

## Featherstone, William and other Oslers

In the history of any country there are some famous family names to conjure with - or, rather, with which to conjure. Take Eaton, Gooderham, Grant, Ketchum, Massey, Trudeau and add any others. One that has reappeared recently after not having been heard very often for half a century is the name Osler.

The William Osler Health Centre has revived it. Since 1998 it has been a regional referral agency for amalgamated medical and surgical services in Etobicoke and Peel regions. Its 'catchment area' is 2,400 nearby square kilometres in which one million people live. It employs 700 health care professionals, 3,700 other staff people and enlists the help of over 1,000 volunteers. It 'partners' with other institutions from Sunnybrook-Women's College Hospital and Sick Kids in Toronto to Headwaters in Orangeville / Shelburne and with other agencies for specialised care.

Sir William Osler (1849-1919) was in his time Canada's most famous physician and medical educator. His *Principles and Practice of Medicine* and teaching appointments here and abroad made him by 1890 one of the best known medical men in the world. Most notably, in 1905 he became Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and was knighted by King George V in 1911.

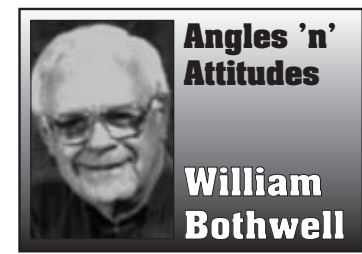
After a professional lifetime revolutionising both undergraduate and graduate schools for training those who minister to the sick, he died of pneumonia. His remains were cremated and the ashes now rest in McGill University's Osler Library together with his books and papers.

He was born at Bond Head, Ontario, the seventh child of the Reverend Featherstone Osler, rector of Trinity Church there and his wife Ellen Pickton Osler. His father had been since the late 1830s the pioneer 'saddlebag' Anglican priest in North York, Tecumseth and Mono, which areas were being opened to settlers. His journals record his optimism about the future of the region and imagine its bucolic beauty once the swamps and woodlands had given place to rolling hills and farms.

Before ordination in England he had been a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and had served in H.M.S. Victory, once Lord Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. It

now lies in dry dock at Portsmouth, England. Because his father was dying in 1831 he was excused from sailing to the Pacific in H.M.S. Beagle and thus missed a five-year association with Charles Darwin. He did, however, visit various ports in South America.

Featherstone Osler had answered an appeal from the Upper Canada Clergy Society to work in the hinterlands of what would become southern Ontario. His Cambridge University associates thought of his coming here as



Angles 'n' Attitudes

William Bothwell

"absolute banishment". His February, 1839 arrival in Mono Township was in the coldest time of year and over what he described as "wretched roads". Among the scattered homesteads he was welcomed first by the Ketchum and McManus families in whose log cabins he conducted services. "It grieved me to witness the destitution" of the pioneering families, he noted in his journals that are now in the library of Trinity College, Toronto.

Featherstone and Ellen Osler had 11 children at least three of whom made the family name famous in Canada and internationally. In 1880 Featherstone Jr. declined appointment to the Supreme Court because he was not fluent in French. Britton ('B.B.') Osler was Crown attorney at the 1885 treason trial of Louis Riel in Calgary. After appeals based on the matter of his sanity Riel was hanged by order of the federal cabinet. The Conservative Party thus lost its previously solid support in Quebec and has never regained it.

Five years later, in 1890, Mr Justice Britton Bath Osler acted for the Crown in the sensational Birchall murder trial in Woodstock, Ontario. The case was reported in newspapers worldwide and is outlined in *Memories of a Great Detective*, the story of the career of John Wilson Murray who tracked down "Reginald Birchall: occupation, murderer".

