

# The Grand Dispatch

A brief social history of Port Maitland Ontario, and the surrounding area  
Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association (PMHA) Price \$2.00 - Free to PMHA members

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## Connections and Even More Connections!

Do you remember the television program called Connections? It was a British (BBC) show likely shown here on TV Ontario or WNEO which first aired in 1979. It starred James Burke the overly big goggled brain picking scientist, genealogist, archaeologist, historian and all round genius on every subject that ever affected the world we live in.

Those of you who were readers of the Hamilton Spectator in the mid 1970's and early 1980's may recall a journalist by the name of Angela Collingwood. Angela married my journalist cousin Paul Warnick. My first few readings of Angela's writing did not excite me much. They seemed to ramble around and around. As you know I like to get to the point and end it there and then. Laugh!

I am convinced James Burke got his idea for the format of his show from Angela who by the way also came to us from the Jolly Old rock! But I digress. Angela's stories would start out telling its readers about her problem with City Hall and before you knew it she was writing about the birth of a calf or the moon landing, or some old dog she found along the roadside. Sometimes she even got off topic a bit! James Burke's Connections did the same. It may open with a short story of a dancing girl wearing a flimsy shiny beaded outfit and continue with a caveman carrying a big stick dragging home his new found wife, or some smoky dirty steel mill in the backwash of Russia. In the end it always came back to that beautiful dancing girl and her shiny

beaded outfit.

It was not what was at the beginning or the end of Angela or James' stories; it was the trip they took you on to get where they wanted to go! I soon learned to look forward to Angela's articles just as I did James's TV programs.

When I sat down today to bang out this article I decided to write about the harbour at Port Maitland. I had only typed "Do you remember . . ." the first three words of sentence one, when I received an email from a former cottager of Beckley Beach and long-time family friend. It contained a photo of a boat overloaded with his ancestors; twelve in all – and an operator. Pat Hayes wanted to know if he had seen a photo of that boat in an earlier Grand Dispatch. No he had not. But he did see one very similar. By the way Pat Hayes is a cousin of Matt and Maria Hayes – famous of CHCH Television in Hamilton. Matt has a cottage at MacDonald Beach which is just behind Beckley Beach on Siddall Road.



Photo A Twelve members of Hayes Family and an operator touring Port Maitland Harbour.

Photo courtesy Patrick J. Hayes

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, my wife Carole and I attended a reception given by the Lieutenant Governor at Queen's Park and met His Honour, Mr. David C. Onley, and his lovely wife Ruth Ann. I could go on and on here but I will cut to the chase. While there we met Kate Oxley of Hamilton, who works for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism as a heritage outreach consultant dealing with organizations at a province-wide level. Way over my level! That led to a conversation about Hamilton, which led to a conversation about Cork town, (an old Irish section of Hamilton) which led to an invitation to join her at her Beer Club in the historic Cork town tavern. The Cork town tavern is where my great grandfather Warnick used to visit Dan Sullivan at Dan's grocery store before it became a public house. No matter, grocery store, or tavern, great grandpa still managed to find himself under the influence at every daily visit! Karen's friends at the Beer Club are mostly musical history nuts and manage this museum or that museum.



Photo B - The house on the hill behind the boat is the Fred and Rachel Mastroianni family Cottage. The other building are the Former Martin Fisheries/ Buffalo Fish Company.

Wm A. Warnick Port Card collection

One fellow, who I met, was John Summers, who has been a curator at a number of boat museums including the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough. He currently is curator at the Halton Region Museum and is a watercraft historian. After reviewing three photos I sent him of boats similar to the one Pat sent me he replied with the following information.

