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NEWSLETTER 1

JUNE 2024



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The Committee that has been trying for several years to draw attention to the upcoming bicentenary of the Robinson immigration of 1825 was incorporated in February 2024 as Nine Ships 1825 Inc. This committee strives to be proactive in drawing attention from local, provincial and federal governments and from Irish officials in Canada.

The directors are Brendan Moher; Mary J. Smith; Dennis Carter-Edwards; Maureen Crowley; and Elwood H. Jones. All of these have broad experience in local heritage and governance.

Nine Ships 1825 Inc is promoting the bicentennial of the Robinson Emigration (which

coincided with Peterborough's origins and the new First Nations villages).



*Brendan Moher and Maureen Crowley preparing the incorporation document.*

To date members have met with the Irish Ambassador to Canada, Eamon McKee and the Irish Consul General in Toronto, Janice McGann. We have met with the Mayor of Peterborough; the Warden and CAO of the County of Peterborough; the Mayor of Kawartha Lakes; with Chiefs and leaders of the local First Nations; with the local Chamber of Commerce and with representatives of local heritage groups.



## MEDIA LAUNCH

Please join us on Tuesday, July 30, 11 a.m. as we unveil plans for Bicentennial 2025 at The Peterborough and Kawarthas Chamber of Commerce, 175 George Street, Peterborough.



*Brendan Moher and Tanaiste of Ireland, Michael Martin (Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland.)*



*Committee members meet the Irish Consul General at her office in Toronto.*

*Mary Smith, Brendan Moher and Nancy Towns with the Irish Ambassador to Canada, Eamonn McKee. Christy Roche visiting from Ireland met locals at the Porch and Pint on Lansdowne Street. Here, Elwood Jones is answering a query.*



*At the Downeyville Pioneer Cemetery, Christy Roche was joined by Patrick Hennessey, Maggie Hennessey, Mary Connell, Mary Smith, Megan Murphy and Nancy Towns.*





*Peter Robinson as sketched by Howard Pammett from painting now at PMA (TVA, Pammett, fonds 1)*

## TIDE OF HOPE

The Trent Valley Archives Theatre Group presented Tide Of Hope to capacity audiences at the Market Hall Theatre in mid-May.

Ed Schroeter, the author, developed his script around the idea of what might inspire some of the 2,024 Robinson emigrants to consider leaving Ireland for Upper Canada. .

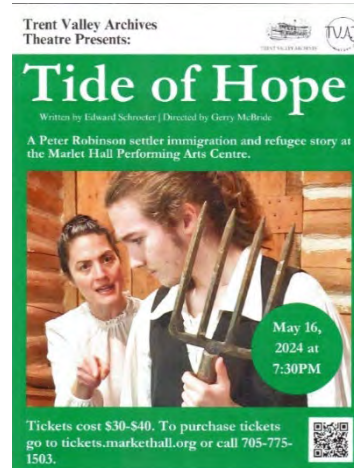
It helped that the earlier emigration from the Blackwater valley in 1823 had been seen already as a success. Generally, Ireland was in good economic shape but there were concerns that the population had grown too fast and was outpacing agricultural production. There had been a potato crop failure in 1821 that perhaps foreshadowed the Irish Famine of 1847, a generation later. More worrisome to the

politicians large landowners evicted tenant farmers whose small holdings were deemed inefficient and becoming smaller as the large families divided their holdings. Landowners also used higher rents to coax tenants to move.

The play captures the resistance to these moves focusing on a land agent who feared for his life. There had been pushback in the Blackwater by locals, acting anonymously, challenged land owners to be fair to tenants. These spontaneous groups evoked Captain Rock, or were seen as Whiteboys, and very effectively challenged specific land agents.

The play focuses on David Nagle, a land agent and Patrick Ryan who joined the Robinson emigrants for different reasons. The play also pitted Peter Robinson in an intriguing debate with Lord Kingston, one large landowner.

The play was enjoyed, even though some people had difficulty hearing the dialogue, for the energy of the actors and clear presentation of positions.



There is a plan for a sequel play, Crossing Over, for May 2025. We have great expectations and wish the theatre group great success in moving forward.