Birchall, a Briton, planned to lure several well-to-do young

Englishmen into partnership with him in an Ontario land venture. He would collect a sizeable initial amount of money, accompany them to Canada via New York and Niagara Falls and then murder them. He disposed of his first victim, Fred Benwell, in a swampy area of Oxford County, Ontario. Douglas Pelly, the next one slated to be murdered, escaped being pushed into the Niagara whirlpool. The 1990 publicity in the British press may have given Sir Arthur Conan Doyle the idea he needed for the 1891 death of Professor Moriarty and Sherlock Holmes's own planned demise at Switzerland's Alpine Reichenbach Falls. The subsequent return of Holmes by public demand was explained as a three-year disappearing act in order to escape vengeance from Moriarty's colleagues.

Another son of Featherstone and Ellen, Edmund Osler, became president of the Dominion Bank, the 1869-1955 precursor, with the Bank of Toronto (1854-1955) of the present TD/Canada Trust. He was also a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway and a business associate of Sir Henry Pellatt of Casa Loma.

After serving at the Montreal General Hospital Dr William Osler spent some years in Philadelphia and in Baltimore where at age 41 he married a great granddaughter of Paul Revere who figures prominently in legends of the American Colonial Revolution. Their son, Revere, served during the First Great War in the Royal Artillery and died of shrapnel wounds in Belgium at age 21, August 1917.

What would Paul Revere, someone asked, have thought if he could have seen his great-great grandson serving with the Royal Artillery and being buried wrapped in the Union Jack? The fact is that the name Osler is one of those that links the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada in a historic, if not a political, unity.

Sir William had been knighted in 1911. It is said that the great doctor continued to have fits of weeping for his son until his own death in England during the post-war influenza epidemic of 1919. He was 70. The real cause of death, said his medical colleagues, was a broken heart. Lady Grace Osler, his wife, lived another nine years. Her ashes rest with his at the Osler Library in Montreal.

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## Should we be bailing out the CBC?

Here's what media mogul Rupert Murdoch says: "Much of what passes for quality on British television is no more than a reflection of the narrow elite which controls it and has always thought that its tastes were synonymous with quality."

Which brings us, of course, to the narrow Canadian elite who believe that Canadian values and CBC values are synonymous, and taxpayers should be happy to pay as much as it takes to keep the CBC doing what it does.

And who better to represent the elite than Liberal MP Bob Rae - Ontario's former failed NDP leader - who, at a time when pretty well all television networks and newspapers are losing money comes rushing to the aid of the CBC?

The fact that the CBC faces a \$65 million shortfall - which is less than CTV and Global face - is not a symptom of our economic times. No sir, it's a plot by Tories to force the CBC "into crisis...Why is the government taking away the voice of all Canadians?" says Rae.

For one thing, the Government isn't taking anything away. It's handing the CBC \$1.1 billion in your money. For another, the CBC is hardly "the voice of all Canadians." It is one voice among many, an increasingly shrinking voice at that.

CBC television, for example, captures less than 8 per cent of prime time viewership and its flagship news show trail CTV and Global.

CTV, which doesn't get government handouts, is facing a loss of \$100 million, but we don't hear Rae and his fellow travelers demanding money for them. Same thing with Global. In Rae's world, it seems, the 92 per cent of Canadians who watch other networks don't count - except, of course, when it comes to taking more money from their pockets to finance the CBC.

Your correspondent is not convinced the CBC should get any government funding, let alone \$1.1 billion. That may have made sense 60 years ago when there were few other options, but with widespread access to cable and/or satellite, the idea of a state-sponsored broadcaster has outlived its usefulness.

The CBC is facing the same economic struggles which everyone is confronting.

A weekend New York Times article shows the same problems are plaguing U.S. networks too.

CBS, for example, featured 12 of the top 20 U.S. shows, yet operating income in its television segment plummeted 40 percent during the fourth quarter of last year. News Corporation, which owns Fox - despite the extraordinary popularity of "American Idol" - saw its operating income drop by \$18 million in broadcast television. Disney's broadcasting arm suffered a catastrophic 60 per cent drop in operating income.

And so it goes. Yet the elites - which includes the so-called Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, a group which rarely displays friendship for anything but the CBC - want taxpayers to rush in and bail out their favorite network, no questions asked.