*“The images, photo B and Photo C would both*

*be described as “open launches.” They could have been built anywhere from the 1890s to the 1920s, although given that they’re both powered by gasoline engines, I would tend to say around 1900 or later. The boat in **photo B** has what was known as a “torpedo” stern. The boat in **Photo C** may have one as well but I can’t see it in the image. Both would have had a relatively low-powered gasoline engine mounted amidships, probably less than 25 hp. Such boats were very typical of the first generation of pleasure powerboats, and were built in the thousands all over North America, so it’s not possible to say where or by whom they were built.*



Photo C - A typical gathering of tourist taking a boat ride on the Grand River. Wm. A. Warnick Post Card collection

*The Silver Spray is a little more robust, and looks like a fishing boat that’s taking people out for a pleasure cruise in its off-hours. Its lapstrake (having the external planks or plates overlapping like the clapboards on a house) construction and a little more workboat like in its finish. Probably about the same period, probably also a 25 or so HP engine amidships.”*



Silver Spray

Late Earl M. Siddall Collection

John is right on the nose regarding the *Silver Spray*. It belonged to John Percy Siddall who began his fishing career in just such a boat.

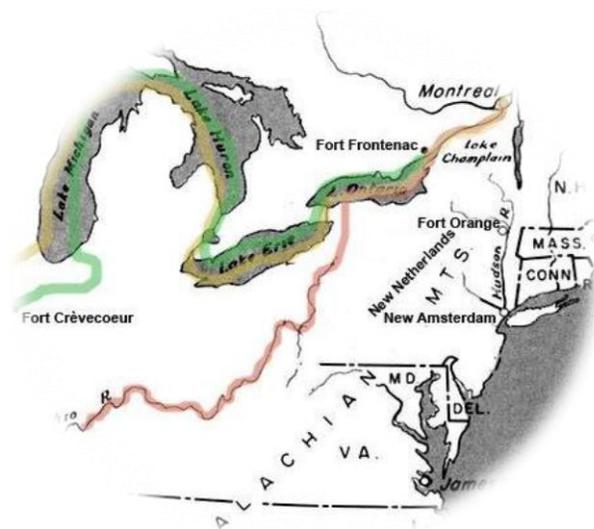
Back to the Port Maitland harbour, which is, if not the biggest natural harbour on the Great lakes, it is one of the biggest. Every time I drive to the end of the Feeder Canal at Brown's Point and look either up the river or down, I see this undeveloped tourist Mecca. No, it does not need to be a Niagara-On-the-Lake, but it could at least better display its own history and celebrate its many evolutions. Before we white's, or maybe this would be best expressed as non-natives arrived and quarried away the sand hill, built the piers, dredged the river, built retaining walls, dug a canal, filled in the marshes, and so on and so on; the Neutral's Indians inhabited this place.

On the Grand River Conservation Authority Site is the following information – 1626---“*Two French priests, Father Jean de Brebeuf and Father D'Aillon provided the first record of Europeans paddling down the Grand River to Lake Erie, although many historians believe the first European to pass through this area on the Grand River was French explorer Etienne Brule.*”

Forty-three years later, in 1669, Robert De LaSalle in an effort to find the Mississippi River and then its mouth travelled via Lake Ontario to what would become Burlington / Hamilton Harbour where according to a book written by a well respected Archeologist and former Registrar at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto named “*The Early History of Haldimand County*” tell us LaSalle was told by a fellow explorer Louis Joliet who had found the Mississippi River five years earlier that the best route would be to go south via Ohio. Here is what Mr. Harper wrote. “*At the meeting, Joliet told LaSalle that the route he followed would take him to the upper lakes and thence to the*

*Mississippi. He added that it was a long and hard road which could be shortened by going overland to the Ohio at the south. Since LaSalle was confident that the Mississippi flowed to the East, he decided to take the easier course pointed out by Joliet, and so altered his route, avoiding the Grand River.*”

From the Grand River Conservation Authority we read – 1669---“*The French explorer Robert de LaSalle, and priests Rene de Brehant, de Galinee and Francois Dollier de casson, were part of an expeditionary mission that was to follow the northern shore of Lake Erie. In September, likely near present-day Hamilton LaSalle became ill and left the party to travel back to Montreal. But Galinee, Casson and their party made the trek to the Grand River. They travelled eight days by canoe down the river to its mouth at what is now Port Maitland, then headed west and spent the winter near Long Point.*” Please forgive me my French or lack thereof!