## IRISH FAMINE RELIEF 1847

*[This is a letter in Library Archives Canada , RG10, page 94787, with others shows empathy for those facing starvation in 1847 in Scotland and Ireland, 22 years after the Peter Robinson immigration.]*

Chemong Lake Village 5th April 1847

Sir,

We received your letter informing us of the distress of the poor of great Britain and Ireland we have held a council. And Authorize you to forward £12:10:0 out of our Annuity and we further assure you only for our poverty at present that we would willingly subscribe a larger sum to assist our friends in the British settlements for the friendship we have received from them in former times.

Sir Mr. Nogy our Chief and the greater part of our Indians were at the Council and all present willingly subscribed to this above sum and as a few of them were from home we think should they be present they would as willingly have sanctioned the grant as them that were present. We only let you know of their absence least complaints should be made that they were not all present as we borrowed Ten pounds from Mr. Gilmour we think it right to remind you of it as he Mr. Gilmour is expecting it as soon as you can with convenience send it to him as it was for provisions he advanced it.

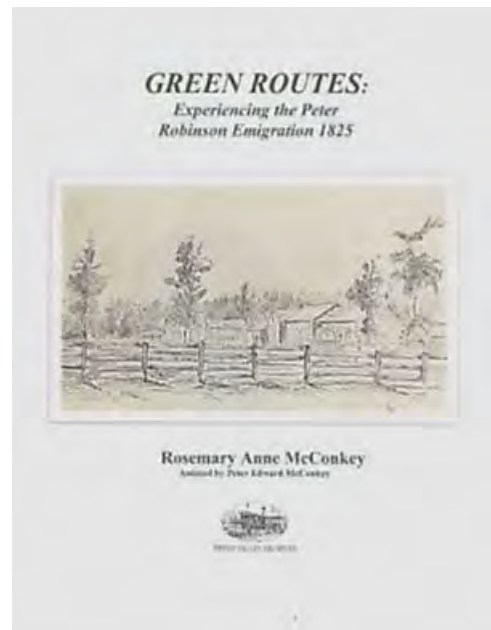
I remain Sir in behalf of the Indians your most Humble Servant

Peter Nogy

## CHRONOLOGY OF 1825 EXPERIMENT

- April 28 selection complete
- Sailed from Cobh 5 May to 21 May
- Reached Quebec 12 June -6 July
- Steamer to Montreal 12 June to 9 July
- York boats to fort wellington Prescott 18 June to 9 July
- to Kingston 20 June to 11 August

- to Cobourg 12-31 August
- to depot (now Peterborough) late August to 20 September; some early October.
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*A recent publication about the legacy of the Robinson settlers was Rosemary McConkey's Green Routes, TVA, 2022. \$35. Available at Trent Valley Archives.*

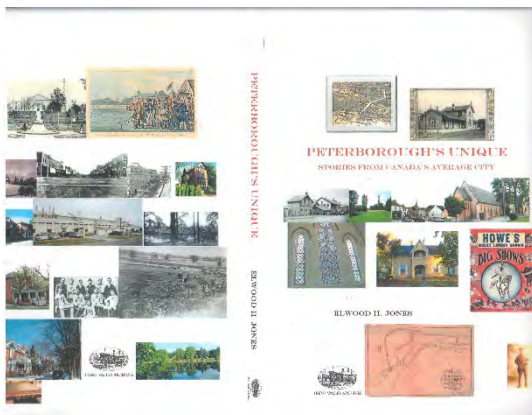
## PETERBOROUGH'S UNIQUE

The new book written by Elwood H. Jones and published by Trent Valley Archives contains some 50 stories about "Canada's Average City."

