

Heritage Gazette of the Trent Valley

ISSN 1206-4394

The Official Publication of Trent Valley Archives and Trent Valley Ancestral Research
Fairview Heritage Centre 567 Carnegie Avenue Peterborough ON K9L 1N1

© 2000 - 2001 - 2002 - 2003 Trent Valley Archives
From Volume 6, number 4

Peterborough, October 1864

We recently received a copy of the 1964 reprint of the *Peterborough Examiner*, IX, 42 for 20 October 1864. We know that the issue was reprinted because it contained the report on the Quebec Conference, the start of the road to Confederation. The four page paper was printed on paper that was wider than modern papers, and so the reprint besides being on pulp-paper rather than the rag-paper of 1864, was printed smaller so it could fit the width of the 1964 newsprint.

Even so, the reprint allows us to consider many matters.

The *Peterborough Examiner* was published and owned by Alexander Graham, and appeared weekly every Thursday morning. It was available mainly by subscription, one dollar per year, paid in advance. At that time, the newspaper was produced in the Nicholls and Hall Block, on Water Street. This was the building that also had the Mechanics' Institute, the forerunner of the Public Library. The *Examiner* was the Reform paper in Peterborough. The Reform party of that generation eventually settled into the name Liberal.

Journalism has changed dramatically. The whole paper was only four pages long. When papers wanted to make room for more news, the first instinct was to make the page bigger. The whole left side of page one was advertising, as was all of page three and page 4, and more than one-eighth of page two. Advertising covered nearly 65% of the space. The lead story came after the mast-head on page two. That part of page one that was not advertising was reserved for "Miscellaneous" items, and "Select Poetry"; these were items copied from other papers and magazines. In some seasons, this space could carry the proceedings of the legislature. In this particular issue, the annual report of the Great Western Railway was reprinted from the *Hamilton Times*.

The other stories on the front page were chosen for their oddities. "An American Tragedy" was the story of the solving of a bizarre murder in Laporte, Indiana. "How to Die Prematurely" is really a disguised story of how to succeed. "Curious Superstition among the Natives" is about Maori resistance to Christianity in New Zealand, and the misuse of dismembered heads. "Jealousy and Revenge" is about a woman in France gaining revenge on another through the husband of the second. "Riches of the Bible" looks at the Bible as a complete library of books on law, divinity, travels, narratives, young man's companion, and dictionary. The final item on the page is an off-beat US Civil War story.

Essentially, then, all the news is on page two. The lead-off item, "The Conference and the Union," is a full column editorial related to the meetings then being held at Quebec City, a step in a series of conferences that would lead to the Union of British North America. The *Examiner* argues that good definitions of liberty and justice should take precedence over sectional interests. Legislative Union is not the answer, because it does not allow for local opinion on local matters. "The more completely each province has the management of its own affairs the more stable will be the Union — the more united the people."

The second story was a miscellany of news about the US Civil War, drawn from northern and Confederate sources. No story took more than three sentences to tell. Lincoln's re-election as president seems assured. A major battle is looming between Hood' forces and Sherman's. Petersburg is withstanding the siege. Northern troops are deserting, according to Confederate sources. The war will not end before winter. The best Civil War story was in column five in which a letter from a Charles E. Shaw to "Friend Brock" recounts the Battle of Pleasant Hill: "the sight is one of terror and appalling splendor." People are more apt to die of disease than fighting.

The local news features a belated report on a party for the Branchmen of Protection Fire Company, and thanks for their work. The feature commends the plan to establish a debating society so that its members can find more profitable ways to spend

monotonous evenings than “loafing promiscuously ‘about town.’” A fire was set in John Brown’s furniture warehouse, but was detected and put out quickly. Rowdy prowlers removed a gate from James Best’s yard on Water Street “thereby allowing cattle to get into his garden and destroying the trees &c.” Boards torn from the bridge over the Otonabee had been strewn on the bridge. And a temperance lecturer was coming to Peterborough, and an art show promoting temperance was playing in Omemee. At town council, the big items were that it was illegally building a shed at the rear of the Engine House, and the Rifle company needed \$25 for prize money. W. McBurney died at Smith, aged 54, on 11 October.