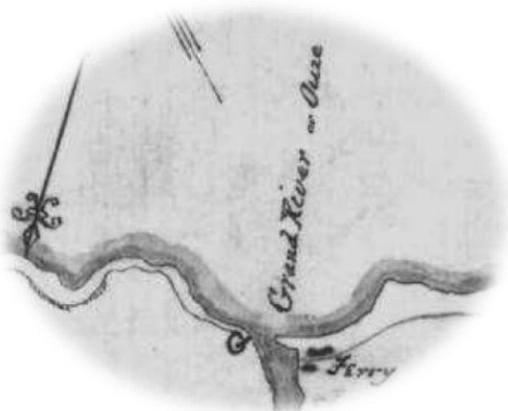


La Salle's Campaigns to the Mississippi.  
The trip through the Grand is in Green.

Map from the Internet.

It seems we have two reliable sources here, yet both differ on important pieces of the information. Did LaSalle continue looking for

the Mississippi River, or did he return to Montreal due to his illness? Did LaSalle or his team make their way to Port Maitland or did they avoid it completely? These two differing statements could send me on a very long journey just to discount one while confirming the other. What I have done is go to the famously inaccurate internet and found a map diagramming LaSalle's three missions attempting to explore the Mississippi. Only one of the trips according to this map takes him to Burlington then to Lake Erie seemly down the Grand River. In a description found separately of this trip (also from the internet) LaSalle makes it all the way to Fort Crevecoeur in what I believe would be today the state of Illinois in the USA, where he leaves his party behind to return to Fort Frontenac (Kingston ON) for supplies. This would mean that LaSalle, himself visited Port Maitland. I am certain this is incorrect!



This is a map of Port Maitland in 1815, with the lake to the top. Note the trail along the lake.

Wm. A. Warnick Collection

White settlers began to affect the river's mouth as early as 1815 when, by then, a ferry had been instituted at the mouth of the river. One must remember in 1815, there were no piers and the mouth of the river would often silt up to the extent it could be walked across. The first ferry was not a self-propelled vessel, but rather would have been a horse drawn wagon or maybe a barge drawn by a horse.

Of course, the War of 1812 had some effect on our harbour; not during the war, but after when the Grand River Naval Depot was built on the east side. In 2012, an archeological assessment was conducted in east Port Maitland to learn about mysterious possible graves. There will always be some difference in opinion between myself and some others involved in this assessment. Then again that is what makes history so interesting.



This is a cairn in Stanford ON, commemorating our namesake Sir Peregrine Maitland. The one at Brown's Point will not be anywhere near this high, but will have a similar shape and be made of stone, some from off our own lakeshore.

There was good indications that bodies may be found but in my mind there was also a good chance that any bodies that may have been buried there were long gone due to quarrying of the sand for concrete and railway track winter traction. In the end even to my disappointment no bodies or remnants of bodies were found. Still this dig and what was hoped for ought to be remembered. As result of Sylvia Weaver's extensive work, Port Maitland, "On the Grand"

Historical Association (PMHA) announced on March 5<sup>th</sup> that pending the approval of Haldimand Council and a funding drive, a cairn will be placed at Brown's Point. It will provide a short history on four subjects. They will be, the Grand River Naval Depot, Commercial fishing at Port Maitland, The Feeder Canal including the Port Maitland Lock, and finally the archaeological assessment conducted at Beckley Beach in 2012.

Back to the harbour, or at least what has happened in and around it. My guess is if you were to ask people who knew a tidbit about Port Maitland what stands out to them depending on their age, would be "fishing or tourism, or those smelly factories! Well, those smelly factories are gone now. The operative word here is smelly. I will never knock the industries that remain who one might call descendents of those earlier smelly factories. They have been great supporters of PMHA and The Grand Dispatch.



Unfortunately I do not have a good photo of the Commercial Fish tugs lined up along the west shore. However, this photo will surprise many of you. It is of the fish houses when they were on the north side of the Feeder Canal.