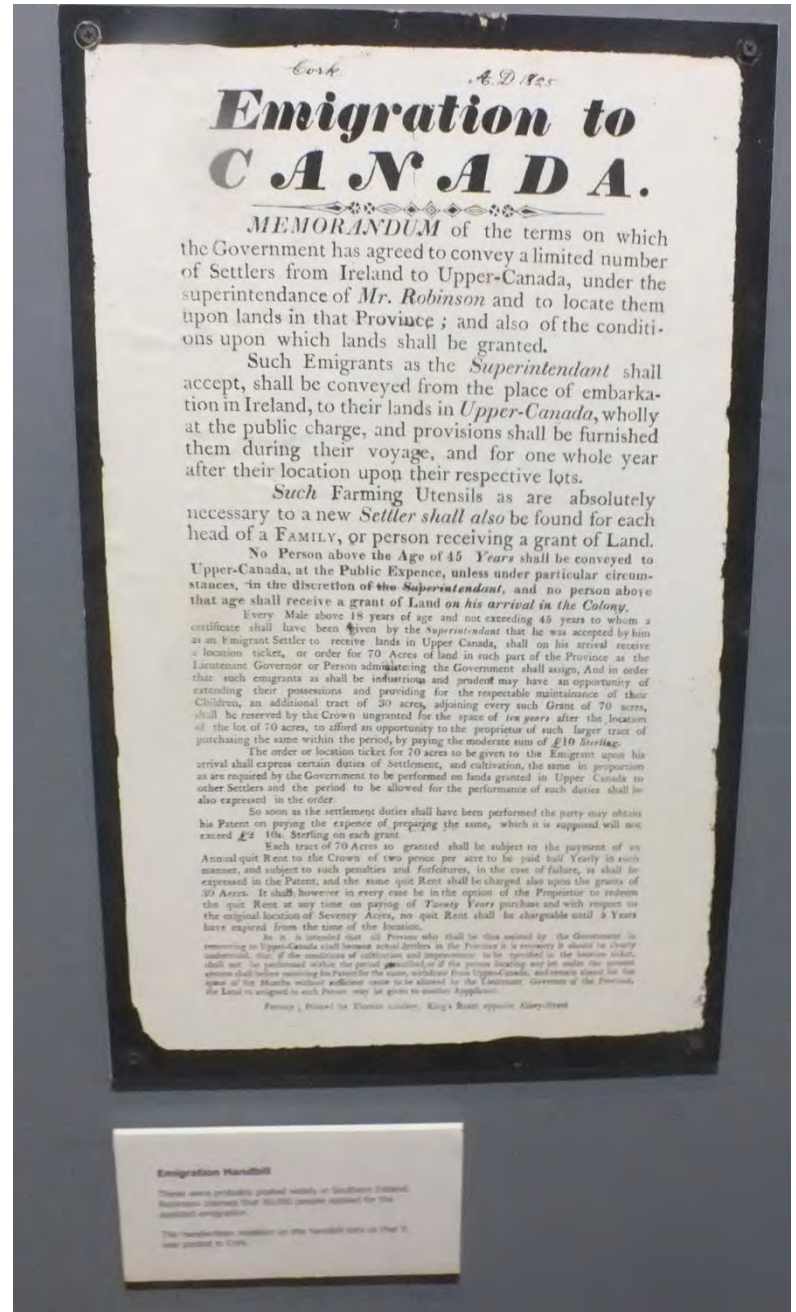
The book has been praised for its fascinating selection, good looks, diversity and reliability.

One chapter on the 1927 three-day celebration of Canada discusses how Peterborough celebrated its history. The

Robinson emigration was marked in several ways. In the parade, some floats had historical themes, and the Peter Robinson IODE float had a reconstructed boat like the one that brought the immigrants up the Otonabee. The Douro float featured settlers who remembered 1867, but most were also Robinson descendants. The show in front of the grandstand at the Exhibition Grounds included skits. The pageant included tablets on several historic points including the fifth tableau which featured Charles Rubidge and Peter Robinson conducting a lottery for lands; Robinson was played by Walter Sutton and Dr. N. H. Sutton played Rubidge. The event was a success. At least 250 people participated in the historical scenes, and were drawn from some 60 organizations, as well as clubs and schools.

