

NEWS views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

Vol. 48, No. 3
ISSN 0700-4427

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President's Report

I hope that this finds you and yours well. There seems to be a renewed interest in history and the telling of our stories. The fears brought on by a Pandemic could do that to my generation.

The Simcoe County Historical Association has not been able to meet in person since the Pandemic started in March, but our board has been quietly working behind the scenes in their organizations and on SCHA initiatives. We did have a Zoom AGM in July to approve our updated Constitution and By-laws. It is hard to believe it has been six months already.

We are still very actively driving the strategic plan that we implemented in 2019:

- To improve our membership renewal rate (It has exceeded our target for 2020).
- To improve donations that would be helpful to the continuation of our work in bringing us together through Community Partnerships and programming.
- To improve our partnership with the secondary schools and move forward with our Andrew Hunter writing award.

We have improved the value proposition for organizational members, offering benefits such as:

- Listing the name and contact information of your organization and promotion of upcoming meetings and events in our newsletter.
- The ability for groups to contribute content to our newsletter and website to promote and share the stories that are important to them.
- Providing help from the SCHA and our members at your next event.
- Leveraging our extensive social media reach to promote your upcoming event or current activities

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Preserving the Past,
in the Present,
for the Future.

The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.



President's Report ... continued

We were planning a History Conference for this fall, but COVID-19 came. This was to bring Historical Associations and Societies together to share and promote our common county history. We are hoping it can happen in 2021. It would be a great benefit for us all.

By becoming an individual member you:

- Help support our quarterly newsletter and spread knowledge about local history news, upcoming events, and interesting stories about the history of our region
- Help the SCHA promote public knowledge of local history through our quarterly history speakers' series, our support of the County Heritage Fair and our new annual Heritage Business Award and more!

We have launched a new website that better positions us for:

- Improved communications and programming
- Membership acquisitions and renewals
- Online donations
- Newsletter subscriptions, current issues and archives
- A platform for content delivery: virtual events, exhibits and other programming

Our Vision is the promotion, preservation and appreciation of Simcoe County's history and heritage through the encouragement of communication and cooperation among historical and cultural groups within our county.

Our Mission is to create forums wherein history can be shared while bringing together the unique areas of Simcoe County, putting local into a county context.

Our opportunity during this Pandemic is to leverage SCHA's position on line to create programming and opportunities to tell our stories. Please join us as individuals and groups to make it happen.

Ted Duncan,
SCHHA President

Do you know someone who would enjoy receiving the News and Views and other updates from us? They can subscribe [here](#).

Re-enactors at Fort Willow

Strategically located as a supply depot during the War of 1812, the historic Fort Willow area was also actively used for centuries by our Aboriginal peoples, the fur trade and French explorers as part of a major transportation route known as the Nine Mile Portage. If you're lucky, our volunteer re-enactors will be there to show you what life was like in the 18th century. We're @Nottawagaca on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Follow us for updates! Fort Willow is a great starting point to hike or bike the surrounding trail network, including the Ganaraska, North Simcoe and Trans Canada trails. Plan to have lunch at the Fort under the Bernie Longson Memorial Pavilion or at the picnic tables around the conservation area.

The last pandemic: Simcoe County and the Spanish flu of 1918

by John Merritt

From our current perspective caught in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, the thought of a global pandemic shutting down economies and societies around the world certainly seems unprecedented. But just over 100 years ago, people around the world, across Canada and even right here in Simcoe County faced a similarly unprecedented crisis: The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

Spanish influenza was a strain of the H1N1 flu virus which was unusual in that it affected normally healthy adults in addition to the flu's traditional victims, the very old and the very young. Initially presenting typical flu symptoms, the illness could turn serious literally overnight as severe immune reactions or secondary infections caused potentially fatal respiratory distress in those infected with the virus.

The first cases of Spanish flu were recorded on army bases in the United States in early 1918. By the summer of that year, an initial, mild form of the virus had spread across the US, Europe and into Asia. After a brief hiatus, in the fall of 1918 the virus reappeared in a deadlier form that swept the globe, reaching every continent except Antarctica and killing tens of millions of people worldwide. In Canada, which at that time had a population of only eight million people, the death toll numbered 50,000. In Ontario, 300,000 cases were recorded, including 8,705 deaths.

The first cases of Spanish flu in Barrie were reported in the last half of October 1918. The virus was allegedly brought into the town by returning travelers who brought the virus home, where it infected their families and spread into the community. Cases increased throughout the last half of October 1918 to about 300 total, mostly women and children. Many cases were also reported in Innesville, but doctors reported that the flu in both places was mild in character and there were no deaths yet linked to the virus.