William A. Warnock photo collection

Commercial fishing remains, though it is only a shadow of what it once was. Many will recall looking from east Port Maitland across the river and seeing a quarter mile of sparkling white fish tugs lined up at their respective docks. Behind each boat was a red tar papered fish processing house that also held their dry nets and various

pieces of equipment needed to be a successful commercial fisherman. In my younger days, east Port Maitland also housed up to 8 boats in my younger days. These boats also had fish houses serving similar purposes as those in west Port Maitland. Each afternoon, a truck or maybe on a good day two trucks, would arrive from Finley Fisheries in Hamilton, or maybe the Kobe Brothers Fisheries of Port Dover and take away tons of fish that were packed under ice in wooden boxes, with the fish companies name boastfully printed on the sides and ends of each box. I recall as a youngster purchasing whole perch for 3 cents a pound. When Mom was feeling like being a big spender she might have to pay 9 cents a pound to purchase fillets. Fish eggs, were maybe a nickel a pound. They were great fried in a touch of butter with just a sprinkle of salt! Mom never got the hang of it when asked to fry them "over easy"! Today, only four commercial fish tugs remain fishing out of Port Maitland. All are housed in east Port Maitland. They are the *G. W. Siddall* owned by Wayne Siddall, *Just 'n Case* owned by Jim Case, *Lynsey Lenore* owned by Dan Minor and finally the *Lincoln R.* owned by Paul Minor.

Tourism was at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a major industry on both sides of Port Maitland. The picture Pat Hayes sent me is only one piece of the evidence of this. I believe I found over one hundred and thirty rooms to rent in Port Maitland in the early 1900's. Sailing regattas took place here on a regular basis filling all the local rooming houses and hotels to capacity. The overflow went to Dunnville to find lodging. That was above and beyond those who slept on the boats. We still have some very nice bed and breakfasts places at Port Maitland, but so few that we could hardly call Port Maitland a tourist destination. If I sound like I am promoting a change, I am!

(Continue on Page 8)

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☺

Continued from Page 5)

Did you know that on more than one occasion the Martin's of the Martin Hotel where the Port Maitland Apartments now sit rented a barge and hired a band? The barge would be anchored in mid river in front of the Martin Hotel where the band played throughout the evening. Dancing took place on Martin's pavilion in what is now Esplanade Park. Saturday nights in the summer at the Martin's Hotel meant there would be a band in the pavilion or on the river, and Mrs. Martin made sure everyone had good food, drink and great time. This pavilion also served as a Sunday and Wednesday night go to meeting place where ministers of various faiths would preach their words. Mostly, it was Rev. Edward Fairbairn and Rev. Kerr both of Buffalo. I have no idea what faith they represented, but these meetings went on summer after summer.



This photo is of the Jessie Taylor Hotel/Boarding house. Currently the Tom Kelly and Therese Riley cottage sits on this location. Note the sand beach in front. Today the river is blocked off by large armour stones.

Wm. A. Warnick Post Card Collection

Try to imagine both sides of the Grand River before the break walls or the armour stone was placed along its shoreline. The beaches were sandy as was the bottom of the river for as far out as you could walk, and you could walk some distance in 1900. The water was warm and clean enough to enjoy a day of swimming and laying on the rivers' sandy beaches. Yes, our grandparents sunned along the river and swam in it before the almighty dollar became more important. Let me stop here for a minute. By 1900

as mentioned much building had taken place making Port Maitland a tourist destination and these buildings were being damaged by the high water due to the winds of summer and the ice and water of the spring thaw. Our river beaches were one of the things that made Port Maitland a place to go, but they needed protection, as did those hotels and tourist homes! That protection, in the form of large rocks and at first wooden, then finally steel break walls destroyed the access to the river and is one of the things that killed tourism.



Before this and the former wooden break wall were built, this was a sandy beach where Mom could catch a few rays while her children swam in the calm water of the Grand River; not having to worry about undertows.

Wm. A. Warnick Photo collection

Along came the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway (TH&B) in 1915 with its rail car ferry *Maitland # One* and its docking facility on the north shore of the Feeder Canal. Shortly thereafter came Canada Coal Ltd of Toronto who dug what we have come accustomed to call the coal slip. A construction worker drowned during the construction of the coal docks. He and his buddies had a drink or two, too many and took advantage of that sandy beach mentioned above and he never came up.

Artists found Port Maitland a summer home away from the hustle and bustle of Buffalo during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and painted many beautiful and scenic sketches of our natural habitat as well as our many tourist and residential buildings. Many of these paintings were then put up for sale at Bohemian Sketching Club the following winter in Buffalo.

