

YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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HOMEBUILT AIRCRAFT:
Keith S. Hopkinson had the
first homebuilt plane licensed
in Canada after the Second
World War. (Story on page 3)

Gazette archives at the library

By Bill Gladding

In 1986 the Gazette had their entire archive collection (shown at right) scanned onto microfiche through a project with the University of Western Ontario in London and funded by the Ontario Community Newspaper Association (OCNA). Those microfiche files were then digitized by the Tavistock & District Historical Society.

That meant that every single available copy of the Tavistock Gazette, up to the end of 1986, was now searchable.

This resource is now available at the Tavistock Library through a partnership between the Tavistock & District Historical Society and the Oxford County Library. Ask your Tavistock librarian for guidelines and procedures for accessing these digital newspaper copies using the library's computer terminals.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

One of the greatest resources to anyone looking for the history of Tavistock over the past 120 years is the Tavistock Gazette. There are, however, some 'holes' in the Gazette history books that local residents may be able to fill.

From its beginnings in 1895 until June 2, 1910, there are only four complete years of records - May 17, 1900 to June 2, 1904.

Years ago, thanks to the saving habits of a few lifetime residents of the area, many missing Gazette editions have been added to the archives. Eckhardt Wettlaufer of

Sebastopol provided 14 editions prior to 1900. One was the second last edition of the first year dated September 10, 1896 and the first edition of Volume 2 dated September 24, 1896.

Back in 1895, Mr. J.W. Green was said to have won the "Battle of Inkerman" (as Tavistock was previously named) when N.H. Boden simultaneously published the Tavistock Mail that same September. An editorial by Mr. Boden, who was publishing his page out of Drumbo, was challenged by



Gazette founder J.W. Green, c. 1871



GAZETTE ARCHIVES: Early records were bound into books consisting of two years.

Mr. Green to withdraw from the community as Mr. Green said he had already secured the good will of the business people here to advertise with him and had every intention of moving to the village. What I didn't know was anything else about Mr. Green.

In 1888, J.W. Green is listed as editor and publisher of the Wellesley Maple Leaf newspaper in Waterloo County and family information says he worked previously at the Galt Reformer. Then in September of 1895 he moved his family to Tavistock.

The Gazette was first published from Loth's Hall which was a part of the Commercial Hotel on the northwest property at the five corners. The paper was later moved to the Wildfang Block, now the location of Quehl's Restaurant.

Mr. Green owned and operated the Gazette from 1895 until 1900 and according to Carl Seltzer's report in Fact & Fantasy, "Early files of The Gazette were burned in the Square one Hallowe'en night and in the ashes disappeared much of our history." As a

result, the complete collection of archived Gazettes does not begin until F. H. Leslie took over as publisher for the first edition on May 17, 1900. He kept meticulous records until the business was sold to Charles Fraser in June of 1904 when records again cease to exist. The Gazette currently has only 24 copies in existence between the years of June 1904 to June 1910. Sometime between March and June of 1908 Norman E. Dopp became the Publisher. Then in June of 1910 F.H. Leslie returned as owner of the Gazette for the next four years.

Three father and son ownerships followed starting with William Appel (1914-1916) and son Lorne W. "Chick" Appel (1916-1929); George K. Brown (1929-1939) and son K. Hartford Brown (1939-1969); and finally C. Robert Gladding (1969-1988) and son William J. "Bill" Gladding (1988-present).

By chance, if you have copies of the Gazette, in whole or in part, from the years September 1895 to May 1900 or June 1904 to June 1910, it would be greatly appreciated if you could either allow the Historical Society to copy them or donate them to the existing archive of newspapers.

Also in the archived collection is a copy of the Tavistock Mail, September 13, 1895 and the Plattsville Echo, November 15, 1888.

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Former Tavistock resident licenses first homebuilt kit plane

The first homebuilt plane licensed in Canada after the Second World War was built by former Tavistock resident, Keith S. Hopkinson.

From the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum web site "Ingenium," we read the following history by R  nald Fortier:

"At first glance, the Stits SA-3 playboy of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, in Ottawa, Ontario, is not particularly impressive. Its very ordinary appearance, however, conceals a most interesting story dating back more than 60 years, as suggested in the photograph (front page), published in the September 1957 issue of the monthly magazine *Canadian Aviation*."

Under the Collection Highlights of the web site we can also learn the following history:

"During the 1920s and 1930s building aircraft from kits and plans was popular among enthusiasts in the United States. In the 1950s, the Experimental Aircraft Association of Canada was formed to further home aircraft building. The Stits SA-3A Playboy is a kit airplane. The kit was considerably modified by Keith S.