Why should we? For those of us who occupy the right-of-centre spectrum of Canadian opinion, it has long been clear that the CBC - both radio and television news and public affairs - has consistently leaned hard to the left, both in the stories it chooses to pursue, and the slant it pursues them with.

There is no better indication of the elitist nature of the CBC than its' ongoing insistence that, unlike all other media outlets, it forego on-air radio advertising. Apparently running ads for consumer goods would sully the otherwise pristine presentation of our one-sided national broadcasters. Too bad. It can be as pure as it wishes, just not on our dime.

CBC brass, ever ready to declare a cultural crisis to coerce governments into writing bigger cheques, have declared that without more help they may have to bring in more U.S. programming. Oh no. How could we live with programs which people actually want to watch? For apart from Hockey Night in Canada - which, low brow as it may be, consistently draws huge audiences - the CBC has a pretty good record of presenting programs which few Canadians actually want to watch.

So far, the Tories haven't said much, although, Kory Teneyke, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's spokesman, did say they don't intend to "insulate" the CBC from tough economic times.

Let us hope not. Unless, of course, it's prepared to bail out CTV, Global, and a host of struggling newspapers and radio stations too.

If Rae and his elite pals are so concerned about the CBC's bottom line, let them send money. They're rich. Leave the rest of us alone to wallow in our own cultural swamps.

## Previous byelection heralded a Tory triumph

A byelection in cottage country northeast of Toronto a decade and a half ago started a revival of Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party that quickly put it in government. Could another there today do the same?

The influential byelection was in 1994 in a riding then called Victoria-Haliburton, and Mike Harris had been Conservative leader for four years but still was little known.

Harris had begun promoting policies with an underlying theme of cutting government and taxes under the title, The Common Sense Revolution, but had not caught much public attention, and the competing opposition party, the Liberals under Lyn McLeod, held a substantial lead in polls.

The New Democrats, who had won government and the riding in the 1990 general election, were not in the race, particularly because they had piled up \$10 billion-a-year deficits that were being held against them.

The Conservatives, who had not emerged as quite the aggressive, far-right party they were to become under Harris, took the offensive by saying their own first priority was to create jobs, while the Liberals' was to provide gay and lesbian couples with the same family benefits as heterosexual couples.

This was a distortion, because McLeod had supported extending family and survivor benefits to same-sex couples, but placed this nowhere near the top of her professed goals and spent incomparably more time discussing jobs.

Harris also declared that Ontario had "too many from other countries coming here for a free ride," which also bent the truth, because immigrants generally have been as willing to work as those born here.

Harris added that if he became premier, welfare recipients who "choose to stay at home and do nothing will get nothing," which appealed to many who had to scratch out a living in a riding that lacks industries that provide reasonable incomes.

The byelection was the most bitter in memory and the Conservatives won it comfortably, in terms of votes, and it put Harris on the map, where he had not been before.

A year later, Harris went on to sweep the province,

particularly because of his promise to cut government and taxes, something most residents had been waiting to hear.

He was helped, particularly among small-c conservatives, by his refusal to support spousal benefits for same-sex couples, which went along with his refusal to recognize same-sex marriages.

Harris also won votes because he promised to force welfare recipients to work, which many felt logical, although it is less easily put into practice.

The legislature's best phrase-maker, Liberal Sean Conway, who had shied from attempts to persuade him to run for leader of his party, announced "the politics of prejudice" he had taken hold and later said "he would run for Liberal leader solely to eliminate Harris, although he did not follow through on the promise.

Not much of what Harris campaigned on is of help to Conservative leader John Tory, if he wins the byelection in approximately the same riding, now re-named Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Same-sex benefits are no longer an issue, because the courts have ruled that refusing to recognize same-sex marriage and provide benefits is discriminatory and Tory and his current party have gone along with this.

Mainstream parties today would not single out immigrants as unwilling to work or argue that many are on welfare because they choose to stay home, although they might press for policies to get more welfare recipients in jobs.

Tory or whoever is Conservative leader will have to produce policies that appeal, but will be helped by the rapid deterioration of the economy and tendency to blame Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty for it or at least failing to act sooner.

