

# HART'S BOOKSTORE & ALMANAC

**John Hart Sr., John Semple Hart, William Brown Hart**

In 1887 the *Toronto Mail & Expositor* opined that “the culture of a community is largely due to the discrimination and tact of the bookseller”, going on to observe that “this at least is true in so far as this city [Perth] is concerned”. The town was, the newspaper said, home to “the finest bookroom in the Dominion outside of Toronto and Montreal ... contributing to the intellectual and aesthetic of its patrons”.<sup>1</sup> The object of such remarkable praise, Hart’s Book & Stationary Store, was a local institution; family owned and operated over three generations, it served Perth, eastern Ontario and beyond for 84 years.

The founder of Perth’s famous bookstore, John Hart Sr. (1808-1881), was a native of Paisley, Scotland. By the time he married Jean/Jane Mason Semple (1808-1907) in 1830 he was a successful Glasgow merchant; a lessor of hand looms and owner of a store specializing in books and stationery.

Historically, Scottish weaving had been a cottage industry, with middle-class merchants owning the looms which they rented out to individual weavers who worked in their own homes. By 1820, however, the invention of the Jacquard loom<sup>2</sup> saw the processing of most cotton and wool cloth industrialized, and thousands of handloom weavers thrown out of work. Nevertheless, the fine work demanded in the production of Paisley Shawls kept a small pool of craftsmen at work for another decade, and in the mid-1830s there were still an estimated 6,000 looms in Paisley, owned by more than 100 merchant firms, among them businesses owned by the Hart and Semple families. By the 1840s, however, further advances in powered loom technology was driving even the shawl weavers, and the merchants who supplied their looms, out of business.



The men and women consigned to the growing ranks of Glasgow’s unemployed had once been the Hart family’s<sup>3</sup> customers, renting their looms and shopping in their bookstore. Rooted in its first Education Act of 1496, and progressing through the programs of John Knox’s *Book of Discipline* in 1560, to the establishment of parish schools in 1616, and the Education Act of 1633 imposing land taxes to support those schools, by the 17th century Scotland boasted one of the highest literacy rates in Europe. All classes enjoyed the benefit of at least basic education and in the mid-19th century adult literacy in Scotland was close to 90% for men and over 75% for women.<sup>4</sup> Education bred a long standing Scottish passion for books and corresponding societies, but when unemployment led to hunger and eviction, there was no money to spend on improving the mind and the Hart bookstore in Glasgow began to falter.

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<sup>1</sup> *Toronto Mail & Expositor*, Trade Edition, May 14, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Invented in 1804 by Joseph Marie Jacquard (1752-1834), the Jacquard Loom was an attachment for powered looms that used punch cards to instruct (program) the machine how to make intricate textile patterns.

<sup>3</sup> John Hart’s brother, Thomas Hart (1813-1889), was also a Glasgow merchant, either in partnership with John or independently.

<sup>4</sup> Although the bar for measuring ‘literacy’ was not always particularly high.

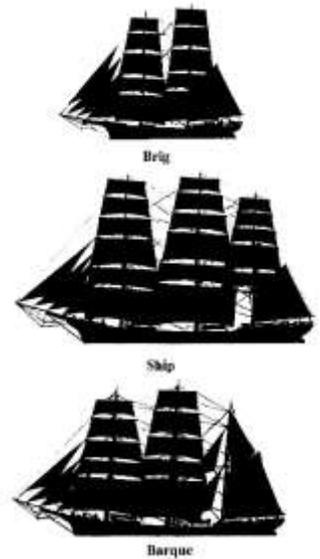
As more and more weavers, and those who lost other jobs dependent upon the weaving industry, faced ruin, agents of the Canada Company<sup>5</sup> at Glasgow were loudly advertising opportunities for the purchase or lease of land in the Huron Tract<sup>6</sup> of Canada West (Ontario). They promised that,

*... the poorest individual can procure for himself and family a valuable tract; which, with a little labour, he can soon convert into a comfortable home, such as he could probably never attain in any other country – all his own!"*

With few prospects for improving their lot in Scotland, the unemployed of the 1830s-1840s were soon electing to follow earlier generations of their countrymen to North America.

