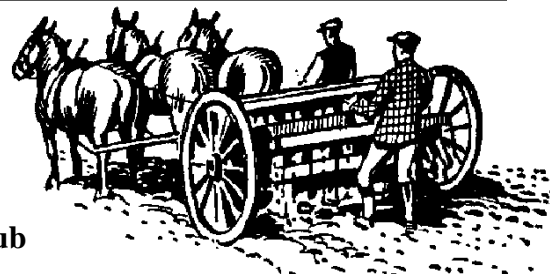


Inside:

- Letter from the Prez.
- 2016 General Meeting Highlights.
- Summer Student.
- Special Occasions.
- The 25th Annual Machinery Show.
- Other Events.
- Club Donations and Restorations.
- Looking Ahead to 2017 and much, much more!

HORIZON



A newsletter for the members of Hope Agricultural Heritage Club

2016 Edition

Hello Members and Friends,

It's hard to believe the year is almost over! It may be by the time you read this. And it was a hot one at that. The forecast [if you can believe it] is for a hard winter with lots of snow. I will let you know in the spring what happens☺

One of the first things that I would like to mention is the past Antique Machinery Show. Thanks to all members, friends, directors, exhibitors, and sponsors that contributed to the show. The response for help was fantastic. Although it rained a little [never happened all the rest of the summer] on Friday and Saturday, the show still went on. The grain could not be combined and thrashed, so some of our demonstrations could not be shown.

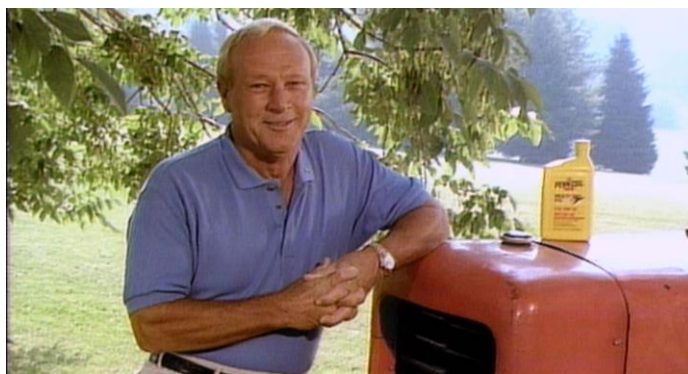
I would like to thank Barry Adamson and family for the sound system, tents, office, and barbeque Saturday night and of course the entertainment.

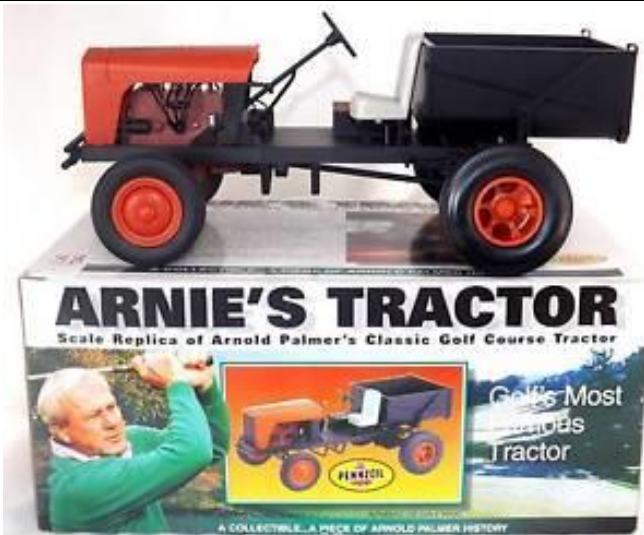
The Open House, which was held on October 1st at the Antique Machinery Centre, was well represented by our members and the public. Again, thank you.

During the year, we have many calls regarding machinery that people would like to donate to the A.M.C. Some items we do not want or need because of their condition, size, historic value, or because we already have that item. Sorry to disappoint and say no but the A.M.C. has limited on floor space. Thanks for thinking of us and keep checking with us as items come to your attention.

We do have some wall space for items that could be nailed or hung on the wall. Sometimes though the phone will ring and we will go and look at the item. One of these items was from Ross Morris in Orono. He had a 600 c.i. Waukesha 6 cylinder gas engine that was used on a saw mill at one time. The engine looked to be in great shape, not seized, no missing parts, BUT it did need cleaning, starting and a paint job. It is a great donation, future project and a very interesting piece of machinery. Thank you, Ross, for thinking of us!

Many years ago, the Hope Agricultural Heritage Club was the recipient of a donated Toro Tractor Model 3 with a 6-cylinder flat head Ford industrial motor. Anyone trying to think what this machine looks like, think of a super-sized John Deere Gator with dump box. This was donated by Ken and Ross Fulton and originally came from a golf course in Bolton, Ontario. The late Arnold Palmer was pictured with this same model many times in his Pennzoil ads. If you have internet look it up, Arnold Palmer, Pennzoil Oil Commercial 1981 and Pennzoil [YOU TUBE] Arnold Palmer or Latrobe Country Club





1970's. On our open house in June, one of our members wanted to see it run. But we knew it had issues. So he started working on it and found many seized valves. We also found Ford parts for this engine are very hard to find. Happy to say it is now running and painted so plan on seeing this machine and taking it for a drive.