Despite the allegedly mild nature of the flu, local doctors worked around the clock attending to the sick. One doctor claimed he had attended to 45

people in one day and 36 the following day; one nurse attended to 20 cases in one day. A shortage of medical assistance was reported in the villages of Stroud and Churchill, where there was only a single doctor available to attend to all cases in both communities.

To aid the doctors, the Barrie branch of the Red Cross organized an "Emergency Health Auxiliary" which consisted mostly of women volunteers who were trained in basic care by four graduate nurses. These volunteer nurses, nicknamed "Sisters of Service", also assisted the sick at home by providing them with meals and clean laundry.

As a precaution, all picture shows,



pool rooms, and other places of amusement in Barrie were closed and all Sunday evening church services were cancelled, although local churches were still permitted to hold services on Sunday mornings.

By the end of October, numerous cases of the flu were reported in every municipality of Simcoe County except Nottawa, which had no confirmed cases, and Alliston, which had only a few. The epidemic seems to have struck the Midland and Penetanguishene areas particularly hard, perhaps because at the time both towns were important ports in the busy Upper Great Lakes shipping trade. By late October there were as many as 1,000 cases of Spanish flu in Penetanguishene, more than that in Midland. The epidemic also devastated the First Nations community on nearby Beausoleil Island, killing 47 of only 317 residents.

In response to the epidemic, munici-

palities in other parts of Simcoe County took similar measures to Barrie in trying to curb the spread of the virus in their communities. In Flos, the local Board of Health ordered all schools, churches, picture shows and halls to be closed and banned all public meetings. In Collingwood, local women formed their own Sisters of Service group, and local health authorities closed public places like schools, churches and the public library and commandeered the local YMCA building as an emergency hospital. By early November, Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital was overflowing with flu patients and extra cots had to be brought in.

Despite a string of tragic deaths during the last half of November, local representatives of the Ministry of Health assured the public there was no cause for alarm. By the end of the month, the average rate of new cases across Simcoe County had fallen to about one new case per doctor; two of the new cases had come from outside the region. There were only four patients being treated for the flu at the Barrie hospital, all of them reportedly doing well. As the number of active cases in Barrie declined drastically, the Sisters of Service quietly disbanded.

Barrie was declared almost free of the flu by mid-December, though there were several cases reported around Craighurst, Minesing and Utopia up to the end of the year and in one tragic case, a Tecumseth man lost both his wife and daughter to the flu within the same week in early December. By January 1919 the epidemic was essentially over for Simcoe County, though the virus periodically reappeared in other parts of the world until well into 1920. As severe and daunting as the epidemic seemed to those living through it, society persevered and eventually was able to return to life as normal. Today, the Spanish flu epidemic is history. One day, this pandemic will be history too.

Fanny's Journey by Mary Harris of the Barrie Historical Archive

It's just over 150 years since the first British Home Children arrived in Canada. It's estimated that more than 80,000 children were migrated to Canada from about 1869 until 1939, where they were placed first in shelters, then homes – usually rural. Reformers envisioned a better life for these perceived impoverished or orphaned children, but in many cases, their experiences as cheap farm labour or indentured servants was quite miserable. Regardless, these British Home Children went on to become contributing Canadians – to our culture, economy and military. It's estimated that about 10% of Canadians are descendants of British Home Children.

Fanny Maria Langley was born on January 15, 1883 in London, England and on July 17, 1899, found herself embarking on a huge and life changing adventure when she stepped onto the *Lake Huron* with eighteen other girls. Fanny, at sixteen years of age, was one of the oldest. Some were as young as nine.

As stated on the top of the arrival document for July 29, 1899 at Montreal, these were “Barnardo’s

Girls”. Dr. John Barnardo was an Irish born man who moved to London, England in 1866 with dreams of becoming a missionary. He encountered such poverty and hardship in the city’s East End that he opened the first of his 122 children’s homes within four years of his arrival there.

Barnardo’s organization was just one of the better-known groups who arranged for over 100,000 poor and orphaned children from Britain to go to Canada for a chance at a better life. These children are known as British Home Children. Many of the children did very well in their new homes but others were mistreated and looked upon as cheap labour.

How terribly sad, we think to ourselves, that this young girl could be taken away from her family and sent off to a foreign land all alone. As unfortunate as that sounds, it may be that Fanny’s life improved for the better the minute she sailed away from that Liverpool dock.