With his own prospects circumscribed, John Hart Sr. made the decision to go with his former clients; but always the entrepreneur, rather than follow, he chose to lead. Seeing opportunity in the emigration itself, Hart and a partner<sup>7</sup> organized and financed the travel to Canada of a company of 400 men, women and children. As his son, Samuel (1849-1933), later recalled, "*my father financed the voyage and ... derived some financial benefit from it in bringing out himself and family*"<sup>8</sup>.

Through shipping agents Gilmore & Company, Hart and his partner chartered the barque<sup>9</sup> *Carleton*<sup>10</sup>, under command of Captain John Allan. The *Carleton* sailed from Glasgow and Greenock on April 15, 1842 carrying 245 male and 154 female passengers, among whom were John Hart Sr. (34), his wife Jean (34), and their first four children John Jr. (9), Thomas (7), Margaret (5) and William (1), as well as James Richard Semple (1816-1876)<sup>11</sup>, Jean Semple-Hart's younger brother. On the second day at sea a nine-year-old boy was found stowed away in a rope locker, bringing the total number of passengers to an even 400, plus a crew of 25. The 51-day passage by sail was sometimes stormy but largely uneventful except for the birth of one child and the death of another due to a measles outbreak. The *Carleton* reached Quebec City on June 5th and after a brief stop continued up-river to Montreal.



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<sup>5</sup> Incorporated in 1825 the Canada Company was a private British land development company created by Royal Charter to aid in the colonization of Canada.

<sup>6</sup> The present Ontario Counties of Huron, Perth, Middlesex and Lambton.

<sup>7</sup> The partner has not been identified.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Richmond Hart (1849-1933) quoted in *Diary of Voyage of John Hart of Perth, Ontario, Who Left Glasgow Scotland on the 15th April 1842, Arriving at Quebec 5th June 1842, Fifty-one Days*, by John Hart, published by W. A Newman (1940).

<sup>9</sup> Barque: Three-masted vessel, square rigged on the fore and main masts and fore-and-aft rigged on the third aftermost mast.

<sup>10</sup> Apparently the barque *Carleton*, owned by Robert Catto of Aberdeen, built in New Brunswick in 1834, Berthen 404 tons, Dimensions 111' X 28' 10" X 20' 9", Lloyd's Code AE1 (Lloyd's Shipping Register's second highest quality classification) - see *Fast Sailing and Copper-Bottomed: Aberdeen Sailing Ships and the Emigrant Scots the Carried to Canada 1774-1855*, by Lucille H. Campey (2002).

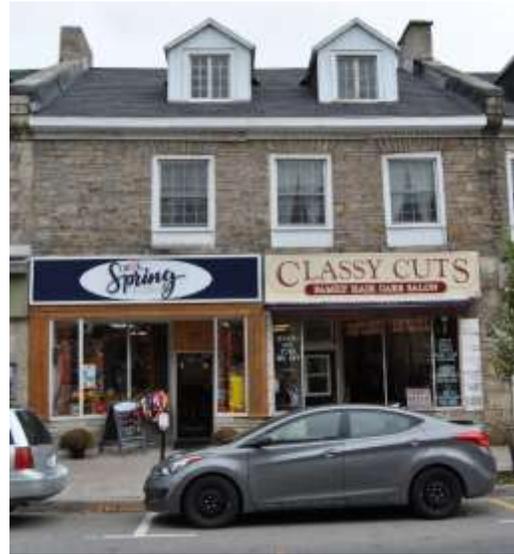
<sup>11</sup> James Richard Semple also lived at Perth for a number of years, where he married Cecilia Leggett (b.1826) in 1843. He moved to Hanover (near Buffalo), New York, c1851 and to Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1860s where he died in 1876.

From Montreal the Harts and most of the *Carleton* passengers continued by steamboat up the Ottawa River and then along the Rideau Canal bound for the head of Lake Ontario. The Hart's, however, did not continue to the Huron Tract. At Rideau Ferry they disembarked, loaded their baggage on wagons and travelled seven miles north to Perth.