The Northumberland and Durham Tobacco Association also donated a 4x8 sheet of plywood that has been covered in 50 pictures of the process of growing tobacco in the local area. Finally, this summer we have the names of the people in the pictures, what they are doing, and the location of the farms. If anyone has the time, it is very interesting to read.

When everyone reads this letter, the 2016 Antique Tractor Draw will be over. The draw was for an International Model Cub tractor or \$2500.00 cash. There was also a second and

third prize. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket[s]. Thanks to everyone that sold tickets! Special thanks to Jake Greydanus and Gerry Zealand. This is our main financial fundraiser for the Club. Many may not realize the Club's expenses that occur in the restoration and maintenance of the Club's equipment. Paint, batteries, gas, oil and many other items are needed to keep things running. Thanks to the members that donate their time every Tuesday evening, especially. John, Doug, Greg and Barry.

I cannot stress the importance of the sale of tractor draw tickets for the future of the Club and Antique Machinery Centre. Looking forward to 2017 please commit to getting a few books of tickets and selling them throughout the year if you have not done so before.

Looking forward to 2017 ...

Your President for Life
Earl Ashby



2016 General Meeting Highlights:

The club always tries to provide some interesting events or guest speakers to keep the bi-monthly meetings enjoyable for members and to stimulate their minds. The first meeting of the year, held on February 8th, was silent auction night, always good for a laugh or two. Members were encouraged to go through their stuff and get rid of some of those treasures that they have been hanging onto and pass them on to fellow members so that their better halves can tell them to clean out the garage/shed/basement. Of course, they never intended this newfound space to be meant for new stuff, but that is just how these things need to work. In fact, it was encouraged for everyone to offer to bring their neighbour's stuff as well. Preferably with their knowledge! Also for this meeting we had a guest speaker who provided a very interesting update on what was happening with low level waste cleanup in the Port Hope area. A subject on everyone's minds these days.



For the April 11th meeting, guest speaker Ivan Elford talked about auto detailing, a great topic for post winter clean up. Ideas and pointers on body work and auto detailing were also interesting for those members restoring and



painting tractors as well as cars/trucks. Also for this meeting was a show and tell. This was an opportunity for members to bring an item or two from home that maybe unique/interesting/rare to show, talk about or have members guess what it may be. We are all interested in antique machinery and agricultural artifacts/practices, but we each have our own areas of knowledge within that broad topic. This is a great way for knowledge to be shares.

With no June meeting, the next get-together was on August 8th and was held at the AMC. The guest speaker was Ralph Goheen, who showed us some of the pieces he has donated to the club and talked about there history. Artifacts always have more meaning when we know the story behind them and how they became a part of our collection. It was also a great opportunity for members to get up close and personal with many of our antiques.

October 1st saw the AMC's last open house and the executive decided to hold the fall meeting at the same time. To entice members to come out, lunch was provided to all members from noon till 1pm. Business items were handled by President Earl after this at 1:30pm. This was a great opportunity for members to crawl around the museum and to see our great collection first hand. Everyone was encouraged to bring along family and friends also. We are always looking for new members.

As usual, the year wraps up with the annual Christmas meeting, held this year on December 12th. Santa was booked to join us at the Canton Municipal Building and members wishing to participate in the gift exchange were asked to bring a wrapped \$10 gift for under the tree. This is also when the draw is made for the clubs raffle, which for 2016 was a 1946 International Cub, or \$2,500 cash, for the main prize. A pedal tractor and die cast model were 2nd and 3rd prizes. 2017 calendars are also given to those renewing memberships for 2017. "Can" donations are also received for the local food bank as this is a time to give back to the community.



Summer Student:

Some of you may have noticed a new face around the AMC over the past year, the result of a new and exciting project for the club. The HAHC was very excited to have received a Canadian Government summer job grant, a first for us. It was a very different opportunity for a student because it was geared towards the things we like – antiques, fixing things, people and farming.

The position was advertised as a Machinery Centre Technician with flexible hours, starting June 27 for an 8 week term. The successful applicant had to be a full-time student between 17 and 30 years of age and with a valid driver's license. Assets included a working knowledge of farms and farm equipment and not being afraid to get hands dirty.

The successful student was given the opportunity to work on the restoration and conservation of agricultural artifacts. They also worked with HAHC chairmen on public education at fairs and shows and conducted guided tours of the AMC and helped develop educational packages for pieces of equipment.

It truly was a unique opportunity that went well. Hopefully it is something that can be repeated in the future. See *Machinery Centre Technician* report on page 9 for The Bare's story on how we were able to get a student, what he did and how things worked out.



Special Occasions:

During the past year, HAHClub members were invited to two special occasions, giving them the opportunity to recognize long term members as they started a new chapter in their lives. Both instances provided an opportunity for us to reminisce, tell stories and wish them luck.

The first of these was a little bitter sweet and was held on Tuesday March 1st at the AMC between 7 and 9pm. It was a surprise get together to honour Ted Schmitt, who was leaving the area to join family in Nova Scotia. Good news for Ted's family but bad news for the club and his fellow antique machinery lovers. Ted was a long time member, donator and dedicated volunteer for many years of the club and AMC. On the night, Ted was given a card from the club along with a few small items for him to remember us. His presence will be missed by everyone here.

