



Stratford-Perth County Branch



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# More Than Bricks and Mortar

Issue 3- June 2014

## Just Around the Block

Sunday, June 8, 2014  
1,2 and 3 PM

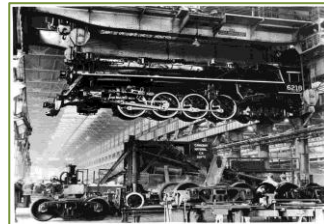


Join the  
Stratford-Perth County Branch ACO  
**Guided Historical Tour**  
around  
Queen Street, Ballantyne Avenue, Front  
and Water Streets

Stratford Heritage Weekend is June 7 & 8. Many events are scheduled including "Doors Open" on June 7, The Branch is participating by offering this walking tour of a group of houses featuring historical plaques.

### GTR Shops (Cooper Site) – Market Square: update

Stratford's City Council passed a motion on February 10, 2014 asking staff to study and make recommendations concerning the Cooper Site within 90 days. In response to CAO Ron Shaw's report, the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee of Council passed a motion at its May 20 Meeting asking staff to look into possible adaptive re-uses of the existing GTR building – a step in the right direction! Branch members and others interested in the site attended the May 20 Meeting. In keeping with Branch contributions regarding the Site, we would hope to see a plan for the rejuvenation of the site that would include solutions to the removal of parking on Market Square. Linking the redevelopment of these two important downtown city sites makes good sense.



The Branch continues to cooperate with other interested groups to inform the public on future possible uses of the site. Remember to go to the Branch website and the Cooper Site page for information.

Branch member, Dean Robinson, is willing to lead a walking tour (6 to 12 people) of the Cooper Site for anyone interested. Please contact Dean at [deanrobinson@wightman.ca](mailto:deanrobinson@wightman.ca)





Avon Crest To-Day

Dan Schneider

## Avon Crest: Stratford's First Hospital at a Crossroads

By Dan Schneider

A century and a quarter ago, in the spring of 1889, a committee of local worthies chose London architect George F. Durand to draw up plans for Stratford's first hospital. The prolific Durand had already designed the iconic Perth County Court House and the city's pump house, later repurposed as Gallery Stratford. The new hospital on the banks of the Avon River was one of his last designs – he died the same year

In the High Victorian Queen Anne Style and costing a little more than \$13,000, the building opened to enthusiastic crowds in May 1891. Picturesquely set back from John Street on a curving drive, it was an imposing structure – symmetrical in plan with a central tower and wings boasting generous bay windows and turrets. High chimneys rose from the roof and, crowning the tower, an iron weather vane. The building's siting and stylistic characteristics are even reminiscent of the much larger Legislative Building at Queen's Park in Toronto (completed in 1893).

Over time the hospital was enlarged with major rear additions, although these were more functional-looking than complimentary to the style of the original. Open-air porches, later closed in, were also added on the southeast corner. Responding to post-war demands, by the late 1940s a new Stratford General Hospital arose across the street (with a tunnel, still in use today, linking the two); the old hospital, after almost 60 years of service, was closed in 1950. In 1955 the building reopened as Avon Crest, a convalescent facility. This chapter in its history continued into the late 1980s when the last patients moved out.

Fast-forward to today, when the building, rundown and about 65 per cent occupied, is home to a hodgepodge of hospital-related offices, including the Stratford General Hospital Foundation, educational services and the wonderfully cluttered two-room hospital and nursing school archives run by the dedicated Joan Macdermid. Outside, the structure has lost many original details – gone are the turrets and the chimneys, and the tower has been truncated. The building is practically surrounded by a huge parking lot and almost no one enters by the old front doors. Overall the effect is rather shabby and forlorn.

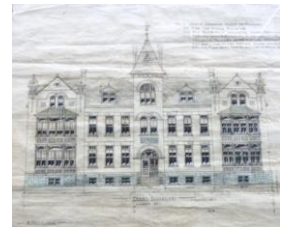


The first Stratford General Hospital 1891 -Stratford-Perth Archives

But big changes are afoot for the old building. No decisions have been made at this point; according to its President and CEO Andrew Williams, the hospital is only just beginning to map out the process to be followed that would lead to a major redevelopment of the site. He anticipates this initial stage should be completed internally over the next six months or so, after which planning for the future use of the property will go public. Mr. Williams is clear that the hospital, since 2003 part of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA), will not be selling the property; this means its future lies in some health care-related purpose, such as a Stratford doctors' clinic like the Wellness Centre in St. Marys. As for the existing Avon Crest occupants, the 2010 addition to SGH has freed up space and they will be moving across the street.