It wasn’t supposed to be this way. Fanny’s grandfather, Edward Langley, had left his home in Liverpool, Lancashire to pursue a career in art in Burslem, Staffordshire where he found work as a

porcelain painter in the booming pottery industry there. He married around 1848 and he and his wife, Betsey Simpson, had two sons, Frederick and George. Frederick trained to be a clerk while George eventually became a school master.

Ten years later, the family was in Lambeth, a section of London, where Edward continued his profession of porcelain painter and gilder. The Royal Doulton china company, now famous for fine dinnerware, was beginning to take off during this era. Surprisingly, their earliest successful products had been sewer pipes, leech bottles and ink pots!

Another decade on, Edward Langley had died leaving widowed Betsey to be supported by the wages of her two sons and the income from two female boarders. Around 1879, Frederick Langley married Fanny Maria Johnson. He and his wife became the parents of two small girls, Mary and Elizabeth by 1881. They lived on Elder St. in Whitechapel, another part of East End London.

The census taken in 1891 gives no mention of little Mary and Elizabeth, who had either passed away or were living elsewhere. However, children Fanny Maria and George Frederick, ages eight and three years, had arrived in the household.

At that time, Frederick Langley was employed as a general labourer, a term that hints that he likely did not have a steady source of income. Further proof of this comes in the form of a school admission record for his daughter, Fanny Maria. In 1890, she had been enrolled at George Yard



S.S. LAKE HURON, 1881 Beaver Line

School. This school was a ragged (charity) school.

On that school admission record, Frederick Langley provided the family address as the Rothschild Building. This building would have been almost new at this time. In the preceding few years, the street on which it stood had become absolutely notorious and the poorly built dwellings along it were known as rookeries. In other words, it was a dense collection of houses in a slum area.



Unknown Whitechapel girls playing on Flower and Dean Street

This was Flower and Dean Street of the mid-1880s. Of all the evils attributed to this short street, the worst of it was the Jack the Ripper string of murders in 1888. Two of his victims lived in doss (rooming) houses on Flower and Dean Street and some modern-day criminal profilers believe that the killer most likely lived on the same street.

This outrage accelerated the demolition of the old slum and made way for the Rothschild housing scheme. In time, those buildings too became derelict and were torn down in the 1970s to make room for the current housing block.

The already struggling family was

dealt a terrible blow when Frederick died around 1892. The Langleys were split apart. Fanny, Frederick's widow, went to live on Hanbury Street but, on several occasions, was sent to the St. John's Road Workhouse when she was ill or could not support herself. Little Fanny, who was about nine years old, was admitted to Forest Gate School under the Poor Law. It's not clear where George went but his name does appear on the ship's manifest of the *Bavarian*

when it arrived in Montreal in 1904, carrying some seventy more of Dr. Barnardo's home children.

By the time George Langley went to Canada, he had no one left in England. His father had died, his sister,

Fanny, had gone to Canada and his mother had died in St. Pancras Hospital, on the workhouse grounds, in December 1902.

Happily, we do know that George and Fanny found each other in Canada, or perhaps they had never lost touch. In 1916, when George enlisted with the military to fight in the Great War, he listed Fanny as his next of kin.

George was a farmer, a line of work that he likely got into after being sent to a farm family upon his arrival in Canada.

Fanny's younger brother had a very short time in the military. He signed up in Toronto on March 31, 1916 but by August George had made it as far as Camp Borden where he was discharged after

being deemed medically unfit for service. It could very well have saved his life.

Fanny found work for herself in her adopted land. She worked as a domestic servant which is to be expected as this is what most British Home girls were trained for, just as the boys were commonly put into farm positions.

Six years after arriving in Canada, Fanny met a young man. On October 21, 1905, she married George Henry Mortson in Detroit, Michigan. As hard as it is to imagine today, perhaps Detroit was a popular cross border honeymoon destination at that time. On the marriage certificate, Fanny was listed as a domestic servant while George was a reed worker.

Four children were born to Fanny and George who settled in Toronto. In 1934, their elder son, Harry, married Muriel Whiting Harrow, a young English born lady who had her own tales of hardships and poverty.

In later years, when some of her family found their way to the rural areas of Simcoe County, Fanny followed. She spent a lot of time near Bradford where Harry and Muriel's daughter, Marilyn, had settled.

Standing at 5-foot 1-inch tall, Fanny was lovingly known as Little Grandma to her many great grandchildren around Simcoe County. She made her last stop near Hillsdale, Ontario where her daughter, Gladys, lived and it is there that she rests in the small cemetery in that community. The little girl from Flower and Dean Street passed away at age 96 years in 1979.