The following is an overview from President Earl:

GOING AWAY PARTY

Most of the members were aware of a going away party held for Ted Schmidt on March 1 at the Antique machinery Centre. Hopefully all members were notified by E-mail or phone. And it worked; I hope that no one was not contacted. I had calls from Bowmanville, Roseneath and Florida mentioning that they could not make it but gave their best wishes to Ted. The weather man had predicted up to 12" of snow during the day and through the night and many cancellations were happening. Personally I did not want to cancel because I was leaving for 2 weeks and Barry Adamson was going in for a knee operation which would have ended up making another date late in March. Ted might have left the province by then. The storm never happened! The party went on anyway and approximately 25 people attended. Ted was surprised with the party because he had no knowledge of it happening. Ted figured it was a Tuesday evening, [work at the A.M.C night!]

Ted and Louise are moving to Nova Scotia to be a little closer to their only daughter but have made many friends in their lives while in Port Hope. Ted has been a great supporter of the Antique Machinery Club and The Antique Machinery Centre. He has been on call and available to help whenever he was needed. Ted will be missed by the club members and friends. We wish him all the best in the move and in his new home.

The second occasion did not involve the club losing a member but his leaving his career family. Connie Davey asked Bare to invite the HAHC gang as our own Ministry of Transportation Truck Cop was retiring. Doug had chosen to retire so that he could come and play with us at the AMC! Actually, we are pretty sure that Connie has bigger plans for him. To help Doug celebrate this new stage in his life, club members were invited to The Mill Golf Course in Cobourg on Sunday November 10th between 1:30 and 4:30 pm. It was also a surprise and if you did not know Doug he has been (and still is) on the Executive of the club and as shifts let him a tireless worker. Well Doug, no more shifts, so lots more time for us! We hope!



The 25th Annual Antique Machinery Show or:

IF YOU WANT RAIN, HOLD A HAHC ANTIQUE MACHINERY SHOW

In the summer of NO RAIN, the HAHC hosted our 25th Annual Antique Machinery Show. It was held in the field off County Rd 2 across from Burnham Family Market. And, if you all recall, the location of the mud bowl of a few years ago.

For many weeks our farmers prayed for rain, so we gave it to them. Not a mud bowl, just enough on Saturday to send folks home, dampen our spirits and attendance. Then in the early evening it cleared up, the sun came out and the tractors started to roll. Saturday night many took a tour of the fields and areas around. Quite a site to see; a dozen antique tractors and drivers chasing each other over hill and dale.



Joshua Bowman and team drew in the spectators to watch the Lawn Tractor Pulls. Noise, action and dust are a crowd pleaser. Thanks Joshua for your continuing support and the great entertainment.



Little noise, no dust but lots of cheering happens at the Kids Koral as the young ones mount the pedal tractor and pull. This year the group was so aggressive with their pulls, they wrecked the sled! No worries though as our on-the-job mechanic took it home overnight and brought it back better then new for the Sunday games. Thanks Brent Adamson for the great welding job!

Sunday the sun came up and dried things out, but not enough to allow the demonstration of the “binding” and “thrashing” so the grain stayed standing until Paul Burnham could finish the harvest. Yes please - thank the Burnham family for the loan of the land. Where are we going to be next year??? Watch the website for the location as the snow leaves the fields.

All in all we had a very good show with many beautiful pieces of equipment displayed. Thanks to all who helped to run the show and those who came and “PLAYED” with us. Make sure you view the show in photos on the website.

See you next year - August 12th & 13th, 2017

Th' Bare



HAHC Show 2016 Judge's Final Standings			
CATEGORY	FIRST PLACE	SECOND PLACE	THIRD PLACE
Best Restored Garden Tractor/Lawnmower	Ray White 1967 John Deere 110	Ray White 197? Massey Ferguson 7	Ray White 1969 John Deere 112
Best Original Tractor	Allan Strang 1954 International W6	Paul Burnham 1956 John Deere 70 Diesel	Myron Szalawiga 1958 Allis Chalmers D14
Best Restored Tractor	Jack Malfait 1954 John Deere 40	Allan Strang 1953 Farmall Super MV	Walter & Mark Stapleton 1953 Farmall Super M
Judge's Favourite	Allan Strang 1953 Farmall Super M Sugar Special	Gary Minifie 1949 Ford 8N	Walter & Mark Stapleton 1955 David Brown 88D
Best Odd Ball/ Unique Machinery	Allan Strang 1953 Farmall Super M Sugar Special	Walter & Mark Stapleton 1955 David Brown 88D	Brent Adamson 1845 Coffee Grinder
Best Engines /Others/Display	Greg St. Amand Collection of Small Engines	Doug & Robert Davey Chainsaw Display	Brent Adamson 1953 Gravely L
Best Restored Farm Equipment (non-tractor)	Hank Janson 1940 McCormick Mower No 7	Jake Greydanus John Deere Grain Binder	Paul White Homemade Wagon
Best Car / Truck / Bike	Brian Bickle 1949 Chevrolet 4400		



Other Events:

Besides the club's meetings, open houses, BBQ's and antique machinery show members also participate in many other events and 2016 was no exception. One of the first of these was the Colborne Apple Blossom Tyme Festival, held on May 28th and 29th 2016. There was a new location this year, at the Keller Centre, rather than downtown on Highway 2. The Antique Tractor Show portion of this event was on the Saturday and was held in memory of Carl Wilce, who passed away in February at the age of 89, with a special addition of the "Carl Wilce Trophy". Mr. Wilce was an active member in local agriculture as well as a longtime member of the Apple Blossom Tyme Committee.