John Hart Sr. left a detailed account of his family's 1842 sea voyage<sup>12</sup>, published in 1940 by his grandson William Arthur Newman (1889-1953) with some appended memoirs by several of his children. Nothing in that book explains, however, why the Harts chose to settle at Perth while the bulk of the *Carleton* company Hart was leading continued westward. The *Cyclopedia of Canadian Biography* (1888) says that "Mr. Hart Sr. only intended to stay in Perth a few days and then go on to Toronto, but whilst [at Perth], he was persuaded to remain and make it his home".



-1901-



27-29 Gore Street East

-2019-

In 1850 John Hart Sr., with the assistance of his 17-year-old son John Semple Hart, opened a small bookstore at an unknown location in Perth. That business did well and six years later they built a 2½ storey stone building at 27-29 Gore Street East<sup>13</sup> to house an enterprise that would become an institution known across Ontario and beyond. The building had 3,000 square feet of retail space augmented by a two-storey warehouse in the rear. Its 40-foot frontage offered two entrances flanked by three plate glass windows, with polished brass handrails running in front of the windows for protection. Counters, shelves and other fixtures were all of polished wood and when electricity reached Perth in 1877 Hart's store was one of the first stores to be lit by electric light.

*The store, is a model of neatness ... the arrangement and general plan are strikingly attractive.*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Diary of Voyage of John Hart of Perth, Ontario: Who left Glasgow Scotland on the 15th April 1842, Arriving at Quebec 5th June 1842, Fifty-one Days*, by John Hart, published by W. A Newman (1940), 46 pages – Perth Matheson House Museum collection.

<sup>13</sup> The house now at 19-21 Drummond Street East was moved from the 27-29 Gore Street East site to make way for the new store.

<sup>14</sup> *Toronto Mail & Expositor*, Trade Edition, May 14, 1887.

The enterprise was, at its core, a book and stationary supply business, offering a wide range of, newspapers, periodicals and magazines (Canadian, American and European); general literature, dictionaries, testaments, prayer books, sheet music, school texts and copy books; as well as blank passbooks, diaries, account books and standard forms for deeds, mortgage, conveyancing and other business transactions. However, its inventory extended far beyond products falling into the book and stationary categories; they also sold garden seed, fruit trees, dye stuffs, paints, glass, coal oil lamps, wallpaper and window shades. Harts stocked musical instruments, chromo lithographs, engravings, coloured prints, jewelry, mirrors, hair oils, toilet soap and a thousand other items. Moreover, the reach of Hart's store went far beyond Perth and the immediate area. Its offerings were available at both retail and wholesale terms so that dealers in neighbouring towns could secure stock through the Perth store and warehouse, and almost everything on the shelves was also available by mail order.



37 Herriott Street

When they arrived at Perth, the Hart family first lived in rented accommodation on Drummond Street opposite St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, before building a house in Carolina Village in about 1845. They moved to accommodation on Wilson Street in 1855, and then in 1860, built a new home at 37 Herriott Street. That Herriott Street house was formally recognized for its heritage value by Town of Perth in 1982<sup>15</sup> and listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP) in 2008<sup>16</sup>,

*... a 2½ storey frame building ... an excellent example of the Italianate style which was popular in Canada for town houses around the time of Confederation, complete with a square plan, hipped roof, and decorative bell-shaped dormer window ... diamond appliques at the bottom of the portico posts which relate to the pediment-topped first-floor windows, the rounded windows, and the dormer's curve which is echoed and widened in the surround of the double window below it.<sup>17</sup>*

The Herriott Street house was successively the home of John Hart Sr., his son John Semple Hart and his grandson William Brown Hart and their families.