The featured local stories in this issue were the prize lists for the Asphodel, Belmont and Dummer Agricultural Show held at Norwood on Tuesday, 11 October; and the Dummer and Douro Agricultural Show held at Warsaw on Thursday, 13 October. It is hard to believe, but at the first show, John Clydesdale had the best Stud Horse. Other big winners in livestock categories were Donald Cameron, Lewis Lewis, James Dinsdale, Francis Elmhirst, Alex Nichol, R. C. Humphries, Hugh Ewing, John Blezard, John Breakenridge, A.R. Kidd, Sampson Lukey, Hugh McFee, Charles Calder, and John Sullivan.

There were other stories, some of which were fillers. There was an interesting account of a man in Kingston, known this week as the Rev M. Armstrong, who pretended to be a Baptist minister. The *Kingston News*, 5 October, reported, “The man is clever but an absolute scoundrel. The sermon he preached is said to have been eloquent and sermon-like.” There was also a *Globe* story on the construction of a wharf and elevators near the St Lawrence Market in Toronto. The paper also carried a story, with a half column advertisement, from the *New York Albion*, relating of a sale of 250,000 watches, chains and pieces of jewellery by Arrandale & Co, on lower Broadway in New York City. One wonders if the one-third column for Grovesteen & Co, Piano Forte Manufacturers, at 499 Broadway in New York City was also copied for filler rather than revenue.

For the most part, however, the advertisements are windows to the Peterborough of 1864. They are rich in details about what goods and services were available. Some also tell us about the relationships of businesses, so we can reconstruct where people lived and worked. For example, we learn that Tobias Fitzgerald has just moved his carriage and waggon establishment to a commodious building at Brock and Water, across from the Court House Park. McWilliams and Isbister had bought out the carriage-making establishment of J & T Douglas, and would continue the enterprise. In a full-column advertisement running since February 1864, Thomas Bletcher, the agent at the Sewing Machine Depot and for Bletcher’s Canadian Clothes Wringer, said he was over Samuel White’s Shoe Store and directly opposite W. Cluxton’s store on George Street; he directed customers to enter by the Hall door, between White’s store and I. Robinson & Co’s. Samuel White advertised that he was on George Street, at the sign of the large boot. John McMillan, tailor, had moved to Simcoe Street where he occupied a former Nicholls and Hall office, next door to R. Patterson & Co’s boot and shoe store. R. Patterson described his location as in Nicholls and Hall’s old stand, Simcoe Street. John McClelland announced 6 July 1864 that he was from Manchester, England and had taken over the George Street stand of the late Joseph Dixon. His main competition in the sale of English and Swiss watches was evidently J.R. Ormond. Dr Thomas Poole announced he had just come from the eastern part of the county and his office and house would be on Water Street, across from the Market Square. Edwin Poole announced that he was selling furniture from a ware room at George and Sherbrooke, near his furniture factory. Elsewhere, he described himself as a cabinet maker, upholsterer and undertaker. D. Cadotte, next to Caisse’s Hotel on George Street, was selling to “farmers and others” teas, rice, barley, wines and whiskeys; he also wanted to buy 10,000 pint and quart bottles.

At the lately opened Montreal House, calling itself “The Cheapest Store in Town,” James W. Dunnet was selling dry goods and groceries; he was also buying 200 firkins of dairy butter at top prices. Leslie & Fairweather, a new dry goods store, advertised that they were in the Henthorn Block on Hunter Street. Strickland & Rogers, and John Erskine’s Glasgow Warehouse were so well-known, apparently, their ads did not mention location. Other dry goods stores gave general locations, such as J.Z. Rogers was in Ashburnham, and Wm. G. Thomson & Company was on George Street. Wm Lech, who was manufacturing imitation lamb caps as well as carefully making up all the furs and sleigh-ropes, was also importing silk, tweed and felt hats.