A new event for the club this year was the Lakeridge Chrysler Car Show in Port Hope which took place on July 16th. The club was invited to take the draw tractor and sell tickets. Members were also invited to bring their own tractors to the show, giving us a great opportunity to show the public who we are while they attend an event that has been running annually for some years. The function is for a great cause too, being a fund raising event for Cornerstone Family Prevention Centre.



Club Donations and Restorations:

Ross Morris of Orono, Ontario donated a 600 c.i. Waukesha gas engine to the club. This engine was used on a saw mill and always ran up to several years ago. It has to be cleaned up, got running and painted. Waukesha was an American brand of large stationary reciprocating engines produced by G.E. Energy. These were large engines intended for industrial use.

As mentioned in President Earl's opening remarks the Clubs Toro tractor received a make-over this year. This included new paint, valve job and electrical work. This is an interesting piece that has been a part of the AMC display for some time. It's nice to see it given new life.



2017 Meeting Dates – Mark Your Calendars!

(All meeting are on a **Monday** unless noted otherwise)

General Member Meetings

Feb. 13, April 10, June-*none*, Tues. Aug. 8 (AMC), Sept. 25 (AMC) and Dec. 11 (Christmas Party and Tractor Draw)

All general meetings are in the Canton Municipal Building, unless noted AMC (to be at the Antique Machinery Centre).

Directors Meetings (located at Dan Lovshin's on Telephone Road):
February 6, April 3, May 29, July 31, September 18 and December 4.

❑ **Please note** that all meetings will start at 7:30 pm.

Other Dates

Open House and BBQ at AMC – June 3 & 4; June 3 – **Open House, Tractor & Car Show**, June 4 – **Open House & BBQ**

Annual Antique Machinery Show - August 12th & 13th

Open House & Members Only BBQ at AMC – September 30th

Poker Run – Date TBA

See the AMC flyer for dates and events specific to that facility. If you don't have a copy, go see Earl or Barry. They'd be glad to set you up with one.

Your HAHC Directors:

Barry Adamson 905-885-2760
Doug Davey 905-396-5746
Dan Lovshin 905-377-1348
Stephen Portengen 905-885-4078
Mike Walsh 905-375-4503

Earl Ashby 905-753-2387
Jake Greydanus 905-373-5310
Jack Malfait 905-372-6308
John Tufford 905-885-9351
Ted Schmitt 905-375-4830



2017 Membership Form. Fee - \$20/year.

Mail To: Membership Chairman Barry Adamson
1020 Port Britain Rd., Port Hope Ont., L1A 3V7 – 905-885-2760 Bare@AProd.com

NAME	
ADDRESS (INCLUDE 911 ADDRESS)	
CITY	
POSTAL CODE	
PHONE	
EMAIL	
FAX	

Note: this year, President Earl is offering the greatly desired 2017 calendar with your 2017 membership. Yes, the form above is correct! 2017 memberships will be available at the same old fee of \$20 for the year.

Closing Remarks:

As always, make sure that you go to Earl and Barry to thank them for providing almost all of the material that went into making this newsletter a reality. Without their continued input, there would be no newsletter for your mental stimulation. So when you read this, remember that their input made it possible.

For next year's issue please do not be shy or afraid to contribute material. If you see something interesting on tv, read it in a magazine or newspaper, see it on the interweb and think to yourself "the boys at the HAHC would like to see/read/hear this", pass it on. We are always looking for interesting stories about current restorations, events you have attended or heard about or memories you may have of days gone by. You can send anything to The Bare or Earl or send it directly to me.

Also, please consider helping out with the newsletter or taking it over. This year especially I haven't had ready access to a computer so it has been difficult to put this together. Also, not being able to attend meetings or events personally makes it difficult to stay in touch. If interested, please let Bare or Earl know that you would like to help out. In the meantime, I can be reached at jon.beavan@aecom.com, or through my Dad at 905-352-2382. Well, take care all, and have a great Christmas and winter season, but above all, stay safe and have fun!

One last thing. If you have an email address and do not receive emails from "The Bare" on behalf of the HAHCclub but would like to, please send a note to the Bare at bare@aproduct.com and ask to be included on the club's mailing list. That way you won't miss any important dates or club related happenings.



Machinery Centre Technician

Our Machinery Centre Technician or as most people called him, our summer student. About the end of May, Earl attended a meeting about applying for a summer student grant. Earl reported back to the executive and they said OK, let's try it. So Earl and I coerced Jack Malfait into helping to lead this project. So, Jack filled out the forms and sent them away. It is government, so we waited and as summer was about to start we received word that we had been given the grant. Oh heck! What do we do now? It was very late to try to hire a student that was not already working. Well we lucked out and got a young man from Cobourg. His name was Daynen Beazer-Clarke.