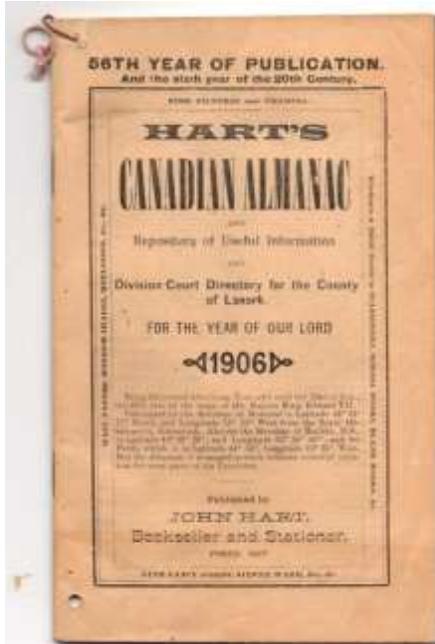
Prominent as the Hart Bookstore was at Perth, its proprietors were more widely known for publishing *Hart's Almanac*, or, to cite its full title, *Hart's Canadian Almanac and Repository of Useful Information and Division Court Directory for the Counties of Lanark, Renfrew, Leeds and Grenville*. Appearing annually for 64 years, from 1850 through 1914, a copy of *Hart's Almanac* lay close at hand in the office, shop or home of every businessman, merchant, lawyer, judge, teacher, postmaster, minister, banker, tradesman, farmer, travelling salesman, civil servant and politician across the four counties, as well as much of Ontario and western Quebec.

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<sup>15</sup> By-Law 2457, July 13, 1982. Also known as the Jean O'Donnell House.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=8515>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



Among blank diary pages for each day of the year, and advertisements for the many goods and services available through 'Hart's of Perth', readers of *Hart's Almanac* could find useful information on post offices; postage rates; money order offices; savings banks; the Division Court Directory; School Boards Directories; census statistics and agricultural statistics. There was also a list of bank holidays in Ontario; an extensive Directory of Professional Services; tables for standard weights & measures; interest and currency exchange; calendars covering moveable festivals; charts for the appearance of the planets, eclipses during the year, equinoxes and solstices; and, of course, "*Herschel's Weather Table – Foretelling the Weather Through all the Lunations of the Moon Forever*".

Another publishing venture was *The Gye and Perth Commercial Advertiser*<sup>18</sup>. Although it contained both editorial copy and advertisements, it was not a newspaper; it was delivered to readers free of charge through the post. The

inaugural edition for April of 1858 contained multiple advertisements for goods and services available at the Hart Bookstore, but also for blacksmith's coal and circular saw machines offered by Richard Shaw<sup>19</sup> at 'Farmers' Foundry'; photographic portraits taken by the ambrotype, melianotype or cameotype method at the studio of Ezekial Morrison<sup>20</sup>; horse harness, valises and travelling bags from the Saddlery of Thomas Jamieson<sup>21</sup>; and printing services for business cards, funeral letters and steamboat bills at the *British Standard* newspaper printshop. The editorial content of the first edition concerned the importance of proper drainage for farms and gardens. The *Gye & Advertiser* was comparable to modern advertising fliers and appeared for a number of years through the 1860s.<sup>22</sup>

In 1859 Harts bought-out the entire stock of schoolbooks and stationery of bookseller Charles Rice, who also published the *Perth Courier*, and became essentially the only store of its type at Perth. A rhyme from an unknown poet, entitled *The Businessmen of Gore Street*, published by the *Perth Courier* in 1864, included the lines,

*Hart has a bookstore where you will get  
Papers and books of every kind  
With a better store I have not met  
And a nicer man 'tis hard to find.*<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> According to the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* <https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/gey> - Gye, Gey, Gae or Gei means 'fine', 'excellent', 'great'; or 'peculiar', often used ironically; or of size, as 'considerable', 'good', 'great', 'good-sized'.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Shaw (1822-1872), eldest son of James Shaw (1798-1878), Perth and Smiths Fall merchant, founder of the local department store 'Shaw's of Perth' and Canadian Senator 1867-1878.

<sup>20</sup> Ezekial Morrison (1831-1904) operated Perth's first photo studio and gallery on the second floor of a building at 81 Gore Street East (where the Crane building now stands).

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Jamieson (1828-1917); his shop was located at 69 Gore Street East.

<sup>22</sup> A copy of the first edition of *The Gye & Perth Commercial Advertiser* (Vol.1, No.1, April 1858) is in the collection of the Perth Matheson House Museum.