William Helm’s Foundry and Machine Shop was located on Simcoe Street, where the city bus terminal now stands. This advertisement, which had been running for a year, spelled out the types of machinery one could expect to get at Helm’s.

J.R. Walton, whose office was over G.W. Robinson’s Store on George Street, had nearly a full column to advertise the sale of insurance and real estate. He was the agent for Scottish Provincial Assurance, Provincial Insurance of Canada and Canada West Farmer’s Mutual and Stock Insurance Co. He was selling 21 building lots on Park Lot 7, near Little Lake, and adjoining Wm Cluxton’s property. Interestingly, William Cluxton was the agent for several fire and life assurance companies.

We can learn in different ways about the place of alcohol in Peterborough. H. Calcutt announced that he had obtained the patent for an upright corrugated tubular liquid cooler and heater which he was prepared to sell to brewers. He claimed, depending on size, he could cool beer directly from the boiler at the rate of five to one hundred gallons per minute. This meant that brewers could brew in the hottest season without fear of the beer going sour. H. Calcutt, Peterborough and T. Cochlin of Hastings were selling a brewery in Hastings. George Mitchell, at St George’s Saloon claimed to be the sole local agent for

Creighton's Superior Ales and Porter. Lewis Glover, was the sole agent for Copland's Pale Ale. James Campbell, on Hunter Street, was selling Gooderham and Worts whiskey as well as superior brandies and wines for "medical purposes", champagnes, St Julien Claret, Guinness' Dublin Porter, and Aldwell's ales and porter. John Watterson, at the sign of the British Flag, was a dealer in liquors, wines, and beer as well as for groceries and provisions. There were a few ads for the sales of elixirs and pain killers. Perhaps related, since it promoted temperance, was the Zographicon of Pilgrim's Progress, and 100 other paintings, painted by a German painter, George Wonderlick; this was running at Victoria Hall; elsewhere, William Coulter, proprietor of Victoria Hall, announced it was for sale.

Hotels also had bars. Louis McGregor announced that he had re-taken the American Hotel, Peterborough, and it was completely renewed and refurnished. Thomas Hewitt had just taken over the North American Hotel in Lakefield. P. Huffman, running Lawson's Hotel at the corner of George and Brock streets, advertised rooms for one dollar a day. Taylor's Hotel in Ashburnham was available for renting by contacting P. Wood; this ad had run since June 1863. George Sedgewick was also letting his Ashburnham hotel, which came with a small shop and with a private house in behind. Robert Hunter was selling a hotel and tavern in Bobcaygeon. The only other hotel mentioned was for the Western Hotel in Rochester NY, the third door south of the New York Central Railroad depot. The New York Central Railroad had an ad announcing its times from Rochester to Buffalo and to the Suspension Bridge at Niagara Falls. The Steamer "Empress" provided daily service to Rochester, across Lake Ontario; the agent was based in Kingston.

There were other advertisements related to transportation. Lewis McGregor was the agent for freight on the Royal Mail Steamer, the "Ogemah", and for stages between Peterborough and Mud Lake (now Bridgenorth). J. A. Johnson was the proprietor of the Norwood and Peterboro' Stage leaving Norwood on Tuesdays and Fridays at 7 am and returning at 2:30 pm; orders were left at the Huffman House in Peterboro or at the International Hotel in Norwood. The Royal Mail Stage ran daily between Peterboro' and Keene. The Port Hope and Peterborough Railway had mail trains and mixed trains, serving the two towns and making connections at Milbrook for Lindsay. George A. Cox, at the Montreal Telegraph Office, in Hopkins' Block on Simcoe Street, was selling tickets for steamships from Montreal to Londonderry, Glasgow or Liverpool, and was the agent for the British and American Express Company. He also cautioned against buying tickets number 219 to 240 as these had been stolen from his office on 30 August. John Might, who had been a saddler and harness maker for 30 years, also offered "trunks, valises and travelling bags." White and Eastland had livery stables on Hunter Street.