Port Maitland harbour is the birth place of the west Port Colborne pier. Just as the allies during the 1944, landing in France used floating piers to build a harbour named Mulberry Harbour in Normandy the Department of Railways and Canals used floating concrete cribs built at Port Maitland to assemble the pier at Port Colborne.

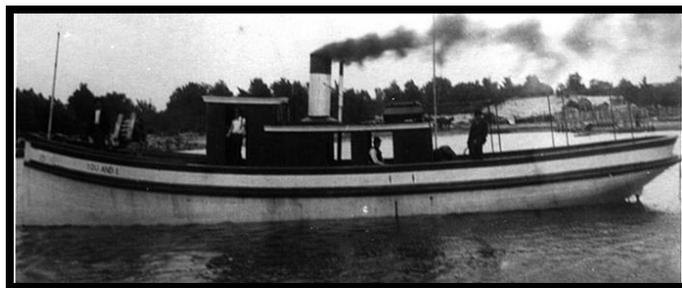
Do you know the land on both the north and south side of the coal slip was dug down a few feet then very large hardwood planking (possibly 18 inches by 18 inches) were placed on the marshy soil? These planks remain there today carrying the load of heavy trucks just as they held up the coal piles in the 1930s, 40s and 50s!

In the late 1950's a number of factories were constructed in east Port Maitland. Heralded at first by most as future employers and large tax payers they were welcomed with open arms. They were good employers and employed a great number of local men and some women. I believe they were given some tax exemption in their first few years but soon became the main taxpayers in Sherbrooke Township. Sherbrooke residents were treated to the lowest taxes and the best paved roads in Canada as result of the tax base these factories provided. Being the type of industry they were, soon discontent became the nature of things and after a lot of negative discourse about air pollution and a changing economy they pretty much left our area.

Today Mosaic remains behind where Georg and John protect our environment, and Innophos continues to produce products which make up a considerable base for foods we commonly eat and other products used for washing. Both are good community citizens and we are lucky to still have them with us. Another is Nadro Marine, of Port Dover, a subsidiary, or partner with McKeil Marine Ltd in Hamilton. Captain Bill Nardrofsky and I have not had the pleasure of meeting but he has agreed to support The Grand Dispatch for the next year. I must meet with him and get his companies story.

The harbour at Port Maitland has seen many changes

since Europeans first arrived in this area. It has enjoyed a healthy and interesting history, yet we have so little of it properly documented. The Grand Dispatches are not what I would call a properly documented history. Hopefully it is an interesting glimpse at what people remember. Hopefully, it encourages others to ask questions and to delve further into what is found on its pages. Hopefully, this story has reminded you of some little fact you have long forgotten, or you discover a new fact about our little village at the mouth of the Grand that happened long before you were born. Maybe you want to know more.



The fish tub *You and I* was used extensively as a rum running boat out of Port Maitland.

Photo courtesy the late Earl M. Siddall Collection

I almost forgot. Rum Running! Not the busiest port on the Great Lakes for running booze, Port Maitland at least has a history of running this repugnant vial liquid to Cuba and other exotic Caribbean ports of call. Depending on who you ask, as few as three and as many as thirty box car loads a month of various brands of liquor were bagged, then jam-packed onto small boats and dispatched from the north side of the Feeder Canal.

Those who know Hamilton's history may recall the story of infamous mobster Rocco Perri who on April 23, 1944, mysteriously disappeared; never to be seen again. It was Rocco's booze that ran freely from our port during prohibition. Some have suggested he was fitted with a comfortable pair of cement shoes and sent to visit the fish in the Burlington Bay. Yes, Burlington Bay. In 1944, Hamilton Harbour was still being called Burlington Bay, though it had in fact been renamed Hamilton Harbour by a Federal Order-in-Council in 1919! I think, if we ever get a chance to dig out the Port Maitland Lock we will find

Rocco's bones there, not in Hamilton Harbour as long suspected!

Here we find yet another "connection." There are two skyway bridges over the Burlington Canal; one is called "The Burlington Bay James N. Allan Skyway." This is after James N. Allan former Provincial Treasurer and Transport Minister known locally as the owner of the now closed Dunnville Dairy. The Dunnville Dairy made the very best old cheddar cheese anywhere – ever! It was so sharp it seemed to cut your tongue!