Ok, now we have a Machinery Centre Technician. What the heck do we do with him? So into the carpenter repair business we threw him. Daynen, was asked to please report to Port Britain Shores and to Brent Adamson to help rebuild our show passenger wagon as it needed a new floor. Under Brent's supervision and help they took the top off of the under carriage and put a new floor on it and painted and preserved the hanging tools. This was a massive job and the finished wagon was ready for the annual Antique Machinery Show.

Daynen spent the rest of the summer doing many, many different things. He redesigned our website and added new information. He prepared our AMC (Antique Machinery Centre) for tours. He had the Centre open for the public while he worked on other things like sanding the excavator hood and many other odd jobs.

For Jack, Earl and I this was quite a different experience. Having someone work for you when we were not there to partake with hands on during the project was very difficult. We all agreed it was a successful summer for the club, with only a small financial investment.

To quote Daynen, "I really enjoyed working for the HAHClub, and have learned a lot from my experience there."

Good luck Daynen in your next life adventure, and thank you for your work and enthusiasm to help improve our Antique Machinery Centre.

Earl, Jack and Bare



Northumberland Tobacco History

Gone in a Puff of Smoke

It's almost forgotten now, but there was a time not so long ago, when the rolling fields of Northumberland were planted in, of all things, emerald rows of tobacco.

Story by Tom Cruickshank

- "Winston tastes good like a cigarette should." So claimed Fred Flintstone to fellow cartoon caveman Barney Rubble, singing the praises of their sponsor on their hit TV show in 1960. After a hard day at the quarry, it seems nothing satisfied more than a Winston.

- "More doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarette," shouts an ad from *Look* magazine in 1946. In an effort to thwart rumblings that smoking might not be benign after all, the tobacco industry employed a preposterous spin tactic, using reassuring "research" from health professionals to make their case. They proclaimed things like, "Not one single case of throat irritation due to smoking Camels!" and "As your dentist, I would recommend Viceroy's." The best of all: "20,679 physicians say 'Luckies are less irritating.'"

- "You've come a long way, baby, to get where you've got to today. You've got your own cigarette now, baby..." So went the jingle for Virginia Slims, the first cigarette marketed directly to women. It was also the last cigarette commercial shown on "The Tonight Show" before tobacco advertising was banned from American airwaves in 1971.

If you're of a certain age, you remember these ads and you remember the controversy that raged for years in the press over smoking. You might also recall that this was the era in which tobacco was at its peak: in 1965, the first



year in which tobacco use was officially monitored in Canada, it was estimated that fully half of all adults indulged on a regular basis. In fact, a daily smoker went through an average of a pack a day. And like earning a driver's license or graduating from high school, you recall that picking up the habit was considered a rite of passage toward adulthood.



But what you probably don't remember is that, at the time, during tobacco's heyday and amid all the media buzz about its link to heart disease and lung cancer, the northern reaches of Northumberland County—and Durham, its neighbour immediately to the west—were growing vast amounts of tobacco. In 1963, they grew an estimated 6,500 acres of it, making the region second—albeit a distant second—to the counties along the north shore of Lake Erie as the heartland of tobacco production in Canada. Local tobacco never accounted for more than four percent of the Ontario total, but nevertheless, these

were heady days for area farmers, many of them on marginal land and only too happy to finally find something profitable to grow. At last, they had a commodity suited to their soil, a reliable cash crop that enabled them to buy a colour TV and still have money left over to send their kids to university. As long as Canada was a nation of smokers, farmers paid little attention to the ongoing war of words and continued to grow tobacco as fast as the public could smoke it.

But as we all know, the times were a' changin' and the salad days didn't last, once the medical case against cigarettes became irrefutable and better known. Within a generation, the public had largely butted out: by 1981, the rate of smoking in Canada had dropped to below 40 percent; by 1994, it was less than 30; in 2013, the *Toronto Star* reported that only 11 percent of Canadians considered themselves regular smokers. Meanwhile, every level of government had enacted restrictions to discourage tobacco use: by removing tobacco advertising from the media; by banning smoking in the workplace, then in restaurants and bars, and more recently in cars in which kids are riding. Likewise, in-your-face anti-smoking campaigns largely erased any glamour left over from the Virginia Slims era. And over the same period, successive governments raised tobacco taxes exponentially: a carton of 200 cigarettes that cost \$4.20 in 1952, including some meagre taxes, now sells for \$80.41 in Ontario, an amount that can't be blamed on inflation alone. Indeed, about \$50 of the retail price is tax.



If the writing has long been on the wall for smoking, the same is certainly true for tobacco agriculture, which—no surprise here—has taken a severe hit in the past 40-odd years. Along the Lake Erie shore, the number of tobacco farmers has dropped significantly, as reported by the Ontario Ministry of Finance, from almost 3,300 in 1974 to a mere 230 today. Likewise, the number of acres in tobacco has also plummeted: from about 108,000 acres in 1974 to a mere 15,500 in 2015. Nevertheless, the region still grows about 95 percent of Canada's tobacco crop. But nowhere is the decline more evident than in Northumberland and Durham, where 150 tobacco farms once thrived in both counties. Today, these farms grow hay, perhaps some grain, or have been left to Nature. Long gone is the sight of the telltale emerald-green leaves—up to three feet long—that distinguish the tobacco crop from any other. And you have to look far and wide to find a tobacco kiln, a greenhouse or any other reminder of the industry. Meanwhile, membership in the Durham Northumberland Cured Tobacco Growers Association, once the voice of local growers, dwindled to a handful of farmers and disbanded in 1990.