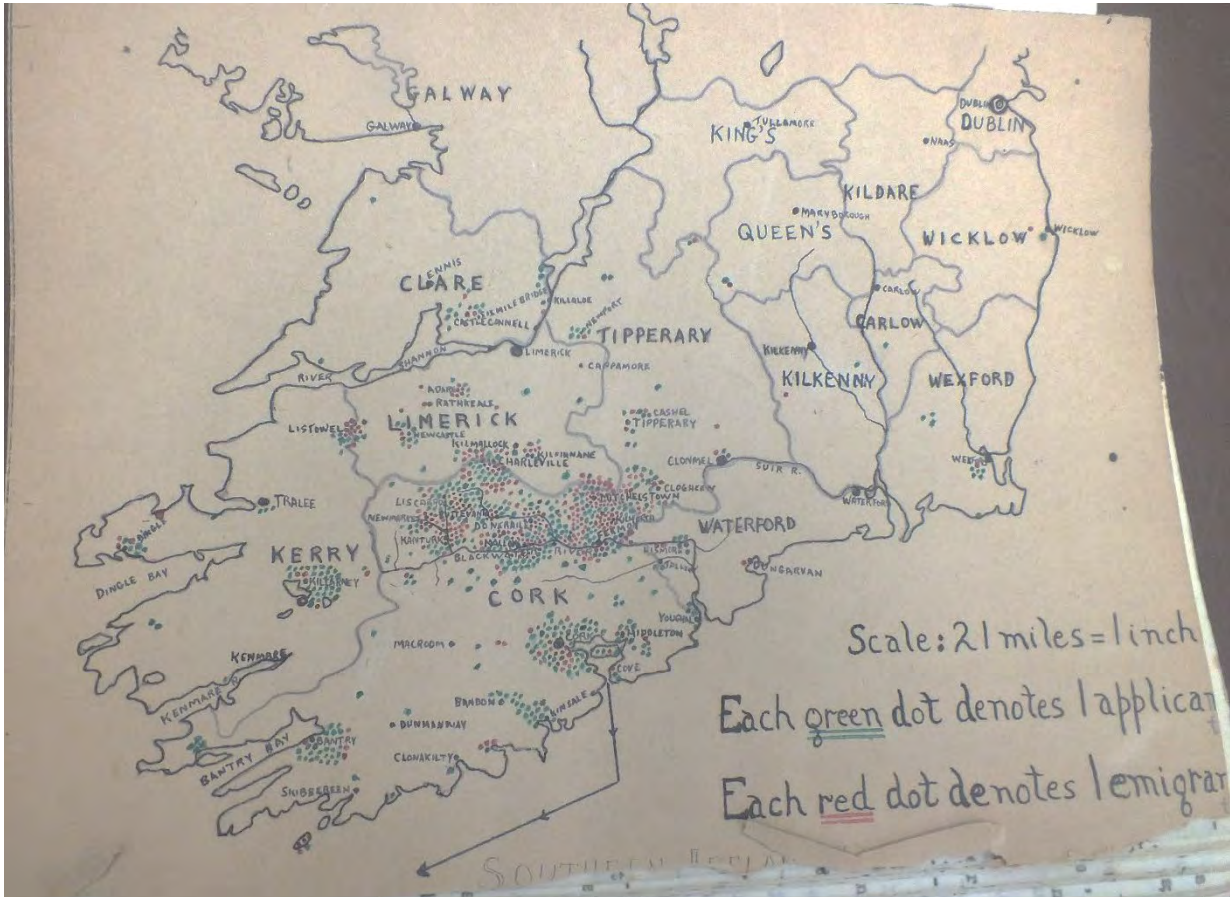


The book, *Peterborough's Unique* is available from Trent Valley Archives, \$60.



*Emigration to Canada* poster recruiting emigrants for Robinson's 1825 experiment to the Peterborough area. (Peterborough Museum and Archives exhibit)





Howard Pammett's map showing location of applicants and emigrants in 1825. (Trent Valley Archives, Fonds 1)

### Significance of the 1825 Experiment

- Rare experiment to test British government emigration policy: would total support of expenses for 18 months
- Exceptional archival resources provide information on every emigrant in the family and the ship on which they sailed.
- Peter Robinson was a well-connected politician and businessman who could handle the logistics of 2,024 individuals, co-operation with the British Colonial Office, the provincial government.
- Failed to meet British government expectations because Parliament wanted instant information.
- The Irish Catholic immigration ensured local diversity in the area.
- There was friendship and acceptance between the First Nations and the newcomers.
- Peterborough's founding is identified with this emigration.
- Significance recognized in 1830, 1927, 1975, 2015 and 2025 at least.

To share further information contact editor  
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