Several people sold groceries. Whyte's was selling apples and taking orders for fruit from his stand, opposite the post office. D. McNaughton, Family Grocery, had just received smoked hams. D. Sutherland was buying barley and oats in Ashburnham. Lewis Dorland was grinding wheat into flour in Douro. A. Williams' Grocery on George Street ran several little ads for groceries, tobacco, crockery and glass ware. W. Cluxton was selling flour by barrells from the Allandale mill. H.D. Arkland had opened a fruit depot west of Brodie's Hotel in Port Hope.

Local hardware merchants also advertised in the paper. Robert Hamilton's was on George Street, at the sign of the circular saw. Millar & Bertram's, both retail and wholesale, carried German sheet glass, and paints and supplies. Wm. N. Kennedy had just moved to a store west of Stewart House on Hunter street where he stocked room paper and interior decorating supplies. His main rival seemed to be Thomas Menzies, who also advertised as a bookseller. Thomas Fife, Otonabee, was selling a new threshing machine.

There were also a few real estate ads. William Weir, Percy, had a valuable farm for sale of for let; Otonabee, 1st concession, east half of lots 22 and 23. Joshua Dawson was selling a farm about four miles from Peterborough; Otonabee, 12th concession, lot 19. Andrew McKee, on 14th concession of Smith, was selling a lot on the 16th concession, lot 27, 17 miles from Peterborough. T. D. Ledyard, a Toronto lawyer, was selling 20,000 acres in this area. Fred W. Haultain was selling 40 acres within 1.5 miles of Peterborough, "with good Dwelling House, Outbuildings and a young orchard." J. Campbell wished to let a brick dwelling house on Brock Street that contained 12 apartments. J. Griffin was selling or letting two houses in Lakefield. Edward Foster was selling 200 acres in North Monaghan, three miles from the town. The property of the late William Lannin, on Charlotte Street opposite the railway station, was being sold by Thomas Lannin and D. Hopkins. Thomas Simpson, Allandale, was selling a farm on Otonabee, concession 2, west half of lot 30. T.M. Fairbairn was letting Auburn, the late residence of C.E. Stewart, with either three or twenty acres attached. One major ad, addressed "To Capitalists Lumbermen and Speculators," announced a public auction to sell Harvey township timber limits and a saw mill on the Mississaga River. John Hewitt, Peterborough and Thomas Hewitt, Lakefield were selling their lot and house on south McDonald [sic] Street, part of lot 11.

The *Examiner*, on page one, carried a business directory. On this day, there were cards for Sheriff James Hall, and for W. Sheridan, the County Treasurer. Lawyers were Mr Dennistoun, C.A. Wellar, Mr Dean (whose office was over Ormond and Gilmour's Drug Store), George Edmison, James H. Henson (whose office was over Lech's Furrier and next to Joseph R. Walton's insurance office), Fairbairn and Dumble's (lending money on improved farms). The dean of local lawyers was Sidney

Smith, whose office was over the Post Office; however, according to a second advertisement, he had, on 19 September, turned his goods over to J.D. Armour, Cobourg, under the terms of the Insolvent Act of 1864. George Frederick Orde was offering mortgage loans on improved farms. W. Philp, a music teacher lived near Union School, and had a quadrille band. Dentists included D. Pentland (who listed a who's who of Peterborough as references), A.W. Kempt and John O'Donnell. A. Smith was the agent for the Bank of Toronto. A. H. McDougall, a land surveyor and architect, had offices over J.C. Hughson's store, across from Caisse's Hotel. James M. Irwin, another provincial land surveyor was based in Bobcaygeon, where he was agent for Canadian Land and Emigration Company. Cornelius Wilson, Norwood, was an auctioneer prepared to attend all kinds of sales.

S.J. Carver, the postmaster, had a list of letters waiting for delivery.

Newspapers, such as this single issue, provide considerable insights into the life of the town.