“My dad's last crop was about 1980,” recalls Freda Westington, whose family—the Szwakobs—owned two tobacco farms, one on the 7th Line of Hope Township and a second a few kilometres north of Elizabethtown in Oak Hill. Further west, near Pontypool, Carrie Severn also grew up on a tobacco farm. “My father quit in the late '60s,” she says. “At the time, the government opened the market to foreign-grown tobacco and the price dropped dramatically. Dad said he had no choice and gave up tobacco farming for a job at GM.” Even then, it seems there was trouble brewing for local growers.

It's interesting that neither Freda's nor Carrie's family was native to the area, but arrived via the Lake Erie tobacco heartland, where tobacco farming had established itself in the 1920s, a good two decades before it came here to Watershed country. For Carrie, tobacco farming was on both sides of her ancestry. “My maternal grandparents—Ned and Thelma Foster—knew it well, having grown up in Virginia before moving to Delhi, Ontario, and then to

their own farm in Durham,” she says. Her paternal grandparents were immigrants from Germany and when they decided they wanted to farm, they cut their teeth on a Lake Erie tobacco farm before moving to Durham, too. “My parents, both children of tobacco farmers, met at a ‘tobacco dance’ in Orono in 1961.” By then, tobacco growing was well established part of the culture of the region.

Meanwhile, Freda’s father—Joe Szwakob—was a Polish immigrant who worked odd jobs across Canada during the ’30s before learning the ropes of tobacco farming on a rented acreage near Tillsonburg, another town in the Lake Erie counties. “I was born there,” she says, “but soon after, when my parents ventured out to a farm of their own, they moved here to Northumberland.” Joe’s story isn’t unusual, for hundreds of European immigrants, uprooted by the Depression and World War II, found their first jobs in Canada in tobacco fields. In fact, immigrant families became the backbone of tobacco agriculture as entire ethnic communities put down rural roots in their new homeland. “There were several other Polish families growing tobacco near us, north of Port Hope—the Sokays, the Hanakas, the Skoras, the Zubers and others. There was even a Polish community hall near Osaca.”

Indeed, a disproportionate number of local growers weren’t part of the established rural neighbourhood, but came from somewhere else, including the very first tobacco farmer in Northumberland. In 1948, John Watson established an initial crop in Haldimand and soon presided over a second farm on Crandall Road in Cramahe. He came from—you guessed it—Norfolk County on the north shore of Lake Erie. Like all the newcomers eager to try their luck with tobacco, he was attracted to Northumberland by several factors. One was the price of farmland, which at the time sold for about half the going rate back in Norfolk. But most of their optimism was based on climate and soil conditions: summer weather characterized by hot, humid days and cool nights; and deep swaths of sandy soil, so sandy that you can rub the grit between your fingers. It drains quickly after a downpour, yet contains adequate nutrients to sustain the plants. “It is ideal for tobacco,” Carrie recalls, “but isn’t good for much else.”

The right kind of sandy soil occurs here and there across northern Durham and Northumberland, most of it in isolated pockets along the Oak Ridges Moraine, coincident with the east-west route of what is now County Road 9. There, tobacco thrived on small farms—averaging between 40 and 50 acres—near Pontypool and Orono, Kendal and Elizabethtown, Osaca and Campbellcroft, and further east, along the appropriately named Tobacco Road near Castleton. By 1961, there were 57 tobacco farms in Cramahe alone, including a belt in the southern part of the township, where the Moraine turns toward Lake Ontario. In their natural state, most of these lands would have been part of a highly unusual prairie and savannah eco-system—a grassland entirely unlike the primeval woodlands that covered most of southern Ontario—with hardly a tree in sight (see “Lake of the Burning Plains,” Watershed, Summer 2015). Early settlers steered clear, presuming that the lack of forest cover was a sign of infertile soil. It took a couple of generations, but eventually, the prairie landscape was ploughed under for pioneer agriculture, but it wasn’t until the tobacco boom that this marginal land was considered anything better than hardscrabble acreage fit only for pasture.

As more and more Canadians took up the smoking habit in the 1950s and ’60s, Durham-Northumberland tobacco farmers had an eager market for their harvest. Always considered a controlled substance and subject to the whims of supply-management politics, tobacco was nevertheless a dangling carrot that plenty of farmers couldn’t resist. Carrie says, “My grandparents were attracted to it because, compared to other crops, it was by far the most profitable.” In the 1990s, Statistics Canada reported that tobacco farmers earned almost twice the income of other farmers and even today, tobacco is still one of the most lucrative commodities in Canadian agriculture.

But compared to dairy, beef, grains or other types of farming, tobacco wasn’t a sure thing. In fact, it was quite risky and farmers had to be willing to gamble. “We always worried about the weather,” Freda remembers, recalling late frosts after planting, early frosts before harvest and especially hail. “Hail could wipe out a crop in a matter of minutes.” Likewise, weeds were a problem and insect pests were a constant threat, particularly hornworms, the same dreaded larvae—as fat and as long as your index finger—that can eat through your tomato garden in no time flat.

