He stayed, married local girl Margaret Hayden and got a job at a foundry as a labourer. He acquired enough skills eventually to become a partner in the company. In the early 1860s, he bought the foundry and called it the Ontario Foundry.

Both he and his son William were Methodists with rigid work ethics and gruff demeanours, though the father seems to have been a well-liked and respected businessman. The son, on the other hand, came off as arrogant.

"I have never discovered why he started building railway cars except that, in the middle 1860s, there was an attempt to revive the old Cobourg Peterborough Railway," he guessed. "Presumably, the principles there asked him to build these cars for them.

"By that time, he certainly knew the foundry business well, and he had travelled extensively around Northumberland County and knew where the lumber was. The combination together probably made him say, 'Yes, I can do this.'

"The first car was built in 1867, and was built for the Cobourg Peterborough and Marmora Railway and Mining Company — it was a coach, but I have no idea of what it looked like.

"His first cars were sleeping cars built for the new Canadian Pacific Railway that supposedly rivalled anything that could be built in the United States at that time. railway rolling stock in Canada, employing upwards of 300 men."

The last car came out of the company in 1916 or early 1916. William died in 1928 with an estate worth $815,000. He had three children all of who moved away. The nearest descendant Mr. Rafuse has been able to locate is a grandson in Montreal.

"My sense, from the research I have done, is that the fortune dissipated within the next generation, which is often the case. And I found that in many respects, with the few family members I was able to find, I knew far more about the company than any of the descendants," he said.

"It was a private company, so they didn't have to report anything to the government. When I tried to track down company documents, I was told they had been destroyed. Were they thrown out? Burned?

"I think it happened around 1926, which is when all the legal patents for the company were given back to the Dominion government. The documents probably got chucked out, which is a shame."

Mr. Rafuse is proud of the selection of photographs he has amassed for his book, and points out that the value of a photograph is not just in the people but in all the details — some only discernible with a magnifying glass. Put all the elements of a photograph together, he said, and it has a tale to tell.

Colborne Chronicle MAR 10/05

DEATH NOTICES

GILLESPIE, DONALD GRANT

Peacefully at the Northumberland Hills Hospital, Cobourg on Sunday, March 6th, 2005 in his 78th year. Beloved husband of Jean Somerville of Grafton. Loving father of Gary of Colborne, Glen (Janice), and Tim (Susie) both of Grafton. Dear grandfather of Sarah, Jenna, Steven, Jimmy, Lindsey, Jeff, Mark and Justin. Brother of Bob Gillespie (Marion) and the late Bill. A private family graveside service will be held in the Spring at Fairview Cemetery, Grafton. If desired donations may be made to the Red Cross Homemakers. Condolences received at www.maccoubrey.com

Province freezes agricultural land

Colborne Chronicle MAR 3/05

By Bob Owen
chronicle@bellnet.ca

A policy statement from the Ontario Government which came into effect on March 1 has put a freeze on development of Class 1, 2, and 3 agricultural land and lands defined as specialty crop areas in the province.

In the document it states that lot creation and lot adjustments will have severe restrictions in prime agricultural areas.

Lot creation in these areas will be discouraged and may only be permitted for four reasons.

Lots can be created for agricultural uses provided they are appropriate in size for the type of uses common to the area and sufficiently large enough to allow for flexibility in future uses.

Agricultural-related uses will be allowed on newly created lots, but they will be limited in size to allow for water and sewage services.

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Province

When farms merge, and there is a surplus residence, it can be severed.

When easements or rights-of-way cannot be used to create an infrastructure corridor, a lot can be created.

The end result is that there will be no more homes built on prime agricultural land unless the severance has been applied for prior to March 1.

The policy will supersede municipal Official Plans, and remove the decision-making process from local politicians when dealing with Class 1, 2, and 3 land, but municipalities may expand or identify a settlement area to allow new lots.

Extraction of minerals, petroleum and aggregates also takes precedence.

Within very narrow parameters, non-residential uses may be allowed.

The same policy document protects mineral mining operations from development activities that will preclude or hinder their expansion.

Library must pay licencing fees

Colborne Chronicle MAR 17/05

With a cornucopia of computers on offer, Cramahe Township Public Library Board must now ante up the annual licensing fee and cost of virus software to ensure they work.

Those budgeted costs will push this year's estimated expense up from $101,327 last year to $119,405. Still, the board came in $26,948 at the end of 2004, due to a one-time special grant amongst other items. The Board Chair Felicity Sidnell-Reid, with Chief Librarian Sue LaBerge and other board members indicated there may be room to cut a further $500 from the proposed budget - if volunteers continue to courier books to shut-ins gratis Midway through 2004, the Colborne Library branch connected to highspeed internet access which is resulting in a budget cost increase for the full year in 2005. Cramahe Councillor Marc Combs is suggesting the board review providers of highspeed internet with an eye to providing the service gratis as a community donation.

With a view to long-term savings, the boars is suggesting five thousand plasticized membership cards at a cost of $1,000 be ordered to meet demand over several years.

The board is also investigating grant funding for a new Saturday morning storytime at the Colborne branch, as well as Community Access Program (CAP) funding for the internet access offered at both the Colborne and Castleton branches.

With the computers donated by the Gates Foundation comes the requirement for annual licensing, plus virus protection.

- MANDY MARTIN