
**10** Move down Queen Street and across Park

The **Bandshell** was built in 1946 to honour Veterans. It was originally behind the Town Hall facing the street but was moved here in 1992 and restored by ACO and the townspeople. It is almost exactly where the Midland Railway station used to be and to the south there was a roundhouse where the train turned around.



Tour, continued on page 9 →





**14 Next door is the Surveyor’s House, 1840s**

Built in the 1840s. In 1870 its then owner, yet another physician, Dr. Harriman, added an office at the front. The extension to the south is a new addition.

**15 Hill and Dale, 1851 (visible behind brick wall, up hill)**

This attractive house was the home and estate of Col. George Ralston who was awarded the Victoria Cross for valour in WW1. During WW2 he was the Minister of Defence in Mackenzie King’s government.

**16 Across road, mustard-coloured building  
Midland House, 1850, with archway**

This was the Midland House Hotel, right beside the railway station. People would arrive by train for a day’s shopping or a matinee at the Opera house along the road, and rent a ‘day room’ here. The south part was built first, then the north part, with a carriageway in between. Note the window and door details. The building was on the brink of collapse when it was bought and restored in the 1980s by Alice King (or A.K) Sculthorpe.

**17 Beamish House**

This is now a pleasant local British-style pub, but when built in 1848 it was the home and workshop of William Beamish, Port Hope’s first shoemaker. It was moved here from along the road at the corner of Augusta Street in the 1980s.

[Tour, continued on page 10 →](#)

**11 Move onto the Lents Lane embankment,  
walking Southwards**

Now we’re walking along the Midland railway’s embankment.

**12 Walk around First Baptist Church**

The **First Baptist Church** was built in stages through the 1860s and ‘70s. Beforehand there was only a wooden meeting hall by the railway line, and baptisms were performed in the lake –hopefully in summer. This building, of yellow brick (often called white brick), has slender Gothic proportions and fine stained glass in its windows. The rose window facing John Street is best seen at night with the interior lights on.

**13 Look across John Street to Dr. Corbett’s Bistro**

**Dr. Corbett’s Bistro** was built as the Bank of Upper Canada in 1857, the same year the Midland Railway opened and a year after the Grand Trunk was completed. The Italianate architectural style, also in yellow brick, was built to impress. Notice its wide bracketed cornice, and the cast iron designs of the windows which change from floor to floor. Yet another high profile Victorian architect designed it, Frederic Cumberland, in partnership with William Storm. Cumberland also designed St. James’s Cathedral in Toronto. One owner was Dr. Robert Corbett, surgeon and M.D. for Hope Township. Quite an entrepreneur, Corbett built the dam on the Ganaraska just south of the 401, installing a generator there to produce electric power, and was president of the Port Hope Electric Light Company in the 1890s. Those are his lions at the front door. Later the building became the Port Hope City Dairy, and was run as a dairy until the 1970s. Now it’s a very pleasant restaurant. Its private room is the original bank’s vault.