James N. Allan Skyway crosses the Burlington Canal in Hamilton/Burlington.

It is time to end this diatribe of tiny facts. We have pretty much gone full circle; a small circle it may be. If you can't find something in what I have written to ask me to expand further, then I might as well have not bothered to write this article at all. I surveyed five people, asking them to tell me how many subjects I actually wrote about in this article. Only Don Blunt replied and he suggested there were twenty-eight subjects but qualified that by saying "it depends on how fine you breakdown what is a subject." I have added some more since Don replied! Finally we come to the end of a very long story, the longest I have ever made you struggle through since beginning The Grand Dispatch. Angela Collingwood and James Burke would be proud!

### **The historic clash of two famous men that never made the history books**

By John Hurst,  
Langley, B.C.

Joseph Brant and Simon Girty, two rugged leaders from the brutal backwoods campaigns of the

American Revolution, became intimately associated with the Grand Valley and its First Nations defenders, but shockingly different in the reputations that history bestowed on them. While they fought the Americans together, they did not end as personal friends.



Joseph Brant

Brant, or Thayendanege (1743–1807) was a Six Nations military and political leader, who sided with *Great Britain* during the *American Revolution*. A famous man, he met many of the most significant people of the age, including both *George Washington* and *King George III*. After sitting for portraits in London by famous artists, he died on his vast estate near Burlington, Ont.

Girty, (1741–1818) was born into an immigrant Irish family and kidnapped as a child by the Seneca's, who raised him and taught him their ways. While he scouted and fought for the U.S. when the war began, he changed sides as it progressed because he came to believe George Washington's army sought only to steal lands from the First Nations people. Girty has been vilified ever since in the U.S. as a turncoat who murdered old men, women and children. While he was hunted by vengeful Americans who invaded Ontario in the War of 1812, he quietly hid with friends on Brant's estate lands. The British regarded him in a much better light and gave him a government pension, but controversy has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The campaigns that Girty and Brant led together were characterized as much by organized attacks on settlements in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio as they became guerilla fighters who defeated the Yankees in the backwoods. For the regular soldiers who participated on both sides, the fighting and campaigning were mentioned in reports as "hard service". It was rough work in which Brant and Girty excelled. The latter served with distinction as a negotiator and guide.

In one particular 1780 action, in Ohio near the Indiana border, warriors and members of Butler's Rangers, led by Brant and Girty, attacked and defeated a force of American militia. Later, in camp, and with heavy drinking begun, Brant began to take the credit for their success. Girty objected and spoke out against the famous Iroquois leader, saying that if anyone should take the credit it was his brother George, who had masterminded their tactics. Brant quietly walked away and then returned, striking Girty across the top of his head with a sword. The blade cut deeply into his skull and witnesses swore they could see his brain beating. A Wyandot medicine man was summoned to care for Girty. (Brant later made a tearful apology for his action to Girty's brother.) Simon Girty, in a deep coma, was taken to Upper Sandusky, Ohio, where it was reported another medicine man removed bone shards from his brain, trepanned him and placed a silver plate in his skull.

Simon Girty lived the rest of his life suffering the effects of the blow. He had increasing vision problems and in old age, he lost his sight. The wound left a visible scar on his forehead and in the years to come, he wore a bandanna to hide it. In later years, the red bandanna would become the signature way in which he could be recognized.



Simon Girty

In the years that followed, Simon Girty's reputation acquired a bitter taste among the Americans. He appears as a villain of the lowest sort in several novels claiming all kinds of fiction as fact. In the movies of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, his character is typecast accordingly.

In the 1941 motion picture "The Devil & Daniel Webster", Girty is depicted as a short, dark, wiry and greasy fiend in a tricorne hat, (hat with a three pointed brim) serving on a stacked jury out to apply injustice against a good man. In the television series "Daniel Boone" of the 1970s-1980s, he is further portrayed as a greasy, stockier man speaking English with a guttural French accent and wearing a ridiculously silly skunk fur hat.