The Barrie Flyers and the Barrie Collegiate Band 1951

The following article is taken from *Notes in Time, A History of W.A. Fisher and the Barrie Collegiate Band, 1938-1972* by Mark W. Fisher. The full work will shortly be made available to the public and may be obtained by contacting the author at mwfisher2@hotmail.com.

The Barrie Flyers, a Major Junior A team of the Ontario Hockey Association, originated in 1945. It was owned and coached by Leighton "Hap" Emms, a native of nearby Dalston, who remains a legend in the annals of organized hockey for the strength of his personality and his controversial ways. Emms must have been the only junior coach that successfully insisted that his young charges attend church together. He just felt that it was the right thing to do. He also abhorred foul language and charged the players a dollar for every infraction that defiled his hearing. The showers in the old Barrie arena, now replaced by a new fire hall, were notorious for turning you red as a lobster or blue as polar ice at the turn of any tap in the building. On one occasion, Ron Stewart experienced this rapid change in temperature and sprang from the frying pan into the fire trailing a voluminous string of oaths. Unbeknownst to him, Emms was present in the locker room and keeping count. "Mr. Stewart" he stated emphatically, "That will cost you \$23." Subtracted from the meagre \$25 Emms paid his players per week, Stewart was left both penniless and mute.

The team rapidly became a contender and won the Memorial Cup, emblematic of the national championship of Canada, in 1951 and 1953. Emms was also a supporter of any youth endeavours in Barrie and it is not surprising that he began to donate the proceeds of an annual intra-squad game to the Barrie Collegiate Band. He may have been motivated by the fact that his son, Paul Emms, also played trombone in the band for a short time. My sisters report that Paul was an indifferent student and his father was probably delighted with anything that would keep him in school for as long as possible. He played for the Flyers but the standard teenage rumour contended it was only because he was the coach's son. His one claim to fame arose during the knock-down series with the Quebec Citadels, led by the great Jean Beliveau, already tagged for stardom and referred to as "*le Goss Bill*." For obvious reasons, in 1951, the Citadels were widely expected to prevail over the less talented squad from Barrie. Several of the games were lopsided affairs with 4,000 overly partisan fans crammed into the local arena, trying to match the vociferous response of the 14,000 that packed the Montreal Forum. Intimidation was the order of the day until the Quebec coach threatened to pull his team from the series before the final and deciding game was played on the neutral ice of Maple Leaf Gardens. Barrie had the lead until the younger Emms--possibly at the prompting of his father--decided to hazard his health, according to one sportswriter, when he skated directly across the ice, "dropped [his] gloves and although outweighed and out-everything but fortitude attempted to light into the Quebec star." Fortunately for Emms, the referees put a quick end to the fisticuffs. Both received major penalties so Barrie came out ahead for a crucial five minutes in exchanging a knight for a pawn.

Hap Emms moved the Flyers to Niagara Falls in 1960 where he won two more Memorial Cups. His son eventually took over the coaching duties, but it proved to be "a dysfunctional squad" in the view of one critic for he was "more concerned about plucking and picking his guitar than the plight of the franchise." In his earlier days it seems that Emms was torn between two careers. As the leader of the Green Valley Boys, a country-gospel group, he appeared on CKVR television and even had his own radio show on CKBB. So who knows what influence the Barrie Collegiate Band may have had. For those of a curious bent, you can even find Paul Emms and the Green Valley Boys on eBay, preserved for posterity on pristine vinyl for only \$9.95.

After downing the Citadels the Flyers went on to sweep the series against the Winnipeg Monarchs. With the Memorial Cup in hand they then made a triumphant return to Barrie on May 14. Some of the more enthusiastic fans joined their train in Bradford while the arrival in Allandale was attended by "several thousand packing the platform and surrounding area." Since it was a wet and dull day the formal reception was moved to the Barrie arena, yet the weather did not preclude a grand parade led off by a cadet colour party, the band with its drum majorettes and the girls' cheerleading squad, all from the local collegiate.

The Barrie Flyers and the Barrie Collegiate Band... continued

Next, a firetruck, with blaring siren, preceded the float carrying the Flyers--all in white Stetson hats--followed by assorted dignitaries in convertible cars, a band from General Electric on a truck, and a half-mile procession of decorated vehicles.

In the arena there was a thunderous ovation from the townspeople as they hailed their returning gladiators. The band added to the pomp and circumstance even if it did not launch into the triumphal march from "Aida." Instead, a rousing chorus of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," in honour of Hap Emms and "Cheer For the Flyers," set to the tune of "Roll Out the Barrel," had to do. This was, after all, a really big deal for a town of around 12,000 whose hockey team had brought them national fame. Why, as a token of thanks, each player was presented with a travelling alarm clock, courtesy of Reeves Jewellers, and a kiss from Mayor Marjorie Hamilton!