Hopkinson: the nose cowl was from a Piper J-3, the propeller spinner from a Cessna 170, wing struts from a Tiger Moth, landing gear from a Cessna 140, and wheel pants from a Stinson 108.

Hopkinson is credited with persuading the Canadian Department of Transport to facilitate the licensing of homebuilt aircraft. His Playboy was the first homebuilt licensed in Canada after the Second World War."

Keith Sandling Hopkinson, a son of Mr. and Mrs. K. Clark Hopkinson, moved with his parents to Tavistock in 1919 as a young boy.

Clark worked first at Zimmerman Brothers Box Factory and later operated a store on Hope Street West that sold everything from



K.C. HOPKINSON: Fall Fair display in the arena.

curtains to crochet hooks. With his father, Clark built a 20' x 60' heated greenhouse on the southeast corner of what was then the orchard on Hope Street West. They specialized in growing flowers and vegetables, also sold at the store.

The family was active in the community in the Tavistock Horticultural Society, the Lawn Bowling Club, the Tavistock Masons and the United Church.

By 1933 Keith's name was appearing in the business portion of the Tavistock Gazette advertising his business repairing electric motors as well as new and used motor sales.

In 1934 the family relocated to Hamilton. During World War II Keith served with the RCAF as the Chief Ground Instructor at the RCAF Elementary Flying School in Goderich and later became Goderich Airport Manager. He was fatally injured in an airplane accident in 1964.

Where is the plane now?

Hopkinson's Stits SA-3A Playboy now resides in the Reserve Hangar, Canada Aviation and Space Museum at 11 Aviation Parkway in Ottawa, Ontario.

The SA-3A Playboy was built over the course of just eleven months by Keith "Hoppy" Hopkinson of Goderich, Ontario in 1955. It was made from a kit designed by Ray Stits at Flabob Airport, California. Hopkinson made major modifications to the kit, using parts from a Piper J-3, a Cessna 170, a de Havilland Tiger Moth, a Cessna 140 and a Stinson 108. He named the aircraft "Little Hokey."

By the 1950s, Canada's Department of Transport had not licensed a homebuilt aircraft in more than a decade. Hopkinson persuaded the department to facilitate licensing of homebuilts, and this Playboy was the first Canadian-built aircraft to be licensed under the Ultralight classification.

In 1977, Don Kernohan of Richmond, Ontario bought the Playboy. It was purchased by the Museum the following year.

As many as a thousand homebuilt kit planes were completed by amateur builders since the 1950s. It helped revive the U.S. homebuilt movement after the Second World War. First flight was in October 1955.

Artifact No.: 1978.1049



Hopkinson greenhouses

Tavistock clock at the Canadian Museum of History

By Sherrill Calder

"One man who helped to shape our community's history and left his mark through his exceptional skill as a woodworker and master mechanic was John K. Lemp". ... extract from "Our Heritage" (Tavistock Gazette) dated February 5, 1997.

John K. Lemp was born in Wilmot Township and spent his formative years on the farm of Christian Gingerich on the 13th line of East Zorra Township. In 1881 he married Mary Leonard. They had two children, John who married Lucy Trachsell and Katherine who married John Piehl.