In later life, the actual, historical Girty settled on land given to him by the British, after reliable service to the British Indian Department. He built a homestead and farmed at Amherstburg, Ont., across the Detroit River from Detroit. He and his wife raised a family and their descendants live across Canada and the U.S. to this day. Before his death, notables visiting his farm included the great chief Tecumseh and many military figures who served on warring sides when he did.

After the Revolution, Brant continued a distinguished and successful military and diplomatic career. He led missions seeking war reparations for the Six Nations to King George in London and President Washington in Philadelphia. The Americans tried to lure Brant and his people back to New York State but were unsuccessful. Eventually, he received a land grant of 3,500 acres from Upper Canada's Lieutenant Governor, *John Graves Simcoe*. A replica of his mansion stands there to this day.√



John Hurst

John Hurst is the son of Murray and Dorothy Hurst. We old-timers remember his father well as a photojournalist with the former Dunnville Chronicle and later the former Welland Evening Tribune. John spent many summers at his grandparents' cottage at

Beckley Beach; living there for a few months one spring. He lived in Stromness for a number of years attending S.S. # 3 School in Stromness. He began his journalistic pursuit alongside his father at the Welland Tribune. While living in British Columbia he continued to hold a number of journalistic pursuits. It is great to have John on board. He has promised to contribute to the Grand Dispatch on a regular basis.

We would be happy to have others take a crack at telling their interesting historic stories.

## Things that are Meant to Happen - Do!

As you may suspect, my craving for history extends beyond Port Maitland. In 1990 the Pastor at that time, Father Joe Scollard, C.R. while preparing for our church's centennial asked me to join the planning committee. My job became to write the parish history. There was a lot to learn and I set out to learn all I could. One item of interest was that our parish may have begun twenty-three years earlier than we thought. Before our present church; there had been an earlier German speaking St. Joseph's Parish. After considerable work I was able to find the names of what I thought were all the pastors and had all but one photo of them. All the photos for the pastors at the present church were found and hung at the back of the church along with those from the old German church. In one frame we asked for help locating the photo of Fr. Stephen Forester. Letters have been exchanged between me and people in Holland and Germany in an attempt to find his photo to no avail!

Sometime in the past few years I started emailing with a fellow by the name of Ferrie Moubis who I thought lived in St. Catharines Ontario. About a month ago he told me he lived in Holland. Then in the past week he told me he had an ancestor who was a chaplain i.e. pastor at St. Joseph's church in Hamilton. His name was Joseph Moubis. I knew he was wrong. I know all the pastors and he wasn't one of them! Well the next thing I knew I had an attachment on an email which turned out to be a short autobiography of his Fr. Moubis. Fr. Moubis described in detail the little German church and his friendship with Fr. Stephen Forester. Before the week was out I had discovered two additional pastors for the German church and received photos of them. The real shocker was that I received a third photo; that of Fr. Stephen Forester, the man I had been hunting for since 1990! Ferrie Moubis and I have no idea how we met to begin our email correspondences. I am not printing the photos here. The parishioners at St. Joseph's should see them first! Tell me that God does not take care of his long-suffering history nerds!

## PMHA holds its first public membership meeting with guest speaker Joe Farwell.

Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association held its first ever public membership meeting. About twenty interested people gathered in the Garfield Disher Room at the Dunnville Library on March 5<sup>th</sup> to hear Joe Farwell the CAO of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA). With the assistance of his wife Melinda McCoy he went through an interesting Power Point presentation. We thank the Dunnville and District Heritage Association for providing coffee and cookies and a welcoming feeling.

To many people's surprise the formation of the GRCA was not so much about flood abatement as it was about agricultural concerns around irrigation. GRCA has since 1932 worn many hats and names. They are now involved in flood control which is what most of us think of when we think of them. Marsh rehabilitation and tree planting is a very important aspect of what they do today. Camping and picnic grounds are another major revenue generator. Joe displayed charts indicating level of various pollutants showing area where levels of these pollutants were anywhere from acceptable to heavily saturated

Mr. Farwell ended his evening after taking many questions and was presented with a binder of all issues of The Grand Dispatch printed thus far. A cover page was included indicating the date of his visit and thanking him for being our speaker.

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