Tory would have to avoid the trap of advocating policies that hurt him, such as proposing to fund more faith-based schools, which destroyed any chance he had in the 2007 election.

But for the Conservatives even to have a leader in the legislature at a time when a government is struggling would help make them a more acceptable alternative.

## Living off the interest

Life is a balancing act. That applies to folk living in the city or in the countryside. That is a basic lesson we should have learned as children, and one that applies all through life. That is a fact of life that Mother Nature has taught for generations, a lesson that is of value to each of us throughout time. Build up capital. Live off the interest.

The big difference in society is man's perception. Nature thinks in the long term while man in 'his' thinking seeks short term gains. A 100 year old pine is a normal goal for Ma Nature. Next year's income is man's goal. But Nature compensates by allowing short term remuneration from our resource base, a lesson of which many landowners are unaware.

My close friend and colleague Mack Williams has spent his life developing a forest. My earliest forestry recollections include evenings thinning Mack's plantations in Oro Twp. In his retirement he can look over his maturing forest seeing the ecological benefits of well managed land clothed in large standing trees. He can also look back on rolling open farm lands which he planted with trees and which have provided incomes from several thinning operations, each providing money to continue sound management.

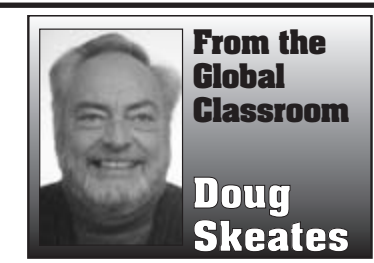
Mother Nature has continued to grow ever stronger, more valuable trees while also building up organic soil from leaf fall and other forest debris. An understory of shrubs and young trees is providing traditional habitat for a wide variety of forest flora and fauna. With the current public concern for atmospheric CO2 the

farm is doing its share of storing carbon above ground in carbon sinks we call tree trunks as well as storing even greater quantities of carbon below ground. The continuing cover of tree crowns also keeps the surface cool and protected from wind, helping to minimize decomposition of stored organic materials and evaporation of water.

Mack's farm is by no means alone as an example of Mother Nature's largesse. A hardwood forest adjacent to our property had a significant proportion of merchantable trees. The owner felt it had reached a stage which could be harvested, capitalizing on his investment. On a marked tree basis, a very fine job of partial cutting resulted. Despite a sizeable harvest the forest 5 years later remains in good shape. It is a joy to walk through particularly in the spring when the trilliums are in bloom. Very little damage was done in harvesting.

A tour through forest operations in Guyana provided an eye-opening experience. From a "forestry" perspective, harvesting of 1-3 greenheart trees per acre in rainforests appears to have been commercially profitable. Young greenheart seedlings were thriving in the openings created. Most important from an ecologist's point of view, with such a minimal cut a forest cover was maintained. As a forester I still question whether or not 'high grading' was positive.

Unfortunately sustainable 'forestry' does not appear to be the norm in the farm forests of southern Ontario. Often forests on the back 40 of farm lands seem to be held strictly in reserve



From the Global Classroom

Doug Skeates

instead of being managed as part of the farm business. Many areas were cut-over (high graded!) many years ago and the residual "bush forests", while serving an ecological purpose, do not appear to be managed well in serving both ecology and the owner's livelihood.

The indication, with the current crisis in the economy, is that many who have moved to urban environments may have to consider returning to the land. Southern Ontario farms have a great deal to offer for the nation's economy. Forest ecology is beginning to look more and more promising with the potential for production of biofuels. A great deal more thought needs to go into forests as an economic base for landowners while nature struggles to meet the needs of mankind by improving the ecology. Mother Nature is capable of building forest capital as well as providing income from interest while enhancing forest lands to meet the ecological needs of the wider range of creation.

**Your Weekly Chuckle . . .**

By KEITH HUNTER

TEACHER: Tell me, when was the Great Depression?

STUDENT: That was when I got my last report card."