Tobacco farming also demanded a larger overhead than conventional cash cropping. Not only would a farmer need the standard barn (in which to store baled tobacco before sending it to market) and the ubiquitous tractor, he also required a greenhouse in which to give seedlings a head-start in early spring before they could be planted in the field. The Szwakob farm had two greenhouses, each measuring about 3,000 square feet. Likewise, the farmer had to build kilns—sometimes called “kil’s” in local parlance—in which the leaves were cured immediately after harvest. More than anything else, kilns—six or seven to the average farm—were the defining feature of a tobacco acreage: upright, square buildings covered in asphalt siding. They would look like sleeping cabins if only they had windows. “You can spot a tobacco farm a mile away,” Carrie says, “by its rows of neatly arranged kilns.”

Most challenging of all, tobacco farming was highly labour intensive, requiring countless hours of manual effort

in a constant race against time. At various stages of its development, the plant requires pruning: “topping,” which encourages leaf growth by snipping off flowering stalks; and “suckering,” which likewise promotes the leaves by getting rid of secondary growth at the base of the plant, much like garden-variety tomatoes. Both chores were done by hand; Freda remembers doing her share of the duties as a teenager.

But of all the field chores, the most demanding, by far, was the harvest. “There was maybe a six-week window, starting early in August,” says Freda. “You had to work fast. Too early and the crop wasn’t ripe; too late and you would risk frost. And once it was picked, the leaves would quickly spoil if they weren’t cured *immediately*.” [italics on immediately] Time was so critical that the harvest required teams of workers—called “primers”—whose sole job was to walk each row, bend down and peel off the bottom leaves from each plant. As the upper leaves ripened over subsequent weeks, the teams would cover the same ground again, working dawn till dusk until the task was done. Priming was relentless, back-breaking work: imagine walking in a crouched position along a row of 650 plants ... in the stifling summer heat... stuffing the enormous leaves under your arm as you go... and then turning around at the end of the row, crouching down again and starting over... all day... rain or shine... for the entire harvest. Moreover, there was the risk of nicotine poisoning, although at the time, no one gave it a second thought and chocked up the nausea to exhaustion and dehydration. This was work that definitely separated the men from the boys. Indeed, many who were new might not last a day. Those who endured wore it as a badge of pride. And for an unskilled job, it paid surprisingly well: up to \$500 for six weeks’ work. Not bad for 1960.

Priming was usually done by summer students, itinerant migrants or workers recruited from offshore. The farmer was expected to house and feed them for the duration of the harvest. “Those guys would collapse into their bunks every night,” Carrie recalls. “And boy, could they build up an appetite. I remember my mom cooking roast beef for 20 people, and then doing it again the next day.”

Priming was only part of the job. Once the fresh leaves were delivered to the kiln, they would be tied so that they could hang on sticks. This was usually the domain of women and teenaged girls and they proved their mettle by the speed at which they worked, quickly knotting the stems of three leaves together and draping them over a wooden rod, which was quickly handed over for placement in the kiln for curing.

A kiln could hold about 1,200 sticks of tied tobacco. “The curing process was the most painstaking part of the harvest,” Freda continues, “and would determine how much the crop would be worth.” Conditions inside had to be just right—not too hot, not too cold, not too humid—and a man was hired to monitor a propane fire and ventilation, and keep a constant watch. In fact, curing was a profession in itself, for like a baker who knows precisely when the bread is ready to come out of the oven, a “cureman” knows exactly when his tobacco is done. Over five or six days, he would check it around the clock, pausing only for meals and to grab the odd cat nap in the bunkhouse beside the kilns. A trusted cureman was a godsend to the farmer. Some made the annual trip from Virginia; a few were local. “My grandfather, Ned, was a cureman,” says Carrie, a hint of pride in her voice.

The kilns operated full-time throughout the harvest. As soon as one batch was cured and ready to bale, the primers would have another load of raw tobacco on hand. And so it went until the work was done or until frost brought everything to a standstill. When it was all over, the cureman would head back home and catch up on his sleep; the primers would nurse their aching backs and go their separate ways; and the farmers and their wives would breathe a collective sigh of relief. “It was hard, hard work,” Freda says, “but there’s no denying the great sense of accomplishment when the harvest was done.” Indeed, everyone who grew tobacco shared that feeling, working against the odds and against the clock to get the job done. Indeed, it made them a community.

Of course, it didn’t last, even as mechanization made easier work of some of the jobs, including priming. Tobacco farming in Northumberland and Durham was over in little more than one generation. It was always the poor cousin to the older tobacco lands on Lake Erie, and when smoking started its precipitous fall from grace, local farmers were first to feel the squeeze. Thanks to a strong export market and better economies of scale, tobacco growers along Lake Erie continued to prosper for another couple of decades, but the bubble finally burst in the early 2000s when the federal government started to buy them out in a concerted effort to divert them into other, less controversial crops. Meanwhile in Northumberland and Durham, the original farmers had already retired; with poor prospects for the future, few of them passed the tradition on to their sons and daughters. With that, the tobacco days in Watershed country ground to a halt.

From a health point of view, no one laments the decline of tobacco, but even so, something was lost when the last kiln on the Oak Ridges Moraine cured its final crop.