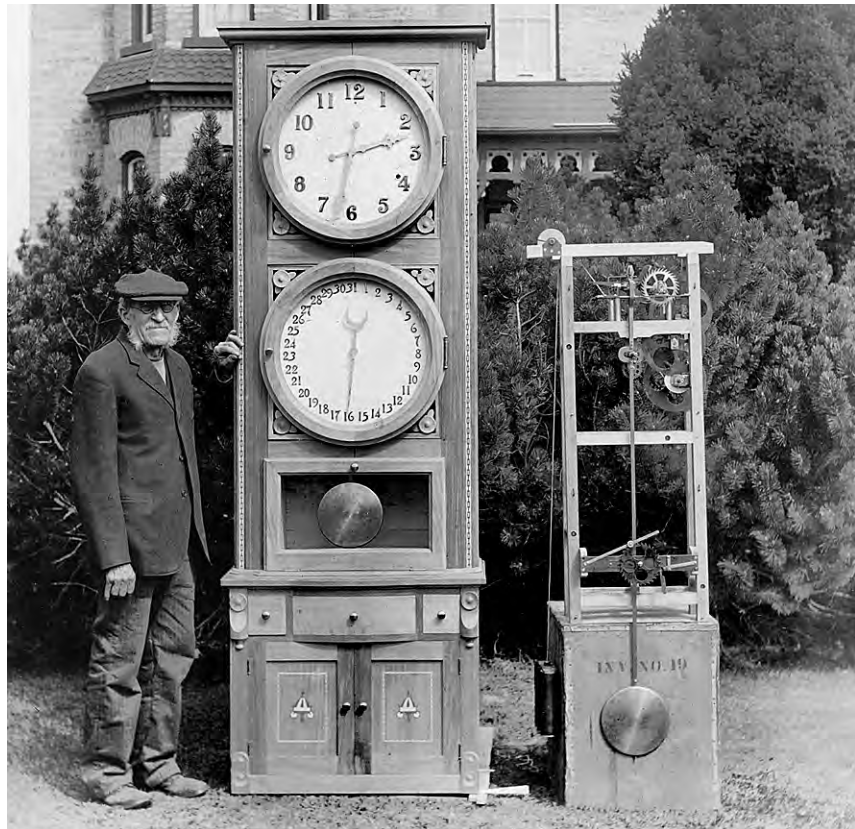
The Lemp family lived at 218 Woodstock Street North in Tavistock in the stately house that John K. built in the late 1800s. Still standing, the home features beautiful inlaid wood floors, a carved bannister and newel post on the main stairway and relief carving below the windows in the sitting room. It was and remains a masterpiece of the woodworker's art.

Mr. Lemp spent most of his life working at his shop near his home. In the early days he sold and filed saws and repaired machinery for various industrial companies in the community. It was said that he could fix literally anything. He maintained steam engines and with the advent of gasoline power, welcomed the new technology. Every year he took the train to the Toronto Exhibition and spent the whole time he was there studying the new machinery and tools in the industrial exhibits. An outstanding mechanic, John K. built Tavistock's first horseless carriage in 1908 for the owner of the local milling company.

Those accomplishments notwithstanding, Mr. Lemp is best remembered for his grandfather clocks. Having no special training as a clockmaker, he studied the tower clock, built by noted clockmaker George Hess, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastopol and used it as his inspiration. For many years, one of Mr. Lemp's many tasks was to keep the church clock in working order.

John K. built his first grandfather clock when he was about 30 years old. He would build four more. All were gifts to members of his family. Distinctive in many ways, the clocks featured two dials ... one dial to show the time and the second to show the day of the month.

The clock built for son John, who was a noted photographer and pharmacist in Tavistock, was described in a newspaper



LEMP CLOCKS: John K. Lemp is shown with a finished clock and the workings of another in front of his Woodstock Street North residence.

article dated April 11, 1938 as follows:

"It is of solid walnut with white maple inlays and, in its ornate case, a pendulum weighing nearly 4 pounds swings back and forth to drive the wheels. The weight within the clock weighs 50 pounds, while the whole clock weighs more than 200 pounds. Cut by hand from sheet steel and solid brass, the cogs and wheels inside the case are notched and geared to perfection. The largest wheel is 9 inches across and not once since the clock was built five years ago has it recorded an inaccurate reading upon the clock's face. Requiring seven months to make, the towering clock boasts two dials. The top one records the minutes and hours while the second, just below the first, indicates the day of the month. The fact that all moving parts are cushioned in ball bearings promises that the clock shall remain in service for many, many years."

The picture in this article shows John K. in 1931, at age 72, with two clocks that he made the previous winter.

The mechanisms in all of John K.'s clocks were completely his work. All of the cases were his design. In later years

he was assisted by grandson Ernest Piehl of Tavistock. Some cases were made from mahogany and some from walnut. Each showcased John K.'s talent for ornamental wooden inlay work, an intricate and time consuming art using hundreds of pieces of wood. As well, they featured hand-carved rosettes and fancy trim.

For many years one of the grandfather clocks stood proudly in the Tavistock Public Library, on loan from a family member. The case measured 9 feet in height. On that clock the pendulum was a Model T Ford wheel hub hidden by a false plate.

It's believed that some of the clocks are still with family members. One, built in 1897, is in the lobby of the Queen's Hotel in Stratford. One is at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau (Ottawa). The museum's website notes that this "long case clock" was made in 1926 by John K. Lemp and Ernest Piehl of Tavistock. It is made of walnut, metal, steel and glass and measures 259 cm high by 92.8 cm wide by 42.5 cm deep. John K., in his quiet unassuming way, would be proud that his clocks are still ticking.