The final decision on the scope and form the redevelopment of Avon Crest takes will be made by the HPHA board, following consultation with the Stratford local advisory committee. This committee, established by the HPHA to provide advice on a range of local community issues, including buildings and property owned by SGH, will no doubt play an important role in consultation with the wider community on options for the future of the Avon Crest property.

On his office wall Mr. Williams has two of George F. Durand's drawings for the old SGH and he expresses his personal view that the coming transformation of the site should be respectful of its history. He also talks of the need for commemoration.



Avon Crest Drawings

Dan Schneider

Will the almost 125 year-old Avon Crest building be preserved? The answer will depend on many things – including the use to be made of the site, finances and the demonstration by the community that it cares about its first hospital. Certainly there are many examples in Stratford and elsewhere of the rejuvenation and repurposing of old, faded but still solid and handsome institutional structures that contributed to the growth of the community and have an important story to tell.

Perhaps the future of Avon Crest could be this: the rehabilitated and partially restored original 1891 building as a splendid historical frontispiece to a strikingly contemporary new building or complex behind. Maybe with a garden or greenspace overlooking the Avon. And an official opening to enthusiastic crowds!



Avon Crest Fireplace Dan Schneider

*Dan Schneider is a heritage consultant and member of the Stratford/Perth County ACO Executive. He would like to thank Dean Robinson (and his great book *For Your Health: Stratford General Hospital, 1891-2002*), Andrew Williams and Brenda Smellie of SGH and nursing school archivist Joan Macdermid for their assistance with this article.*

## Feature House

### Dr. Daisy Macklin House, 196 Ontario Street Built 1907

Daisy Mary Moore Macklin, born on May 8, 1873, was the seventh of eight children of William Macklin (Tyrone Ireland) and Hester Ann Godfrey. Leaving Warwick Township, Lambton County, the family settled in Stratford by the time of Daisy's birth. Daisy was three years old when her mother died. Re-marrying in 1877, William and his second wife, Frances Franklin, went on to have seven children.



The family apparently moved frequently. The 1881 Census finds them living in downtown Toronto. By the 1891 Census, Daisy (now 18) and her family were living in Ellice Township. The family's dry goods business operated out of the handsome Macklin Block (now Family & Co. toy store) across from the Perth County Court House.

Daisy attended public school and the Collegiate Institute in Stratford before following in the footsteps of her brothers William (b. 1860) and Alfred (b. 1868) to study medicine. Jenny Trout and Emily Howard Stowe were the first women admitted to study medicine in 1871 in Toronto and the first women to be licenced to practice medicine in Ontario. Daisy, one of Ontario's early woman physicians, graduated from Medical School, the University of Toronto in 1895.

Following her graduation she conducted a practice in Stratford "but later relinquished that to take up medical missionary work in China" (*Beacon Herald, March 2, 1925*). Daisy worked for a few years at the Nanjing Christian Hospital, founded by her brother Dr William Macklin. Over 100 years later, the Hospital is still open and part of the Nanjing Drum Tower Hospital, one of China's important treatment and medical research facilities. After a few years, she returned to her practice and work in Stratford. In 1907, she moved into 196 Ontario Street.

Closing her practice, in 1925 Daisy went to Toronto for treatment, staying with her brother Frederick. In reporting her death from complications after surgery, the *Beacon Herald* said she "had not been in the best of health for more than a year" and her death on March 2 "came as a distinct shock to a host of friends" in Stratford. Daisy was buried in St James Cemetery, Toronto.

Daisy Macklin and others of her large family remain an inspiration. The Christian faith and a commitment to care for others were central characteristics of their lives and professions.

## Meribah Medical Springs



Stratford in 1881 boasted twelve medical doctors and three dentists. One of the dentists, Calvin Cartwright LDS, had arrived in Stratford in 1869 and set up his office in a stone cottage on Ontario Street where Stratford Place now stands. His house was on the south west corner of Ontario and Nile Street.

While sinking a well on his home property around 1878 for drinking water, the water was discovered to have an unusual taste. According to the 1881 Stratford Directory "after being tested a few times it was found to produce a very exhilarating effect and the parties thus benefitted recommended it to others who seemed to require it to test its virtues."