**CHESTNUT PARK**  
REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE

**CHRISTIE’S**  
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

---



**Julie Aldis**

**BROKER**

julie@juliealdis.com

juliealdis.com

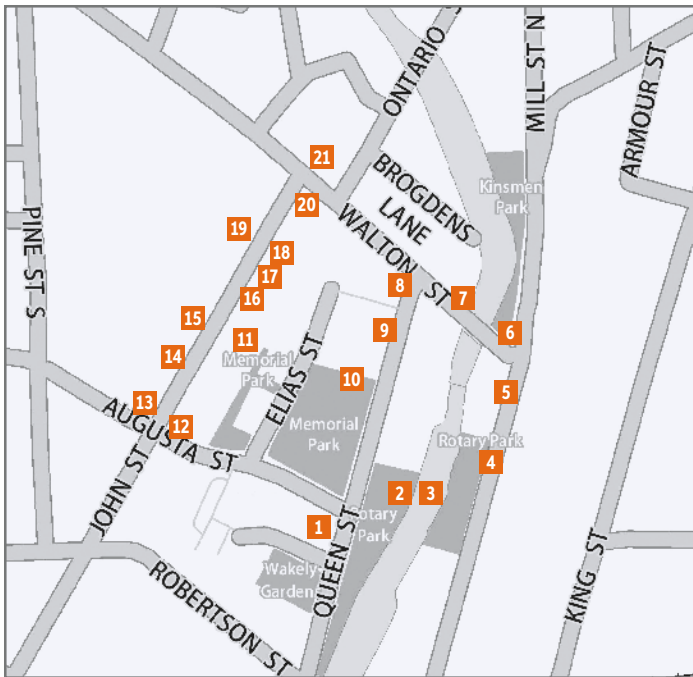
Office: 905-800-0321

chestnutpark.com

**CHESTNUT PARK REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE**

**IN THE HEART OF THE HERITAGE DISTRICT**

126 Walton Street, Port Hope, Ontario



**18 Acanthus**

This was yet another doctor’s home and office but in the 1970s it was owned by Farley Mowat before he moved up to King Street. Now it is an interior decorating store.

**19 Orange Hall, 1874**

Yellow brick again. Victorian Gothic, built by a William Craig as a triumph over the “evil influences of taverns” with a stage at the back perhaps for ‘improving’ talks. There was at that time fearful hatred between the region’s Irish Protestants (the Orangemen), and the Catholics, who attacked each other at regular intervals. It is now used as an artist’s studio and the exterior was recently cleaned of tired paint with help from the ACO.

**20 Continue to Walton Street**

Now we’re back on Walton Street and there are just three buildings remaining which you should see.

**21 Cross Walton and turn to face south**

**Opera House** building on the corner of John and Walton.

The building was built in 1871, but purchased in 1912 by the Royal Bank which owned it until 2019 (last year) when ACO bought it. The bank architects have always maintained the dignity of the original, but the roof and window decorations were once more elaborate. Originally it was a commercial building with an Opera House cum Music Hall on the second floor, and this wonderful space still remains though the Royal Bank’s air conditioning ducts still bulge up into it. Notice the large windows to light the Opera House. The smaller round feature was for advertising upcoming shows. This hall showed films as well as plays until the Capitol opened in 1931. The entrance is on John Street.

To the right of the Opera House is the **St. Lawrence Hotel** building, now apartments and stores, built in 1853 and damaged by yet another fire in 1965. Peter Schultz, an American whose family used to summer at Penryn Park, (home of our hero outside the Town Hall), bought the building with his own money and restored it. I think you’ll agree it was well worth it. (Peter Schultz was the father of Albert Schultz, the actor, and the brother of A.K.Sculthorpe who saved the Midland Hotel). This building is yet another designed by Merwin Austin. Like Dr. Corbett’s Bistro, the design is Italianate, with long narrow windows and highly decorative roof brackets. Notice the cast-iron ‘eared architraves’ over the windows. The windows differ on each floor. Austin carefully considered the problem of the sloping street and came up with the idea of keeping the line above the windows straight and having the same number of window panes in each store front, but increasing the size of the window panes as the street went down the hill.

Peter Schultz was the editor of the Port Hope Evening Guide at the time and his little office was #118 Walton. These two buildings, connected to Schultz, are a fitting finale to our walk as it was the purchase of the St. Lawrence Hotel by Schultz that began the Port Hope branch of ACO and the extremely strong interest in architectural preservation in this town. So we have much to thank him for, and there’s a plaque to honour him beside one of the doors over there.



**FIONNA BARRINGTON**  
SALES REPRESENTATIVE 905-800-0321

**KNOWLEDGE,  
INTEGRITY, TRUST.**

CHESTNUT PARK REAL ESTATE LTD., BROKERAGE

[fionna@chestnutpark.com](mailto:fionna@chestnutpark.com)      [fionnabarrington.com](http://fionnabarrington.com)





# Statues Present Problems

By Bruce Bowden

**S**ir John A. Macdonald in Victoria, **General Lee** in Richmond, moved; **Columbus** in Boston, beheaded; **Captain Cook** in Sydney and **Churchill** in Westminster - under siege. All five were talented leaders who transformed their times, but also who left problematic legacies. By contrast, a generation ago, the controversial statue for Canada was that of **Louis Riel** in Winnipeg. Even when a statue is a deserved recognition of an important accomplishment, such as that of **Champlain** in Orillia, its early twentieth century design unacceptably diminishes the **Wendat-Huron** peoples depicted at its base.

Even a name can be complicated. Because **Henry Dundas** deflected the immediate impact of Wilberforce's Anti-Slave Trade motion in Parliament's 1792 vote, and then as Secretary of War stopped the movement's progress during the French Revolution, a street in Toronto with its own 220-year history linked to The Ward and Chinatown — a street that epitomizes that city's complex relationship to immigrants and minorities — may be renamed. We have our own reasons to remember and to retain, without importing simplistic if heartfelt arguments about a figure we might wish to consign to the dustbin. Toronto's street name is important.