In his own thank you to the people of Barrie, Emms alluded to a statement made by Conn Smythe during the brouhaha over the venue for the seventh game with the Citadels. Smythe was the wealthy owner of the Maple Leafs and the Toronto Marlboros, a farm team that Barrie had earlier defeated for the Ontario championship. It didn't really matter where the game was played, a disgruntled Smythe sniffed, since there were "no players of NHL calibre on the Flyers or the Citadels." The resounding response from the crowd clearly indicated they thought otherwise.

Jean Beliveau, of course, became a star with the Montreal Canadians and at least a few of the Flyers made their presence known in the big league. Jim Morrison spent most of a long career with the Maple Leafs while Jerry Toppazzini from Copper Cliff, Leo Labine from Haileybury, and Real Chevrefils from Timmins lasted for a decade in the NHL, mainly with the Boston Bruins. They were hard-bitten young men, spewed out of the equally hard-rock communities of the Ontario northland and all solid players. It is Chevrefils' tragic story, however, that stands out from this era before the advent of the mega-millionaire superstars. D deservedly the captain of the Flyers, "Chevy" was the best of the lot and second only to Beliveau that year. One of eight siblings and a man of great strength, he yet failed to grasp the golden ring and went off the rails at an early date. He hung on until 1958 with Boston and Detroit until alcohol drove him down into the minors, the ignominy of the amateur ranks, and out of hockey altogether by 1964, in spite of all attempts by management and friends to straighten him out. After six children and the loss of his marriage he ended up in Windsor on an NHL pension of \$130 a month, living in a homeless shelter and finding casual employment for less than \$1 an hour. When he died at 48, his small, flat headstone simply stated his name, pertinent dates and in the upper corner, most poignantly, a small emblem of the Boston Bruins.

Both Chevrefils and his close friend Leo Labine played life to the fullest. I can still see Labine, he of the florid complexion and a temper to match, who could pitch a softball as hard as a bullet on the baseball diamond at Queen's Park. With all their vigorous athleticism they were both good golfers who could hit the ball a mile but they did not take failure lightly. While hunting golf balls as a boy I once witnessed them tee-off on the long and narrow third hole of the old Barrie Country Club. Perhaps they had already spent too much time in the clubhouse for Chevrefils, if not both of them, drilled their drives well into the wilderness. Both filled the air with imprecations sufficient to bankrupt them for life if Emms had been lurking in the nearby shrubbery, and proof that his admonitions about the use of profanity had fallen on sterile soil. For added measure "Chevy" showed his displeasure by launching his club well up into the branches of the neighboring cedar trees.

1953

The Barrie Flyers won the Memorial Cup for a second time in 1953 when they defeated St. Boniface, four games to one. The team then returned to the Allandale station in perfect spring weather, to the cheers of legions of fans and supporters. By now a triumphant parade was *de rigueur* and the one that followed was led off by a firetruck and the Barrie Citizens' Band followed by the waving Flyers on an open truck, adorned again in white Stetsons. After that came a number of open cars full of team officials and local politicians, with the collegiate band bringing up the rear, "resplendent in their hunting-red jackets and whites."

The Barrie Flyers and the Barrie Collegiate Band... continued

Along Bradford Street and up Parkside Drive the cavalcade made its way to the thousands jockeying for a vantage point around the small bandstand in Queen's Park, gaily decked out in Union Jacks and yellow, white and black bunting, the Flyer colours.

During the reception that followed Mayor Jim Hart--no kisses this time--referred to the excitement generated in the town through the wizardry of the live radio broadcasts of the final games all the way from Winnipeg. R.S. Leishman reminded the listeners what an economic asset the team was to the town. The president of the Chamber of Commerce emphatically stated that "win, lose or draw" the town would always love their Flyers and showed it with the presentation of leather grips, each embossed with the initials of the players. And Ken Walls, the master-of-ceremonies, in a fit of Leacockian hyperbole claimed that "there had never been such a big crowd gathered together in one place to do honor to a team of any kind."

In reply, Hap Emms went right to the point to squelch the rumours in a Toronto newspaper that he would be moving the



team to another town. He and his "great bunch of boys" were committed to the local community as shown by their determination to visit the patients of the nearby Royal Victoria Hospital after the reception. Why, in Winnipeg said Emms, all but two of the seventeen players had attended divine service together: "Some people don't believe in that but I think it is necessary." With the ceremony concluded, the band then paraded the official party to the Wellington Hotel for a civic dinner in honour of the conquering heroes.