<sup>23</sup> *Perth Courier*, May 13, 1864 – 'The Businessmen of Gore Street, Perth', by 'A Visitor'.



Active in many endeavors outside his bookstore, John Hart Sr. was elected to the first Perth Town Council when the municipality was incorporated in 1859 and continued to serve as a councilor while the Town Hall was built in 1863 and the first streets were paved.

He was also a leading figure in the Presbyterian Church. On his arrival at Perth, he joined the congregation at Reverend William Bell's (1780-1857) First Presbyterian Church where he was precentor and a Sunday School leader. When Bell retired in 1857, Hart did much to ensure the smooth integration of Bell's congregation with that of Reverend William Bain (1814-1889) at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Hart served as an Elder at St. Andrew's for a quarter century, and, in 1875, when the four branches of Canadian Presbyterianism<sup>24</sup> unified as the Presbyterian Church in Canada, he represented Perth's St. Andrew's at the founding Synod and at subsequent General Assemblies of the unified church.

John Hart Sr. retired from day-to-day involvement with his Gore Street bookstore in the late 1870s, leaving management and eventual ownership in the hands of his eldest son, John Semple Hart.

His second son, Thomas Hart (1835-1912), studied at Queens University, Kingston, and was briefly principal of Perth Grammar School in the 1860s before further study at the University of Edinburgh. In 1872 was ordained by the Church of Scotland for missionary service in Manitoba, the same year he married Isabella Malloch (1846-1928), daughter of Judge John Glass Malloch (1806-1873) of Perth. Thomas was professor of French, ancient classics, and Hebrew at Manitoba College, a member of its board of management 1874-1912, and a founding professor of the University of Manitoba in 1877. From 1886 to 1911 he was convenor of the Presbyterian synod's Foreign Missions Committee, responsible for missions to the indigenous population. In that capacity Thomas Hart acted on his belief that Canada's First Nations were incapable of becoming full members of Canadian society and that only after a long period of careful supervision by Christian missionaries could they be educated and gradually assimilated into Canadian society. He vigorously supported the regime of First Nations residential, industrial and day-schools. He died at Winnipeg.

John Hart's son, William (1841-1914), was an artist (painter) and interior designer. He married (1875) Albertine Schneider (1846-1926) and died at Philadelphia.

His son Richmond J. (1844-1892), the first of his children born at Perth, married (1880) Mathilda Josephine McKenny (b.1859). He worked as a Hudson Bay Company Agent and died in Saskatchewan.



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<sup>24</sup> The Canada Presbyterian Church, The Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Established Church of Scotland, The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces of British North America, and The Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces.

In 1874 John Hart's youngest son, Samuel R. (1849-1923), founded 'Hart & Co. Booksellers, Publishers and Stationers'<sup>25</sup> located at 5 King Street West, Toronto. He married (1882) Janet Hay Wyllie (1856-1939) and died at Toronto.

John Hart Sr. was also the father of four daughters. Margaret R. (1837-1914) married (1856) George Edward Neilson (1834-1911) one-time editor of *Rideau Gleaner* at Smiths Falls and later collector of customs at Arnprior. She died at Arnprior. Jane A. married (1867) her cousin Robert Adams Semple (1841-1937), of the Samuel Semple & Son Cotton Mill family at Mount Holly, Burlington New Jersey, USA. She died in New Jersey. Caroline married (1873) Francis Brown Allen (1849-1896) a Perth merchant tailor with a store at 33 Gore Street East. She died at Perth. Annie married (1872) Maitland Newman (1846-1913), a commercial traveler. She died at Montreal.

John Hart Sr. died at the age of 73 years on October 23, 1881 and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery. His wife, Jean Mason Semple, died in 1907 and was buried beside him.

### John Semple Hart (1833-1917)

On the death of John Hart Sr., his eldest son, John Semple Hart, who had been active in the family business since its founding three decades earlier, assumed ownership of the company, sustaining and expanding the enterprise in all of its facets; the bookstore, retail and wholesale distribution, mail order services and *Hart's Almanac*.