**100 YEARS AGO**  
**Thursday, March 4, 1909**  
• Says Publisher R. L. Mortimer, former principal of Shelburne public school, in his column in the *Shelburne Free Press*: The trouble in the Orangeville public school is creating considerable interest in the county town. A well-known resident of the town claims that the trustees are to blame for the whole trouble. The standing of the school is not good and the reason is that pupils have been promoted that should really be two forms below instead of where they are. We do not know that the present Board is wholly responsible as we do not know how long each one has held office. The trouble is that the Principal has not been allowed to run the school, but the trustees were doing it for him. Whenever a promotion examination was held usually a number failed to pass. The parents of pupils who failed would rush to the Board and as a result the Principal would be ordered by the Board to promote the pupils against his will.


Any school board who interferes in the promotion of pupils is making a serious mistake. The Principal should have full control of the management of the school and the promotion of pupils from one class to another and should be held responsible for the success of each department.

• George Ernest Stewart, perpetrator of the Melancthon township tragedy of Feb. 7, in which John and James Spanhouse were shot to death, will become an inmate of the ward for the criminal insane in Hamilton Asylum. Following an investigation by Attorney-General Foy as to Stewart's mental condition, in which three doctors examined him at the Orangeville jail, a governor's warrant was issued for his committal to the asylum. There he will remain at the pleasure of the Lieutenant Governor, and a judicial trial for his terrible crime will probably never be held.

• Andrew Carnegie has promised to give Grand Valley \$7,500 to build a public library if the village guarantees a free site and by resolution the

*Dipping Into the Past*

**School trustees blamed for 'trouble' affecting Orangeville public school**



council agrees to spend \$750 on its maintenance.

• Dundalk school trustees reached the conclusion last week that in the best interests of the schoolwork the Principal's services should be dispensed with without waiting for Easter as had previously been arranged. The school was suffering on account of the trouble which had been going on since last year. Mr. Alex Wilkins, now attending Hamilton Normal School, has been engaged as principal to begin duties after the Easter holidays. In the meantime, Miss Hall, of the present staff, is taking the principal's form,

and Miss Eva Rundle is in charge of the primary form until Easter. Principal Urquhart was paid his salary until Easter and relieved of further duties.

**75 YEARS AGO**  
**Wednesday, March 8, 1934**  
• Ben Covell, of Orangeville, formerly of Shelburne, who started housekeeping last fall, got the surprise of his life when a hot fire in his stove melted the grates, allowing the fire to fall to the ash pan. While awaiting repairs Mr. Covell has taken up his residence at the town hall, and is among those engaged on the town

wood pile, the introduction of which was responsible for his starting housekeeping.

• Some time ago, Mr. George Watson, of Back Line, Melancthon, was injured while drawing logs from near Corbetton. While he was unloading the timber at his farm, a log rolled off the load and fell on his foot. Mr. Watson made fairly light of the injury, believing the damage to be only bruises. However, the foot began to give trouble. Last Thursday, medical assistance was enlisted and it was found bones of the foot were badly crushed. He was sent to Toronto for further examination and treatment.

**50 YEARS AGO**  
**Wednesday, March 4, 1959**  
• While about 30 members of Listowel's Minor Hockey League were practising in the town's arena Saturday morning, rain-soaked snow caused the roof to collapse. Seven boys and their instructor, Ken McLeod, were killed and 10 required

hospital care. This winter's exceptionally heavy snowfall has created hazards which could be easily overlooked.

**25 YEARS AGO**  
**Wednesday, March 7, 1984**  
• Plans to repave Highway 10 from Caledon Village to Orangeville this year have local officials concerned about the timing of future improvements to that stretch of highway. "Any expansion to four lanes would appear to be quite far off," Mono Clerk Keith McEnly says. And that's how Council members view the project. They are afraid it will mean a further delay of any plans to widen the highway.

• The Town of Orangeville has received 50 applications for the position of Recreation Director. Last fall, Council voted against hiring a replacement for the former director, Al Downs, who left for a similar position in Tillsonburg. Mayor Gord Courtney has struck a selection committee.