Was this a better team than the one of two years earlier? Possibly, but again there were no individual stars. Of the names that I remember several had solid NHL careers. Orval Tessier never really made it yet Doug Mohns showed longevity with 22 years, split between Boston and Chicago. It was the flashy Don McKenny, however, who combined with Labine and Chevrefils for a few years as Boston's "Power Line." McKenny provided the finesse in their battles with the Montreal Canadians even if it was the fiery Labine that once hit Rocket Richard and knocked him cold. And then there was a young Don Cherry who managed only a single game with Boston although he played and coached for a long time in the minors. He also enjoyed five successful years as coach of the Boston Bruins but was constantly at odds with management: "I asked for eagles and they sent me turkeys!" As a hockey commentator on the CBC he later generated constant controversy where his sartorial splendour was more than matched by what issued from his mouth.

Photo: Barrie Collegiate Band during the 1953 Flyers celebration rounding the corner onto Parkside Drive.

Leslie Frost: Orillia's Premier

By John Merritt



September 20, 2020 marked the 125th anniversary of the birth of Orillia native and former Ontario premier Leslie Frost.

Frost was born in Orillia on September 20, 1895 to William Sword Frost, a jeweller and former mayor of Orillia, and Margaret Jane Barker, who helped establish the Salvation Army in Canada.

Frost was studying at the University of Toronto when he volunteered to serve in the First World War in December 1915, at the age of 20. Frost was commissioned as a lieutenant and trained with the 157th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Simcoe Foresters). The battalion shipped for England in October 1916. In August 1917, Lieutenant Frost was reassigned from the 157th to the 20th Battalion (Queen's York Rangers) and arrived on the Western Front in the middle of the Battle of Passchendaele. Though he survived the battle, in March 1918 Frost was shot through the waist near Arras. He was evacuated to England, where he was treated at the Prince of Wales officers' hospital in Marylebone. In December 1918 Frost was shipped to a hospital in Canada on the advice of a medical review board. He was finally released from hospital in September 1918 and officially dis-

charged from service in 1919 with the rank of captain.

Frost went on to study law at Osgoode Hall, graduating in 1921. With his brother, Cecil Gray Frost, he purchased a law practice in Lindsay. Initially, the two brothers rented a former general store at Pleasant Point north of Lindsay and commuted to town by steamer. Frost bought the Pleasant Point property in 1925, later converting it into a family cottage.

Long an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Frost was first elected to the provincial legislature in 1937 and never lost an election for the remainder of his career. He served as provincial treasurer and minister of mines in the Cabinet of PC premier George Drew from 1943 until 1949, when he became leader of the Progressive Conservatives (and premier of Ontario) after Drew retired to pursue federal politics.

With his small-town values, progressive politics, genial nature and pragmatic attitude, Frost led the Progressive Conservatives through three consecutive majority governments, winning the 1951, 1955 and 1959 provincial elections. His premiership saw great expansion in the role of government in society and in public investment in the economy – from the creation of the 400 series of superhighways, the introduction of the provincial sales tax, and the establishment of public hospital insurance (the forerunner to OHIP) to voting rights for First Nations people and the merger of 13 neighbouring municipalities to create the City of Metropolitan Toronto.

Frost resigned as Conservative Party leader in 1961, at the age of 66. He was succeeded by John Robarts.

After retiring from politics, Frost remained heavily involved in governance, serving on the Board of Governors of the University of Toronto as well as on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Montreal, Canada Life, and other corporations. He also served as Chancellor of Trent University from 1967 to 1973.

During his retirement, Frost was also an avid naturalist and amateur historian, publishing the books *Fighting Men*, about the experiences of Orillia soldiers in WWI, and *Forgotten Pathways of the Trent*, which challenged previous historians' conclusions about First Nations trade and warfare routes through southern Ontario. In 1969 he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada. He died in Lindsay on May 4, 1973, at age 77.

Farming may continue on Indigenous archeological site in Barrie

by John Merritt

A major real estate company has recently applied to the City of Barrie for permission to continue farming operations on an Indigenous archeological site in the city's south end.

The Molson site is a registered archeological site near Harvie Road west of Highway 400 in the south end of Barrie. It is believed to contain the remains of a 400-year-old Wendat village which at its height housed more than 400 people in as many as 12 longhouses.