Dr. and Mrs. Cartwright decided to have the water tested by renowned chemist, Professor H.H. Croft of the University of Toronto. The professor called the water, containing over seven minerals "the best in Canada". As a result the Cartwrights made it available to the general public by erecting baths and drinking fountains. The Meribah Mineral Springs, "offering a combination of luxury and health," opened under the direction of Dr. Cartwright's wife, Lucy. In her ad in the Stratford Directory, Mrs. L. Cartwright, proprietress, listed twenty-six diseases that would be cured by the mineral water. Included in the list were diseases of the kidneys, colds, congestion, rheumatism, nervous diseases, ague and all female complaints. In the 1885 Stratford Directory, Dr. Cartwright continued his dental Practice in Stratford but there is no listing in the directory of that year for the Meribah Medical Springs and its astonishing waters.

## News from the Branch's Annual General Meeting

An illustrated presentation by the author of *Old Ontario Houses*, Tom Cruickshank, preceded the meeting. A revised edition of this publication which features houses of various architectural styles from across Ontario was released in 2009.

Historical Plaques were presented to:

- The Queen's Inn, the third nonresidential location featuring a plaque
- Paul King for his St Marys residence, the first plaque there

The President, Ted Hales, summarized Branch activities of the past year:

- launch of the Branch's website
- publication of a Branch newsletter, *More Than Bricks and Mortar*
- presentation of the "*The Cobourg Street Stroll*," an historical walk and house tour of five historical houses on Cobourg Street in September during Culture Days in Stratford, September 28 & 29, 2013
- co-hosting a "*Building Stories*" workshop with the University of Waterloo
- continuing involvement with the Grand Trunk Railway Shops (Cooper Site) issue
- ongoing participation in the Market Square re-development process
- Ted also noted the Branch's 5th anniversary of its founding in 2009

The following **Slate of Officers** was elected for 2014:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Past President:</b>           | Edward Hales                                      |
| <b>President:</b>                | Rick Huband                                       |
| <b>Vice Presidents:</b>          | Sandra Huntley<br>Margaret Murray Nicholson       |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>                | Dianne Chisholm                                   |
| <b>Secretary:</b>                | Paula Brook                                       |
| <b>Membership Chair:</b>         | Mary Lou Drown                                    |
| <b>Plaque Co-Chairs:</b>         | Carole Huband<br>Dan Schneider                    |
| <b>Members at large:</b>         | Ann Reynolds<br>Kim Foster<br>Denis Beatty        |
| <b>Linking Members at large:</b> | Thor Dingman<br>Eleanor Kane<br>(to be confirmed) |

## President's Message

On behalf of my colleagues on the new Executive I would like to express our appreciation to Ted Hales for his sage leadership since the Branch was formed and to the other retiring members for their magnificent contribution.

In the weeks ahead we will reach out to each of our members to solicit your ideas and suggestions for the term ahead.

In the meantime, have a safe and happy summer.

Rick Huband  
President

## Architectural Conservancy Ontario

In the eighty years since its founding, ACO has admirably fulfilled its principles and mandate to educate and to advocate for Ontario's heritage. Given the challenges of the twenty-first century, how best can ACO continue its mission and work?

At the April 5<sup>th</sup> Provincial Council Meeting in Walkerton the design firm Hambly & Woolley Inc. presented its Report and *branding* recommendations. Council adopted a new logo (replacing the Barnum House) to be officially launched this September.

All branches and provincial office will use the new logo and name of *Architectural Conservancy Ontario*. The new ACO logo can be accompanied by a distinctive image, drawing or photograph clearly identifying the local branch.

The logo was presented to the May 5<sup>th</sup> AGM and members are asked to make suggestions about a recognizable Stratford and Perth County image, drawing or photo to accompany the logo.



STRATFORD/PERTH COUNTY

## 2016 Conference

ACO and Community Heritage Ontario (CHO) have an annual conference which takes place in various locations across Ontario. The 2016 event will be held in Stratford and St Marys and will be organized by a planning committee comprised of representatives from the Branch, Heritage Stratford, Heritage St Marys, the Provincial ACO, CHO and the host municipalities of St. Marys and Stratford. Branch members are invited to volunteer as there will be many details to be organized.