

Transcript of Speech by Carla Jones

9 September, 1:00 pm – Corner First Street and King Street

My name is Carla Jones and I am the President of the Cobourg & District Historical Society.

I'm so pleased to be able to speak to you today. I'll start with a short mural history ...

Two well-known citizens were involved in this original creation; Bill Patchett and Dr. Thomas Hawke, pooled funds to redo the former Allen Hardware Building and commissioned and paid for the first mural.

Bill Patchett also invested in restoring the statue on the sidewalk. Famous for art lovers and selfie snappers making this a popular corner.

Mr. Patchett hired John Mitchell to paint the original mural in August 2001

According to newspaper reports, the mural took 150 hours of work and 20 gallons of paint.

Formerly from Cobourg, John is now living in Wingham Ontario driving over 3 hours to join us today.

Thank you for coming all this way, John.

YOU are our connection to the past as both Mr. Patchett and Dr. Hawke have passed on.

I shop downtown and park back there and often as I walked through here, I thought how sad it was that the paint was fading and peeling and what a poor reflection of the town it was. It felt like we didn't care about our own history.

About summer of 2018, Leona Woods, past President and I decided we'd research how we could get this mural restored.

Then 2019 and COVID hit us and as we all hunkered down ... The mural continued to fade.

It was late 2021 and we started the research once again.

We connected with the building owner, who was very supportive as well as various council members and the heritage group to start the process again.

We advised our historical society membership that we would do this and head up a fund raising project to restore the mural.

Through great investigative work our local Sherlock Holmes, Leona, found Allan Bender, an accomplished muralist from Belleville.

Now we could get our quote and begin the fund raising project. With a quote in hand, and meeting and hiring our new muralist, we needed help in making our way through permits and town red tape.

That was more work than we realized – isn't that always the way. Must admit, we found that pretty confusing.

We called on Deputy Mayor Nicole Beatty and asked her advice and help.

She would guide us in getting what we needed from the Town however she realized that if we were to fund raise, that this project might not be completed in 2023 after all.

She offered to speak with the Downtown Business Improvement Association on our behalf to see what funding they might commit to.

Imagine how excited and thankful we were to hear the news that the DBIA was funding almost the complete cost.

Carleigh Hunter is here representing the DBIA.

The restoration work was done by Allan Bender of Belleville, Ontario who has done many projects like this. Hi Allan.

Allan took this project by the horns, even contacting John Mitchell for some history.

Allan has done an outstanding job in the restoration.

Many of you saw him and his assistant on the lifts in the blazing heat that week and watched as parts and pieces of the mural were transformed throughout the week.

And so this project is complete and we commemorate the history of the Cobourg to Rochester Ferries, the original building owners, the current owner and residents by placing a new plaque on the building.

So just before we make our official unveiling, I would like to encourage everyone to shop, eat and support our downtown and local businesses.

And I do hope some of you will consider joining the historical society.

Thank you everyone for coming today and supporting us as we unveil the new plaque and take a few pictures.