The site, *I love Port Hope* has opened this conversation here — actually, Patsy Beeson did last year in her focused tour. **Arthur Williams** was an important presence locally in his own time, but not more than several others. He went west in the late winter of 1885 as commander of his militia regiment, one of the political leaders determined to secure Canadian control and sovereignty of the Prairies. (He also had \$50,000 invested in unsold “grazing land in the North West” and was in financial difficulty (D.C. B., vol XI). The enthusiastic response to the unrest out West, also reflected an ingrained Ontario prejudice against French-Canadians, hatred of Riel, and a broad racism about our Indigenous Peoples. Suddenly, he became a populist figure!

The displacement of the Metis community from Winnipeg, the famine of several peoples on the Plains, these causes of unrest that had needed close attention did not concern him. Was Macdonald's government's inaction dreadfully wrong? Yes, but Sir John was personally overwhelmed by a task that was bankrupting the treasury. From the hardships of the winter journey west on railway flat cars and over unfinished track, and the unnecessary battle at Batoche, the CPR and Macdonald's government were rescued. However, besides highlighting harmful governmental relations with our indigenous peoples, the crisis created the first decisive cultural divide between French and English-speaking Canadians.

Because of the military actions and early death of Williams, Port Hope has a story to tell. The monument's grand pedestal teaches us the views and narrow values of his time. We now should provide some context beside the statue, similarly to our explanation of Lent's Lane. We should do this – complete with the famous photo of Macdonald's unveiling - whether or not the statue stands in front of our town hall.

Why then might one choose to move the statue? The aesthetics of its positioning. Statues of prominent people will always be problematic for succeeding generations. That is precisely why the Cenotaph form was first adopted in London after WWI. It is precisely why the sculptors of our WWI monuments at Vimy and St. Eloi used figures that are universal in their depiction. Port Hope has a beautiful memorial, soon to be enhanced in its surroundings. For me, this triumphalist caricature of Williams as a Victorian officer is at odds with its neighbouring and truly essential sculpture. When viewed in that context, Col. William's pose diminishes us. The best location for it? to be placed within the vicinity of his home: Penryn Park.

Controversy of this sort is a constant historical debate. For many: one should judge persons in their own times and by



those values; to do otherwise is constantly to rewrite history. Certainly, that analysis remains an important component of historical knowledge. When we consider how publicly to remember Churchill who willed Britain and Canada to stand firm in 1940, yet who also expressed views that were decades out-of-date, we discover that this task is too challenging for any monument. If General Lee was a brilliant commander and a patrician presence for his society, today's moral judgements and social conflicts insist that his statue leading to a legislature be re-assessed, and that the original Jim Crow reasons for its creation, be told. Accurate knowledge of history's complexities enriches and informs our present. However, when we consider its depiction as a public presence, we must accept that, rather than freezing the past, this initiates an ongoing conversation with our own moral values. That is what the word “public” requires.



Christopher Wallace Architect

TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

905-753-1122 • cwallacearchitect.com

# Ella's DRAPERY & DECOR

Drapery | Blinds | Valances  
Fabric | Upholstery  
Bedding | Rugs



Visit our newly refreshed showroom at 66 Elgin Street West in Cobourg or call us at 905-373-0983 to book your in-home consultation.

What are your windows wearing?

ellasdrapery.ca  

*If you have any questions or problems with membership renewal, please contact Anna Gray at [anna.gray3112@gmail.com](mailto:anna.gray3112@gmail.com) or 905-885-7949*



## Membership Renewal Form

Please enrol me as a member of the **Port Hope Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario**. I have indicated below my/our applicable membership category.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Member – \$35: \_\_\_\_\_

Household Membership – \$40: \_\_\_\_\_

Corporation – \$60: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Membership – \$12: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Creditable Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering for ACO Events.

Please fill out this form and mail it with your cheque to:

**ACO Port Hope, PO Box 563, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z4**



**Dee McGee**  
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Dir 289 251 6662  
Off 905 885 1508  
[deemcgee@royallepage.ca](mailto:deemcgee@royallepage.ca)  
[www.mcgees.ca](http://www.mcgees.ca)

**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
ProAlliance Realty  
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED