



THE OFFICERS' QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF THE YORK-SUNBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

VOLUME 3 , NUMBER 1

SPRING 1987

The Freshet of May 1887



SOCIETY COLLECTION

P1985.36.1

Officers' Square , Fredericton , during the freshet.
See page 3.

YORK-SUNBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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Volume 3, Number 1 Spring 1987



This is the official newsletter of the York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc., Officers Square, Queen Street, P. O. Box 1312, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 5C8 Telephone: (506) 455-6041.

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The York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1932, and incorporated in 1934, with the aim "to gather and preserve objects and traditions of historical interest in the region of central New Brunswick and particularly in the Counties of York and Sunbury, and to read and publish papers dealing with the same."

Individual memberships are \$15.00 per year and \$100.00 for life.

Editor.....Paul M. O'Connell



THE OFFICERS' QUARTERLY

INDEX	1
PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE	2
THE FRESHET OF MAY, 1887	3
CURATOR'S CORNER	9
THE BARKER/BROWN FAMILY	10
THINGAMAJIG	12
SOCIETY NEWS	13
SOCIETY EVENTS	15
APPLE BLOSSOM TIME	16
THE LAST WORD	17



President's Perspective

As I write, again it is tax time... Have I paid my membership to the York Sunbury Historical Society? Where is that receipt? I guess I am still wondering if now is not the time to buy a life membership for \$100.00 - they are going up next year. How would a tax deductible receipt for \$100 help me this time next year? It looks like others are ahead of me and have paid their memberships. If you haven't please do, I promise to take my own advice.

On the topic of finance, I am pleased to report that a Chartered Accountant firm has looked at our books and generally is favourable towards our financial management. A suggestion regarding the increased pursuit of interest income has been taken to heart and will be acted upon. Congratulations are in order to Fred White our Treasurer and Cynthia Wallace-Casey our Curator-Administrator for their handling of the finances. In our new by-laws, a Finance Committee chaired by the Vice President is called for. Gideon Mersereau, Vice President, will head that committee with Treasurer, Fred White and up to three members of the Society participating. It is hoped that this structural addition will assist with short term and long term financial planning, thereby increasing the long term viability of the Society.

All the best,

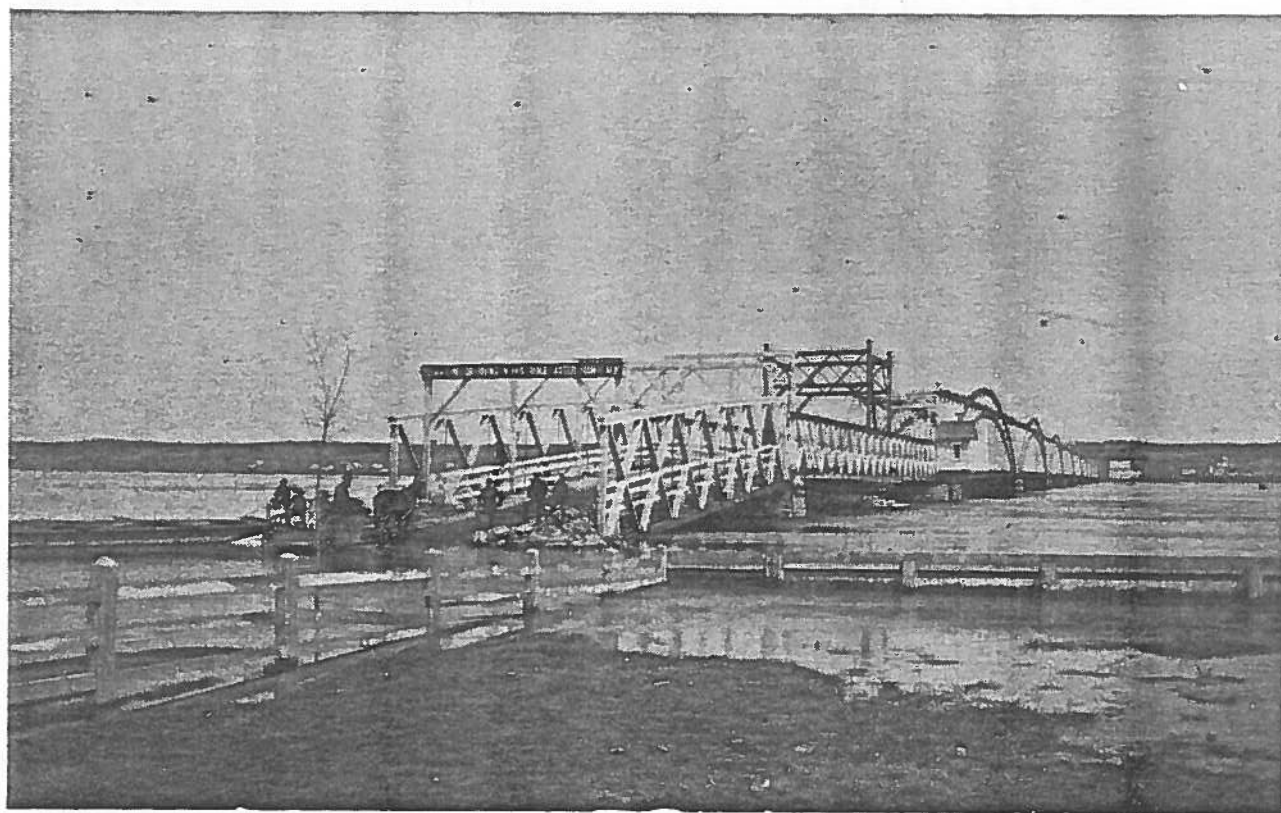
It has been an extremely snowy winter. I was very pleased to receive correspondence from H. Rae Grinnell, Chairman of the Canadian Ski Museum. No, they didn't have any skis in their collection made by the Chestnut Canoe Company, and yes, they were pleased to receive materials telling the tale of The Laurentian Ski Carrier. My father, H. F. Quinlan, now deceased, invented the carrier in 1938. Further, their correspondence indicated that they are going to mention the carrier in their upcoming newsletter. I must admit I am pleased I made the effort to dig through the family papers and copy this information for the Canadian Ski Museum. If you have information or artifacts which you feel would be of interest to the York Sunbury Historical Society, why not dig them out and we'll see if they are a worthwhile addition to the collection. You too will feel gratified that you made the effort! Because of space and organizational requirements, the Society must be selective in its accessions, consequently not all that is offered can be accepted...it's worth a try.

Spring means the rivers once again begin to flow. Those of you interested in canoe history will be pleased to know that the Archives at Mount Allison University have finished the finding aid regarding their Chestnut Canoe collection. The YSHS will be obtaining a copy of that aid in the near future. More on that later...Enjoy the Newsletter.

Harry Quinlan



The Freshet of May 1887



SOCIETY COLLECTION GEORGE TAYLOR PHOTO P1985.100.1b

Old wooden passenger bridge in the '87 freshet....this bridge burnt in 1905 and was replaced with a steel one.

The Flood of 1887

To again this year, highlight a spring flood from years gone by, one might wonder if we were obsessed with the topic. Or then again, one might realize how much a part of our way of life the annual flood-watch is and how it has coloured our history since the first settlers arrived in this Valley.

In reviewing the events of exactly 100 years ago, it is how closely they parallel events of today.

To start with let us go to "The Fredericton Capital" of April 9, 1887 to get an update on that winter, just coming to a close:

"The Past Winter

Whether our winters are getting longer and severer than they were, say fifty years ago, is a debatable question. But there is no chance for discussion on this point with reference to the past winter. It was the coldest and hardest on fuel ever experienced in New Brunswick. From the time that the cold weather fairly sit in, in November last, up to the present, there has been an almost unbroken succession of intensely cold days. In former years, we had very cold snaps but they rarely lasted more than three or four days..."

"We had no 'January thaw' no thaw worthy of the name all through the winter. The snow-fall during the early part of the season was not above average, but during the last month or so large quantities fell stopping railway traffic as well as by the country roads, and seriously interfering with trucking operations...."

"At the present time, solid ice over two feet deep, and a ridge of snow about six feet high on an average, is piled up just on the outside of the curbstone all along Queen Street."

And as we stated in our last Spring issue of the Newsletter, our Accession Book states:

"In 1887 the freshet was entirely a water freshet caused by two conditions. A great hail storm dropped two feet of hail in the Province in March. Spring was cold and backward for some time when the weather turned suddenly warm releasing a greater amount of water than has been known in the St. John Valley before or since."

The Capital again takes up the account of "The Freshet" in the May 7, 1887 edition:

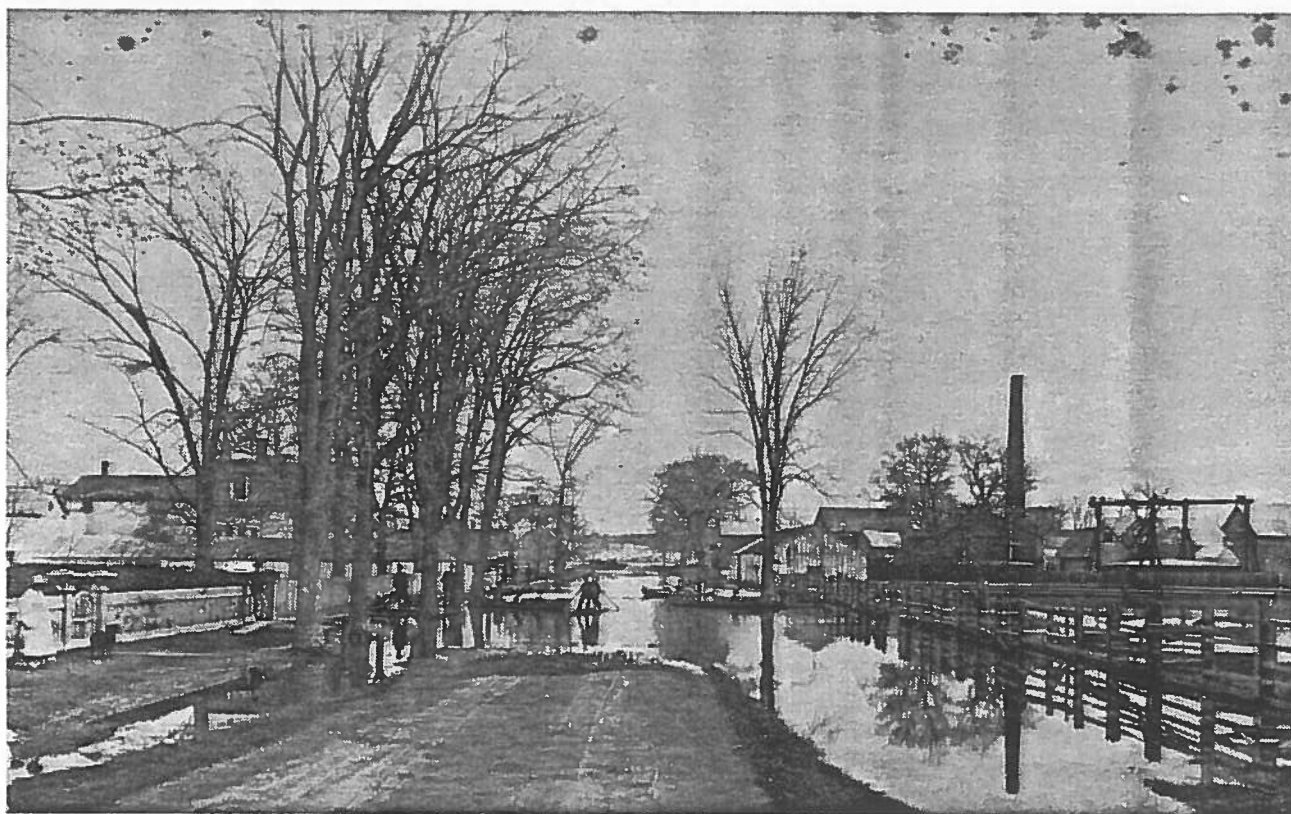
"Owing to the very high freshet, and, as is stated, there being very little frost in the ground, a great number of cellars in the town are filled with water. The cellars of the Kirk and Free Baptist churches are all completely filled, owing to which no service was held at the latter church Sunday morning.

An extraordinary feature of the flooding of the cellars is that it is not confined to the back of the town, as many of the cellars in the front street are flooded to a depth of from one to two feet.

Wednesday's Farmer says that the highest level at that time reached by the river freshet was four inches lower than the highest observed last year, according to the statement of Engineer Ross of the Water Works. Last year, however, the water, after reaching its highest point, receded several feet in a few hours, while this spring the decrease has been scarcely noticeable in several days, and Wednesday the river was rising steadily, and the flood is pronounced the greatest experienced since 1854. Mr. Ross also states that the river was then 20 feet higher than at low summer level.

On Thursday morning the water rose to such a height as to extinguish the fires in the boiler of the Water Works engine, so that the steam fire engine Alexandra had to be put to work to take the place of the pumping engine at the Works. This is working satisfactorily. All of the fire engines used before the introduction of the water from the Works are in readiness for any emergency.

On Friday morning the water had risen the back part of the Officer's Square, and had reached the gutter on Regent Street to within fifty feet of Kirby's corner. By actual measurement, the water rose 7 1/2 inches during Thursday night. During the night water flowed into numbers of cellars previously dry. On Thursday evening the water had arisen sufficiently high on Carleton Street between the Drill Shed and the bridge as to necessitate raised planks being laid so as to enable pedestrians to get on and off the bridge. This morning, the water from the river had reached Kirby's corner along the gutter.



SOCIETY COLLECTION

P1985.26.2

George Babbitt's house on College Rd., looking north

As might be expected all the buildings along the bank of the river had been invaded by the water even previous to Friday morning. All the mills had to shut down on this account.

As the wharves are all submerged, the river bank at Waterloo Row has been used by the steamers. The Steamer "Soulanges" was nineteen hours on the passage up from St. John on Friday morning. The fields back of the gas works are covered with water, as is also the street from the Works out as far as Mr. G. N. Babbitt's, Brunswick Street, between Regent and up as far as the rear of the N.B. Foundry, was also inundated - as early as Thursday, - and water was over a foot deep in the cellar of the Parliament building.

Mr. William Segee, one of our oldest citizens, and a native of the city, informed us yesterday that he had not seen such a freshet as the present since 1832. In that year the water rose to the top of the fence posts in the Officers' Square, which were higher than the present posts, and the greater portion of the town was overflowed. But this was caused by a jam, and only lasted a few hours.

In driving over McLaughlin's bridge on the way to town yesterday afternoon, the water on the bridge reached the bottom of his wagon. Mr. Segee says that there is a large amount of snow yet in the woods, and if the weather keeps warm, we may shortly expect to see the whole town overflowed, as the volume of water in the St. John is

constantly being increased by its tributary streams, the whole face of the country is a vast sheet of water, which has only one outlet - through the narrow gorge at the falls at the mouth of the river at Indiantown, not sufficiently large to give vent to such an unprecedented freshet."

"At the city, between 7 o'clock last evening, and 9 this morning, the water in the river rose only 1½ inches, the night being chilly. This morning the sky is cloudless and the sun bright and strong. If the weather continues warm, as appearances indicate, the water will rise fully a foot more by Monday morning. If it does not exceed this there need be no fear of much damage, as the water must rise fully two feet and a half before it reaches the level of Queen Street in front of the Barker House.

This morning, Brunswick Street, between Regent and York Streets looks like a lake. This is accounted for by the fact that it is the lowest part of the City, and was formerly a bog.

But no such flood has visited this locality since 1854. It is higher now than then.

The dam at Stanley has been carried away. On Monday there was a great jam of logs, estimated at a million and a half at the head of Sansom's mill point, held there by the pond ice."

"The Douglas booms and sheer booms from above the island floated down to the bridge piers on Monday last.

Up river, in the intervals and on the Douglas Islands, extending over an immense area, the ice and water from the river overflowed the face of the country. The only exception was on the small spot of

high land on Sugar Island, on which the Murray buildings are erected. A large number of barns were completely destroyed, and many more were much injured. The damage to the island must be very great.

Among the barns destroyed are two belonging to Mr. Jas. Cliff, on Sugar Island, one each on Shore's Island to John Key, H. Coy, Issac Kilburn and Daniel E.

The backed water and ice which was forced into the cover at the mouth of of Mactnaquac wrecked the large Mactnaquac bridge. The bridge was built but a few years ago and was one of the best and most substantial structures along the river.

All the streams up river are swollen to an extraordinary degree, owing to the large amount of snow in the woods. Down river, in Maugerville, Sheffield and other places, ice, logs, and water cover all the intervals and the bridges are several feet under water."

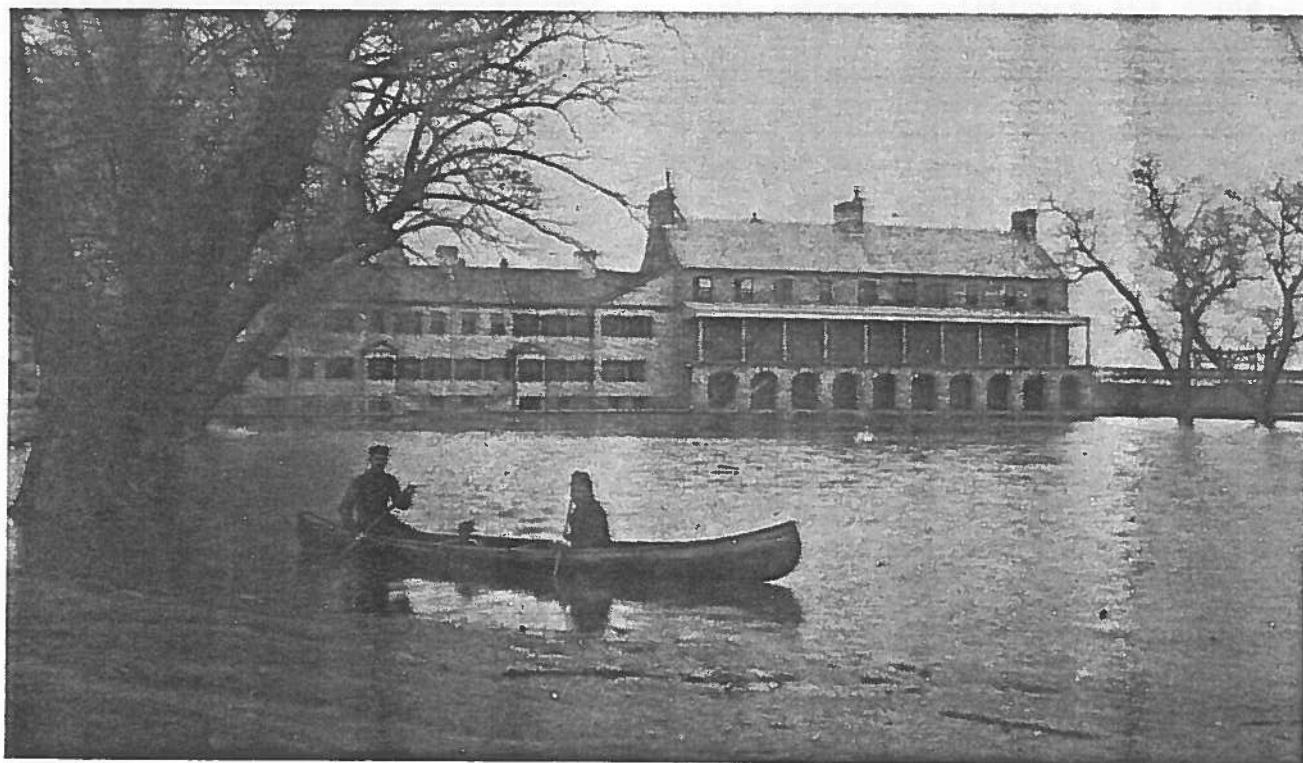
The next issue of The Capital on May 14, 1887 continues with its account of "The Freshet".

"In last Saturday's issue we gave a full account of the freshet up to that time. Since then this has been the all-absorbing matter of interest, as the St. John valley has never before seen such floods. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property have been destroyed in buildings, barns and contents, bridges, highways, fences, railways, cattle, lumber, cord wood, etc. The water in the river in this locality has never been so high as during this week. It is true that the town has been inundated during one or two previous freshets, in 1832 for instance, but it was only for a few hours, being caused by ice jams. This year we have escaped a general inundation, because the ice in the

river had flowed past before the water had risen to a dangerous height, and also in consequence of the important fact, that the streets, sidewalks, river bank, indeed the whole town, have been raised year by year; and that during all the late critical time we have been almost miraculously favored with dry weather. If any considerable quantity of rain had fallen the whole of our streets would certainly have been under water, and must have remained so for days, Inasmuch as the inundation would come by degrees. That we have escaped such a calamity is cause for thankfulness.

The reader will be able to form an idea of the nature and extent of the flood in this city by the mention of the fact that the

whole of the Officers' Square has been covered with water to a depth of about three feet, canoes have been paddled up the gutter on Regent Street to the sidewalk on Queen Street as far as the Officers' Square fence; the cellars of the Cathedral, Parliament Building, Kirk, Baptist Church, Normal School, and hundreds of houses all over the town have contained water to a height of from one to five feet; that the gas works have been suspended, and the supply of gas cut off, owing to the water having put out the fires; the catamarans and canoes have had to be used in various parts of the town, notably on Brunswick street opposite the old grave yard, on the College road, near the gas works and at Gregory's near Salamanca.



SOCIETY COLLECTION

GEORGE TAYLOR PHOTO

P1985.162.1b

Officers' Quarters, photographed by Taylor when the freshet was at its highest. The soldiers, in an Indian birch bark canoe, were members of the old Infantry School Corps, which was in garrison at the time.

On Saturday evening there was a shower of rain. When it commenced, many persons, remembering the circle around the sun that day, thought the long-expected deluge had come, and that the city would certainly be inundated; but it turned out to be only a slight shower, and no rain has fallen since.

Between the floods and the failure of the Maritime Bank the Jubilee year will long be remembered.

Wednesday afternoon a ferry left for Sheffield, for the relief of the people down river.

The Nerepis bridge, the largest in the Province, was swept away on Tuesday night. The bridge, which was partially submerged for some days, was erected in 1874 and was a very costly structure.

Down river, in Maugerville and along the intervalles, the loss of property has been very great. The rising waters drove the people to take refuge in the upper stories of their houses, and rafts and scaffolds had to be raised in barns in order to save the cattle from drowning. From the mouth of the Nashwaak to the Jemseg not more than an acre of land was above water. Boats had to be used as conveyances, and in some cases were tied to the stair bannisters. A local contemporary says on Sunday last Dr. Brown rowed down with a load of provisions to the relief of his brothers, Messrs. Charles and Hanford Brown, who reside at

Maugerville. He found them, as well as their neighbors, in a most desperate condition. Charles Brown had lost several of his cattle, hogs, and sheep, while the remainder of his stock of cattle and horses were huddled together on the highest ground in about eleven inches of water. Stock was being ferried from the lowlands to the highlands on the western side of the river as speedy as possible. As he rowed up to his brother's residence he found the water flowing in over the window sills, and he gained access to the building by running his boat in the front door to the stairs. The house is but a story and half, and the family were unable to remove their cook stove to the upper flat, which was lumbered up with the household goods; and the cooked provisions and canned goods which he carried to them were a God-send.

Dr. Brown states that the water was in 1854 on a level with the window sills on his father's house. On Sunday the water was three inches above this mark, and had risen several inches since then.

All through the week the trains were irregular, and the tons of accumulated mail matter arrived day by day.

On Thursday night the weather became cold, the high wind subsided, and the water commenced to fall. Since then it has fallen fully two feet, and the worst has been seen."



Curator's Corner

Cynthia Wallace-Casey



Owing to the particularly harsh winter which we've been experiencing, it's a pleasure to turn our thoughts to the warm sunny summer. At the Museum preparations are underway for another successful season. Several of the permanent exhibits have been re-vitalized, and three new exhibits are scheduled to open. In May, David Myles will present a lecture on Old Government House. This will coincide with the opening of a major summer exhibition of Government House Furnishings - pieces from the Museum Collection, Provincial Collection, and private sources. Antique connoisseurs will not want to miss this exhibit. Be sure to watch the newspaper for further details.

June will mark the opening of two other special exhibits "Heritage Homes" paintings by Mark MacDonald (illustrating the rich architectural heritage of Central New Brunswick using acrylic construction); and Service to the Crown: Four generations of Fredericton's Barker Family (a memorial to the Late Chief Protocol Officer, Miss Mary Barker, and the Barker family). For more information on the Barker Family, see the article by Brig. Eric Snow in this issue.

These three new exhibits will be featured when the Society meets for the official opening of the Museum for the summer in June. Be sure to attend.

Numismatics will be interested to know that Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Rodger have been volunteering their time organizing and cataloguing the Museum's collection of coins, pins, medals, and buttons. Items of interest in the collection include a love token (worked from a Canada c. 1858-1901 5c silver coin), a "Lucky Penny" souvenir of Niagara Falls, and Confederation medals struck by the Royal Mint in 1867 to commemorate Canada's Confederation. Mr. Rodger has agreed to prepare an article for a future issue of the newsletter outlining the significance of these and other items in the collection.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Professor Francis A. Coghlan and his University of New Brunswick, History 5900 class. During the month of February (as in previous years) five members of this class have volunteered their time and abilities at the Museum for three hours per week. Two have been undertaking research projects on the Officers' Barracks and the Mary Barker Estate Collection, while three have been working on indexing the old accession books.

As well, Dr. George MacBeath's graduate class, "Practical Programs in Material History", have been making use of the Museum facilities throughout the fall and winter. It is encouraging to see the teaching potential of the York-Sunbury Museum being recognized at University level.

The Barker / Brown Family

Original Research...ERIC SNOW
Synopsis.....RICHARD BAGLEY

ENDURING SERVICE TO CROWN AND COUNTRY

The concept of service, to one's family, to one's profession, to one's country, is the foundation and sustaining strength of a nation. Although vital, an individual's or a family's service does not always receive the recognition deserved. The Barker/Brown family(s) of Fredericton provides an excellent example of service to the Armed services and the Crown spanning more than one hundred uninterrupted years.

The family's distinguished record of service to the Crown begins with Robert Smith Barker (1860-1929). His grandfather, Captain Thomas Barker, obtained a Maugerville land grant in 1788 beginning a link from the early English settlements in this area to the present. A schoolmate of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts and Bliss Carmen, Robert Barker was involved in the militia, the Provincial Civil Service, and the Church of England, but is best remembered as the Official Secretary to eight Lieutenant Governors of New Brunswick beginning with A. R. McLellan (1896-1902) and extending to H. H. McLean (1928-1935).

Robert's son, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Clowes Barker (1891-1960), succeeded his father as Secretary, serving five Lieutenant Governors from H. H. McLean to J. Leonard O'Brien.

Following Theodore's death in 1960, his wife Betty Walinsley Poulton Barker (1892-1980) was appointed Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor. The first woman to hold this office, she served four Lieutenant Governors until 1972 during the term of H. J. Robichaud.

Mary Barker (1919-1986) was appointed the first Protocol Officer of the province in 1966 when the office was established by Premier Louis J. Robichaud, a post she retained until her retirement in 1986. During a Royal visit in 1984, Queen Elizabeth made Mary Barker a member of the Royal Victorian Order in recognition of outstanding service to the Sovereign. She is the only New Brunswicker to be so honoured and one of only a small number of Canadians who have been admitted to the Order.

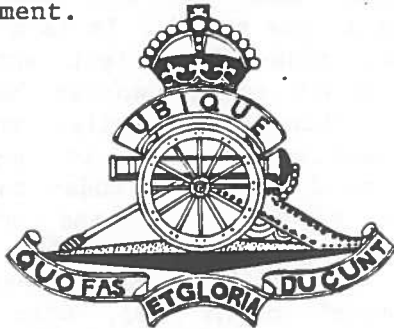
The family's record of military service rivals the service to the Crown. It begins with Surgeon Major Theodore Clowes Brown (1838-1893) of the 71st York Battalion (later the Carleton and York Regiment).



Robert Smith Barker, the son-in-law of Theodore Brown, carried forth the tradition as a member of the Active Militia and retired with the rank of Captain from the 71st York Battalion.



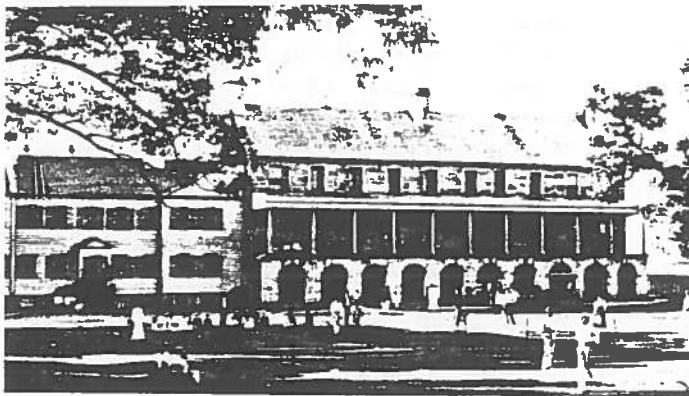
His son Theodore had a long and distinguished military career beginning his enlistment in the Canadian Field Artillery at the outbreak of World War I and ending with his appointment as Honorary Lieutenant Colonel, the 3rd (New Brunswick) Medium Anti Aircraft Regiment.



Mary Barker served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps during the Second World War, rising to rank of Captain, this completing the Fourth generation of service in the Military.



This extraordinary example of continuous service will be appropriately honoured by the York Sunbury Museum when the Society officially opens the Museum for the summer season in June. The memorial exhibit "Service to the Crown: Four Generations of Fredericton's Barker Family" will feature medals, uniforms, photos, scrapbooks and other family memorabilia donated to the Museum from Mary Barker's estate.



MUSEUM SPRING HOURS

MAY 11 THROUGH JUNE 30

Monday through Saturday

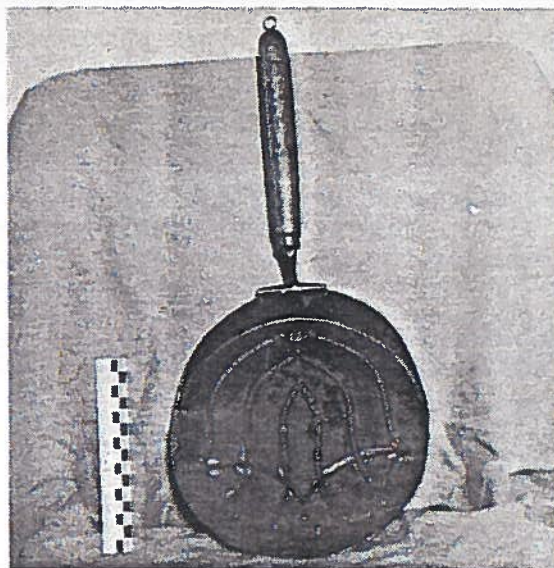
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Thingamajig ?

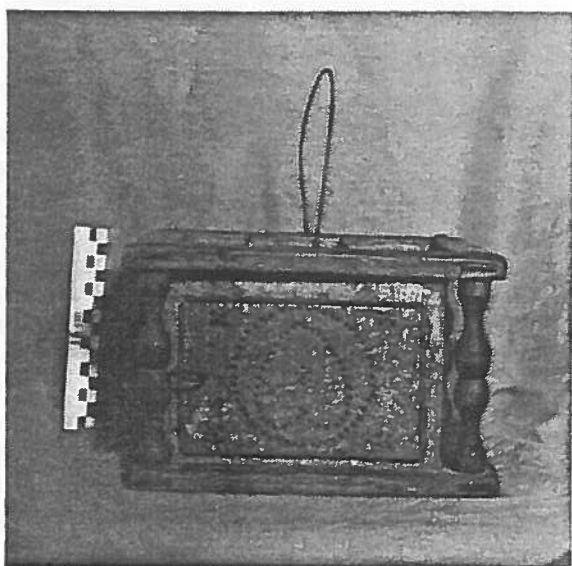
A THINGAMAJIG BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Nancy Reid

The York-Sunbury Museum has an interesting collection of tin and toleware among its artifacts. We have all seen elegant pieces of silverware, porcelain, and fine crystal from earlier periods but tinware represents the household utensils of everyday folks of more modest means. Almost every home has some toleware in their kitchen as recently as a generation or two ago. Indeed, many people still have and use these simple but highly functional utensils. Although some of the tinware produced was plain, a good deal of it was embellished with charming, ingenuous forms of decoration, in the folk-art tradition. Decorating styles varied from pierced patterns in the metal, such as those seen on the foot warmer (next page), to decorative fluting, to hand painted or stenciled floral and geometrical motifs. "Japanning" was a popular treatment of tinware during the 19th century in an effort to imitate the Oriental lacquer work of earlier periods. To produce this lacquered effect, the tin was covered with a combination of mineral asphalt and varnish and then annealed. This resulted in a hard, shiny, brownish-black surface. The colour could be varied by diluting with more varnish, producing some lovely golden brown and reddish tones. The treatment is commonly seen on trays, boxes, and tea caddies that are still available to the collector today.



The York-Sunbury Museum acquired a curious piece of tinware last year, from Mrs. Marion Hansom of Fredericton. The artifact is an uncommon piece - not instantly recognizable, so there was much humming and hawing before research into old housewares catalogues revealed that it was something called a "pie peel". It is a thin, ribbed, disk-like object attached to a short turned wooden handle. Its function was similar to the long-handled "peels" or paddles still used by bakers today to move loaves of bread in and out of large, hot bakeovens. The cook-stove was an improvement over the old brick ovens and, with this innovation, the need for long-handled oven utensils disappeared. However, cooks still needed some sort of tool for lifting hot pies, cakes and breads out of the ovens, hence the pie peel, as we see it here. Our pie peel, which dates from the latter part of the 19th century, has a short wooden handle with a ring on the end for hanging near the stove. It is undecorated, except for the functional ribs on its lifting surface. Tinsmiths of the period also made other types of lifters - some shaped like small pitchforks. This pie peel is a welcome addition to the Museum's growing collection of domestic tinware.



Mrs. Hanson also donated another interesting piece of tinware; a small foot warmer or foot stove. It consists of a tin box set into a wooden frame with turned posts. The metal sides are decorated with a perforated design of a heart in a circle. The box

was filled with hot coals and used to warm cold toes in sleighs and chilly pews of churches or meeting houses. Even when stoves became common fixtures in churches in the mid 18th century. Mrs. Hanson believes that both pieces of tinware came from the Charlotte County area.

Collecting tin and toleware has become a popular pursuit of late. Good pieces are still often found at reasonable prices. The art of tole painting (a whole fascinating subject by itself) is enjoying a healthy revival, with courses being taught in the craft. In the sometimes cut-throat world of antique collecting, with its stratospheric prices for highly prized "collectibles", the quiet charm of tin and toleware is of broad and affordable appeal to enthusiasts.

Society News

☐ The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on January 15th at Officers' Square. President Quinlan presented his informative, as well as humorous, annual report to the general membership. As well the Treasurer, A. Fred White, presented his year-end financial report, and the Curator/Administrator, Cynthia Wallace-Casey, presented the report for the Museum.

At this same meeting, the Nominating Committee, chaired by Dr. Elizabeth McGahan, recommended the new officers and directors of

the Society for the new year. These were approved by the members and their names appear on the inside front cover of this publication.

☐ Continuing with the monthly lecture series organized by Elizabeth Earl, Society members were treated to an excellent presentation by Carol Dilworth, on 18th and 19th century porcelain. Her talk was accompanied with many porcelain examples which were circulated to members to illustrate particular styles or designs.

☐ On March 19th, Society members gathered at the Christ Church Cathedral to hear Greg Finley describe "Bishop Medley's New Brunswick." This presentation centered on the arrival of Bishop Medley to New Brunswick and how he set about to build and remodel New Brunswick's churches to conform to Anglican liturgy of the day. The talk included a slide show and viewing of the actual construction model of the Bishops's centerpiece, Christ-Church Cathedral. As this lecture generated a good turnout it is hoped that Mr. Finley can be persuaded to give a subsequent lecture on this subject.

☐ The Museum is always looking for volunteers - especially to help out with the education program. Currently there is a need for people to make pioneer costumes, as well as to construct garment bags for textile storage, to assist in the indexing of the old museum accession books, and to man the front desk. These tasks would involve no more than three hours of your time per month. Any one interested should contact Cynthia Wallace-Casey or Katie Boyer at the Museum: 455-6041.

☐ A special thanks to Ab Khoury of Maritime Flooring Ltd. who generously supplied the Museum with carpeting to line the storage units for framed prints and photos.

☐ The museum recently received a 371 page copy of Hanging a Legend: The National Film Board's Shameful Attempt to Discredit Billy Bishop, VC, compiled by H. Clifford Chadderton, OC, CAE, and published by the War Amputations of Canada. This extensive piece of work was compiled in reaction to the National Film Board's production "The Boy Who Couldn't Miss" and points out many striking inaccuracies in the film script.

☐ The last monthly lecture, held on Thursday, April 23rd, featured our Vice-President, Gideon Mersereau on the "Trials and tribulations of restoring an older home." Gideon included a slide presentation which took the audience from an early Taylor photograph of the MacLeod Inn and neighbouring warehouse on Waterloo road in the 1860's to actual construction (demolition?) photos of the 1980's. The restorations will undoubtedly provide Gideon and his family, heritage homes, as well as preserve for all citizens of Fredericton, excellent examples of early Loyalist architecture.



Society Events



May 7-9, 1987, Association of Museums New Brunswick
"Aspects of Education"

Location: Doaktown

This will be the topic of the Association's Annual General Conference.

May 12, 1987, Tuesday, 2:30 P.M., New Horizons Meeting.

Location: Society Museum, Officers' Square

The New Horizons Meeting is held on the second Tuesday of every month.

May 19th, 1987, Tuesday, 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

"Museum Photography Workshops."

The New Horizons Group is sponsoring this workshop for interested Society Members. It will be conducted by Peter Gross of the New Brunswick Craft-School and is intended for museum volunteers. There is a limited enrollment of ten and there will be a registration fee. After the introductory session, there will be four more sessions from 9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. on Tuesdays, May 26, June 2, 9 and 16. For further information please contact Cynthia at the Museum.

May 21, 1987, Thursday, 8:00 P.M.

Location: National Exhibition Center

David Myles, Superintendent of Artifacts for the Province, will continue with the series of the "Furniture of Old Government House." Following this presentation, Society Members are invited to the Museum to view particular pieces from the subject exhibit.

May 21-October 16, 1987, "Old Government House Furnishings"

Location: Society Museum, Officers' Square

This exhibit will feature original furnishings of Old Government House, which served as the official residence of New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governors from 1828-1892. Pieces from the Provincial and private collections, as well as the Society's will be featured.

June 1 - September 30, 1987, "Historic Homes"

Location: Society Museum, Officers' Square

Paintings by acrylic construction, by artist Mark MacDonald will highlight the architectural heritage of central New Brunswick.

June 1, 1987, "Service to the Crown - Four Generations
of the Barker Family of Fredericton.

Location: Society Museum, Officers' Square

The permanent exhibit will feature recent acquisitions from the estate of the late Mary Barker, Provincial Protocol Officer.

Apple Blossom Time

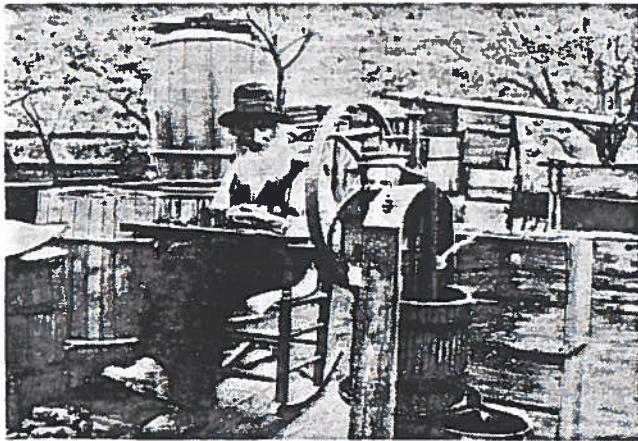
Reprinted Courtesy of
David Folster and the
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Here is something to think about as you drive around the New Brunswick countryside this spring savoring the sweet fragrance of apple blossoms: this province was once considered to be too cold for growing apples.

It took a remarkable man named Francis Peabody Sharp to change the thinking. He did it by developing large orchards of apple and other fruit trees at farms in Northampton and Upper Woodstock. So great was Sharp's contribution to pomological horticulture that, had he lived somewhere else, he would have been famous. As it was, his light remained well hidden under his orchardist's basket. It's an old, familiar New Brunswick story.

Grown Here Earlier

Of course, apples had been grown here, sporadically, for centuries. As long ago as the mid-17th century, French explorer Nicholas Denys was producing apples, peaches, pears and "all kinds of nut fruits and vines" at Shippegan and Nepisiquit.



Francis Peabody Sharp

Similarly, United Empire Loyalists planted orchards at places like Prince William and Kingston. Indeed, what may have been New Brunswick's first environmental battle occurred in the 1790s between army engineers who were building a road at Prince William and a Loyalist, a Captain W. Stewart, whose newly-planted 200-tree orchard stood in the way.

Captain Stewart kicked the army off his property — and wound up getting a six-month term in jail. But the apple tree-planting continued.

As recently as the 1860s, however, the prevailing wisdom was that good-quality apples couldn't be grown in New Brunswick. The problem was that the varieties and rootstocks imported from New England simply couldn't stand up to the rigors of this climate. It remained for Francis Peabody Sharp to develop apples that could.

There is an oil portrait of Sharp, done by his son-in-law Tappan Adney, and it is the fulfillment of what we reckon an agrarian adventurer ought to look like: an intelligent face wreathed in white hair and beard, his left arm folded in front of him, the hand proudly clutching an apple.

Sharp's bearing derived from his distinguished pedigree. His father, Adam Boyle Sharp, was a Loyalist and his mother, Maria, was a granddaughter of Captain Francis Peabody of Massachusetts who fought in the French War and founded Maugerville and Gagetown.

Soon after he turned 21 in 1844, Francis bought his father's farm at Northampton. Later he opened a nursery at Upper Woodstock. He was a meticulous researcher, experimenting with existing apple strains and, later, with new varieties.

He studied, he cross-bred, he planted. The Sharp properties became tiny Edens. Recalled Francis's daughter, Minnie Bell Adney, years later: "My father had a most beautiful garden and orchard, which under his magic hand blossomed and bore abundantly." As well as apples and plums, there were grapes, pears, raspberries, blackberries and flowers which bloomed in profusion all summer long. "It seemed to me in those days," said Minnie Adney, "that I lived in a veritable fairyland."

Message Got Through

Out of all this came many tangible accomplishments, including our first native apple varieties: "Sharp's New Brunswick," "Fameuse," and "Crimson Beauty." He also propagated a new and hardier plum, which he called Mooer's Arctic.

His experimenting was bold and innovative. A century before they were generally accepted, he was recommending dwarf trees and close planting. Drive by a New Brunswick apple orchard today, and you can see that his message has finally gotten home.

He won more scientific recognition in the U.S. than he did here. But New Brunswick was the place that benefited most from his experiments. As Tappan Adney later wrote, "He made a fruit growing country of a province not deemed capable of raising fine fruits of any kind".

Sharp's orchards were a commercial as well as a scientific success, and the family grew wealthy. It did not, however, escape tragedy. Sharp was a gentle, caring father who must have been devastated when he lost three children to diphtheria in a single week in 1861. Perhaps it was the understanding wrought by that experience that prompted him, some years later, to sit up night after night with a neighbor who'd been stricken.

It was dangerous to come that close to diphtheria, but Sharp dismissed the fear. "If you are doing your duty", he said, "God will take care of you".

The neighbor, Maud Henderson Miller, survived, and those words stayed with her all of her life. Francis Peabody Sharp's legacy for the rest of us is no less beautiful — the delicate, perfumed blossoms of this season, to be followed, in God's good time, by the sweet joy that is the apple.

The Last Word

The efforts to get each new issue to press are quickly forgotten once the issue is out, but then quickly remembered as a new issue deadline approaches. Somehow my other tasks always get in the way with my self imposed deadlines, such as spring pruning of the apple orchard. This job is, for me, as much a spring ritual as "flood watching." That is why the article by David Folster about that special New Brunswicker is of interest to me.

While doing research for the freshet article, I had an interesting time reviewing our photo collection, as well as reviewing old Fredericton newspapers in U.N.B.'s Harriet Irving Library. Besides the news about the freshet, I came across some articles on Free Trade and Reciprocity -- in the "Fredericton Capital" of 1887!

As I am involved with the subject of Free Trade in my daily work, I was struck by the similarity of the issues, one hundred years ago. The expression, "the more things change, the more they remain the same" is certainly appropriate. This is a good example of the usefulness of history and remembering the lessons of the past.

I hope you enjoy this spring issue, and spring itself. Happy pruning, canoeing, tax returns, planting - whatever your spring ritual happens to be. And best of all in this 55th year of our Society.....happy reading.



The Editor