The Wendat, perhaps better known by the name "Huron" given to them by French explorers in the 17th century, were an Iroquoian people who lived in what is now Simcoe County almost 600 years ago. They were unlike many other First Nations peoples in that they were farmers who lived in permanent villages made up of longhouses surrounded by a pali-

sade and fields of corn, beans and squash. The Wendat were the people encountered by the French explorers when they first arrived here in 1615. By the 1640s, they had been driven from their homeland by disease, war and famine exacerbated by contact with Europeans.

Today, it is believed that much of the Molson site lies under land now owned by SmartCentres, the Canadian real estate company that specializes in large commercial properties, most notably Walmart. Although the company has no immediate plans for developing the property, it has rented out 87 acres of the land for soybean and corn production since 2014. SmartCentres recently applied to the City of Barrie for an extension to a temporary use bylaw allowing it to continue renting the land for agricultural use. If approved, the temporary use bylaw would permit

agricultural activities to continue on the property until 2023 – and SmartCentres has not dismissed the possibility of developing the site after that time.

The Molson site is one of the few known remaining undeveloped Indigenous sites in southern Ontario. Experts fear that further disruption of the soil through farming may compromise the historical value and degrade the archeological integrity of the site.

City staff have recommended that the property undergo a Level 2 archeological examination whenever SmartCentres wishes to further develop the property. It does not appear that any archeological assessment is required to extend the temporary use bylaw for the land. A staff report about the issue will be submitted to the City of Barrie's Planning Committee sometime this fall.

Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society

Run out of reading materials to get you through the winter? Select from TWGHS's local history titles and settle down in a comfy chair. Prices are as listed, plus shipping costs.

Beeton 1874-1974 by Bert Platt. TWGHS, 2019. 260 pages. 5th edition, now including Index of Names. \$20.00

Cemetery Inscriptions Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Townships. With historic notes. TWGHS, 1982. 339 pages. Digital Searchable Edition. \$10.00

Diary of Daniel H. Rogers for the Year 1859. TWGHS, 1984. 57 pages. \$2.00.

Forty Years in the Forest: Reminiscences From the Pen of a Backwoodsman (1820-1868) by Richard Rourke. TWGHS, 1987. 150 pages. \$20.00

Index to Tecumseth Township: The Unforgettable Past by Mary Drury. TWGHS, 2006. 111 pages. Digital Edition. \$10.00

New Tecumseth: The New Town With a Long Past. TWGHS, 1993. 45 minutes. Won the OHS Dorothy Duncan Award. Now available in DVD. \$10.00

Newton Robinson: A History of the United Church and Community, 1841-1987 by Bernice Merrick Ellis. Newton Robinson United Church, 1987. 66 pages. \$5.00

Pine Hill Farm, West Gwillimbury Township by Margaret Durham Vanderploeg. Includes *A Typical Example of Immigration into Canada in 1819* by Christopher Armstrong. TWGHS, 1984. 24 pages \$2.00

Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society: Our First Forty Years 1978-2018. Compiled by Janine Harris-Wheatley, June Chambers, Helen Yielding. Edited by Mark Burchell.

TWGHS, Revised and Corrected, 2019. 178 pages. Other history groups might find this a useful resource. The book is not sold at a profit but may be obtained for a reimbursement of the cost recovery payment of \$20.00.

William Armson, 1784-1858: Soldier, Settler, Politician. *Biography of the first elected Warden of Simcoe County* by Kenneth Armson and Beverley Kent. TWGHS, 2017. 200 pages. \$20.00

Coming in 2021 *Tale of Two Roads*, an enhanced and updated compilation of *Life on the Old Plank Road* (Highway 88) and *Travel Down a Storied Road* (Highway 27 from Cookstown to Highway 9) by Bernice Merrick Ellis plus *Heritage Tecumseth* by David and June Chambers and *Tour Tecumseth* by TWGHS members

Helen Coutts Memorial Park Dedication

A new park in Springwater has been named after former Mayor Helen Coutts. Mayor Allen and Councillor Moore joined Snow Valley Developments and members of the Coutts family for the official dedication recently.

Helen Coutts served as Councillor and Reeve of Vespra Township for 6 years and was the first Mayor of the newly amalgamated Township of Springwater in 1994, where she served for an additional 9 years. She served as Warden of the County of Simcoe in 1999. Ms. Coutts was also an active volunteer and served on the board of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Simcoe County Historical particularly remembers Helen for her years as President from 2008 to 2013.

What a fitting tribute to Helen and the Coutts family members.