As we all remember from history class, tobacco is a native plant long cultivated by First Nations and used as barter when North America was colonized. It quickly became a major export for the fledgling economies of Cuba, Virginia and the Carolinas, and when Canada was settled, farmers would sometimes grow tobacco for their own use. Back then, it was limited to cigars, pipe and chewing tobacco and snuff. Meanwhile, cigarettes—employing a special kind of cured leaf and wrapped in thin paper—were a relative latecomer that first became popular among Civil War soldiers as one of the few indulgences that could be taken to the battlefield. But they were not a viable commercial product until 1884, when an inventor from Virginia patented a machine that could roll 200 cigarettes a minute. The tobacco industry was on its way.

Sales soared, but smoking was not without its critics even then. Led by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which correctly identified some of the health hazards of cigarettes, popular opinion turned against tobacco and in 1908, the Canadian Parliament under Sir Wilfrid Laurier actually contemplated outright prohibition. It settled instead to ban the sale of tobacco to minors and laid the foundation for future taxation. Indeed, the government did nothing to stand in the way of the ever-increasing appeal of tobacco and by the end of World War I, all of Canada was inhaling. Returning troops had grown accustomed to their daily ration of cigarettes, while women, once forbidden the pleasure, embraced the habit as a sign of emancipation. According to Neil Collishaw's 2009 *History of Tobacco Control in Canada*, some 87 million cigarettes were sold in 1896. By 1920, Canadians smoked well over 2 billion of them and it would be another 40 years before anyone questioned tobacco again.

Sidebar 2: The Cure

Over centuries of tobacco use, various methods have been employed to cure the raw leaves to make them suitable for consumption.

- Among the simplest techniques was to let the leaves air-dry in a well-ventilated barn for a period of up to two months. To be sure, air-curing is time consuming, but the best cigars are still produced this way.
- Fire-cured tobacco is also a long process, lasting up to a few weeks. Here, tobacco is hung in a large barn where the fresh leaves are exposed to a smoldering fire on the floor beneath. Traditionally, snuff, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco were produced this way.
- Flue curing is the process described in this article (see main text). It heats the leaves as they dry, but the harvest is not exposed to smoke. It takes less than a week and is by far the quickest way to cure tobacco. Flue curing is the preferred technique for the production of cigarettes.



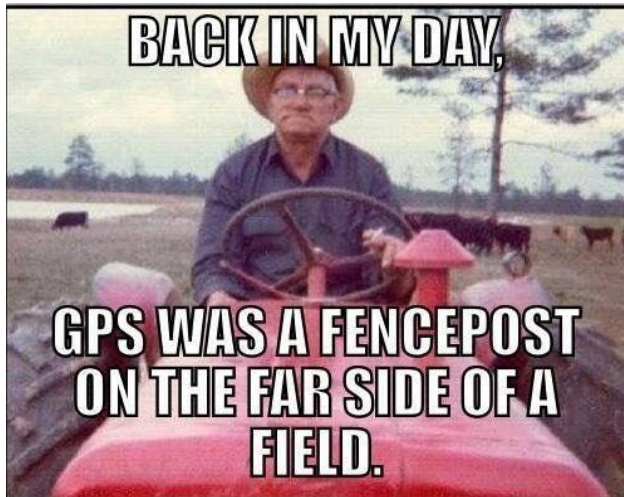
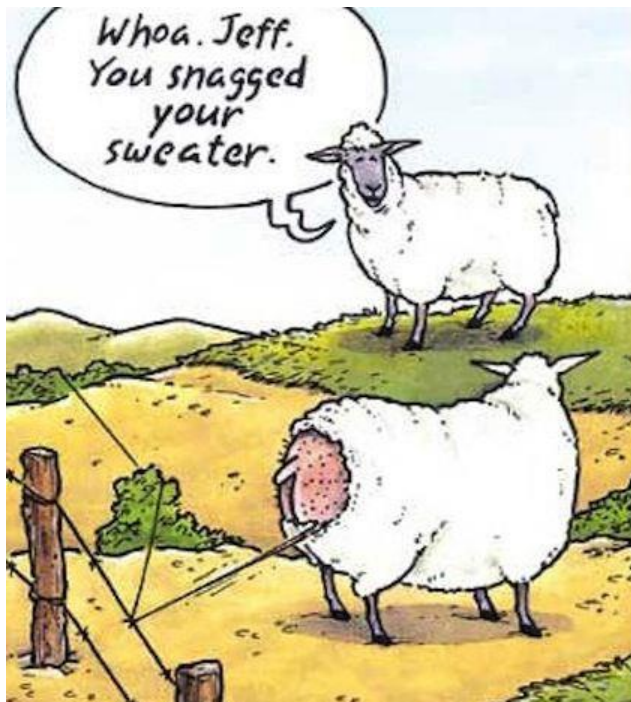
Funny Bone: Once again, I thought I'd end the newsletter with some silly stuff I dug up on the Internet. Hopefully I have not used any of it before. Enjoy!



"IF YOU THINK THAT'S BIG YOU OUGHT TO SEE THE BACK TIRE."



"GEORGE IS REAL HANDY. HE MADE THIS TABLE OUT OF AN OLD TRACTOR TIRE."



Corn Time by Bob Lang