Essa Historical Remembers **ARNOLD FREDERICK BANTING** **June 24, 1931-April 29, 2020**

Arnold Frederick Banting will long be remembered by Essa Historical Society for his many contributions. Arnold was especially proud of the Sir Frederick Banting Foundation and all it represented. Sir Frederick, co-discoverer of insulin, was Arnold's second cousin, with Banting Memorial High School and the Homestead being named in his honour. "I recall Arnold telling of his dinner at the Banting Farm, just the night before Frederick was killed in an airplane disaster in Newfoundland in 1941." according to Olive Lee.

Arnold attended Ivy Public School, Thornton Continuation School then Barrie Central Collegiate. He was very active in South Simcoe Junior Farmers and assisted his father Lee on the Banting Farm 9th Line of Essa south of Ivy. Arnold married Florence Alberta Pratt in October 1959 and became father of Ian in 1963.

Arnold was a Lay Minister at several local churches for a number of years. He regularly officiated at burials, frequently visiting with the

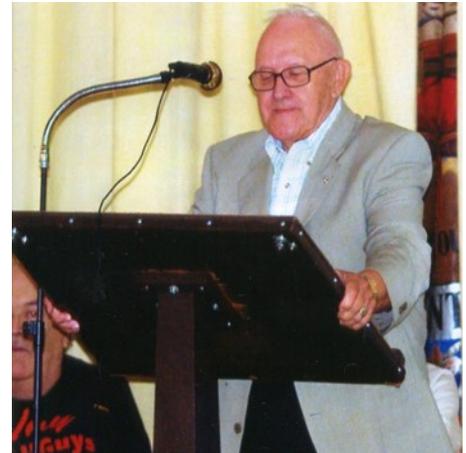
families several times so he would know them before a funeral service. Arnold and Florence joined Essa Historical Society in 2000, and he continued with his funeral duties. Arnold held a number of positions with Essa Historical Society. He was Historical Sites Chairperson for 4 years, Director for 4 years, Vice-President for 2 years, and President for 6 years.

Secretary Olive Lee remembers him as "my go to person". A tremendous assistance to the society, Arnold could be counted on for precise, measured, to the point advice. Current President Richard Blanchard added that Arnold was a great source of historical knowledge about the township. With roots back to the settlement of the township, he always seemed to be able to provide answers to us. Essa Historical Society will deeply miss him.

Arnold is survived by his son Ian, daughter-in-law Alecia and his grandchildren, Katelin and Ryan Banting.

A family graveside service was held on Monday, May 4 at Ivy Anglican Cemetery. About 30 friends gathered in their cars outside the cemetery to acknowledge Arnold's life and work.

This article is an edited version of the tribute prepared by Olive Lee and Richard Blanchard for the Farm View magazine.



Arnold, Chairperson of *Unveiling Ivy Book*, 2014



Digital Doors Open Simcoe County

Explore some traditional [Doors Open Simcoe County](#) sites without having to leave home. The following sites offer tours, videos and activities that will engage people of all ages.

Member Societies

Archives of Ontario
Library
Contact [Frank Van Kalmthout](#)

[Barrie Historical Archive](#)

Weekly columns on
Barrie Today:
[Remember This](#) and
[Then and Now](#) also
Grand Hotels Walking
Tour on [Digital Doors
Open](#)
Contact [Deb Exel](#)

Bradford/West
Gwillimbury Public
Library

[Coldwater Canadian Heritage Museum](#)

[Collingwood Museum](#)
Contact Susan Warner
705-445-4811

The Cookstown
Community
Development Team
www.CooktownON.ca
[Deb Crawford](#) contact
705 791 2051

Essa Historical Society
Contact [Olive Lee](#)
705-458-9971
Essa Public Library
[Contact](#)

[Friends of Fort Willow](#)
Contact [Bryan Wesson](#)

Heritage Barrie
Contact [Tomasz
Wierzba](#)

[Historic Military
Establishment of Upper
Canada](#)
Contact [David Brunelle](#)

Huronian Chapter, Ontario
Archeological Society
Contact John Raynor

[Innisfil Historical
Society](#)
[Contact](#) Donna Wice

[Museum on the Boyne](#)
[Contact](#) Katie
Huddleston 705-435-
4030 x. 1802

[Orillia Museum of Art and History](#)

Contact Ted 705-326-
9809

Orillia Public Library

[Ramara Historical
Society](#)
Contact [Cathy Westcott](#)

[Simcoe County Museum](#)
Contact Kelly Swift-
Jones 705-728-3721

[Stayner Heritage Society](#)
Contact Tom Scholte 705
-517-5171

Township of Essa
[Contact](#)

Township of Tiny
Contact [Pamela
Zimmerman](#)

**Please contact
organizations
directly for current
information
regarding meetings
as regularly
scheduled events
may be cancelled
due to COVID-19.**