In the late 1850s John S. had been a founding member of what must have been Perth's first 'Literary Society'. Known as 'The Homeboys', the group was created by "*three young local men... John Hart, Charles Mair<sup>26</sup> and Edmund Morris<sup>27</sup> ... [who] clubbed together for discussions and to encourage their talent*"<sup>28</sup>. Hart's interest in the arts helped make the family bookstore a defacto cultural centre. As historian Larry Turner observed, "*Hart's was not an ordinary bookstore. It became an intellectual focus for the young community where people went to read the latest newspapers from London, New York and Montreal.*"<sup>29</sup>.

Perth established its first library in 1832 when Reverend William Bell (1780-1857) chaired an organizational meeting of "*40 responsible citizens of Perth*"<sup>30</sup>. That effort failed within a year, but in 1844 a 'Mechanic's Institute' was founded, to encourage "*the pursuit of useful knowledge*". The Mechanics Institute operated a reading room<sup>31</sup>, hosted lectures on subjects from the arts and sciences, and by 1897 was managing a library 2,900 volumes. Many of those books were

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<sup>25</sup> Specializing in publishing textbooks and the *Canadian Almanac*. From 1892 'Hart & Riddell'.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Adam Mair (1831-1927), author of *Dreamland and Other Poems* (1868), *Tecumseh* (1886) and *Through the Mackenzie Basin* (1908). He was also a founding member of the 'Canada First Movement', promoters of a particularly virulent and aggressive Anglo-Saxon Canadian nationalism. See *Canada First: Charles Adam Mair*, by Ron W. Shaw at <http://www.perthhs.org/documents/charles-a-mair-shaw.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> The suggestion is that this is Perth-born painter Edmond Morris (1871-1913), but Edmond Morris was not born until about two decades after founding of 'The Homeboys'. The third founding member was probably not Edmond Morris but William John Morris (1832-1907), second son of William Morris (1786-1858), Perth Merchant and first member of Parliament. William John Morris was an engineer, surveyor, merchant, businessman and one-time Perth Postmaster.

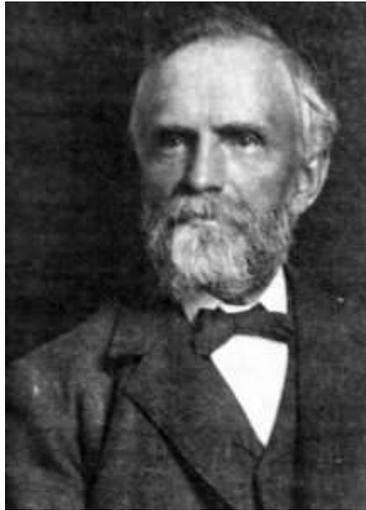
<sup>28</sup> *Come, Bright Improvement! The Literary Societies of Nineteenth Century Ontario*, by Heather Murray (2002)

<sup>29</sup> *Perth: Tradition & Style in Eastern Ontario*, by Larry Turner (1992).

<sup>30</sup> Rev. William Bell Diary, Queens University.

<sup>31</sup> At 75 Gore Street East and later at 39-43 Gore Street East.

purchased through Hart's Bookstore. Services offered by the Institute were not, however, particularly reliable. As its membership and fortunes rose and fell over the years until its demise in 1900, subscriptions to the periodicals offered at the reading room were not always maintained and the issues on hand were often not current. Hart's Bookstore, however, remained a constant and dependable source of up-to-date journals, magazines and newspapers from a wider range of publishers than the Mechanic's Institute could match.



*John Semple Hart (1833-1917)*

Like his father, John Semple Hart's business interests extended well beyond the Gore Street bookstore. He held a stake in the Tay Navigation Company and was a partner<sup>32</sup> in the Canadian Bark Works<sup>33</sup>, a factory that, from 1868 through 1874, extracted tannin from hemlock bark for use in tanning leather. From 1896 to 1900 he was a partner and director<sup>34</sup> of the Perth Canning Company Ltd. that, at one point, put up 3,700 cans of peas in a single day and sold its 'Royal Standard' line of tinned vegetables to grocery stores across eastern Ontario. Unfortunately, the Navigation Company was never profitable and after less than five years, the Bark Works exhausted the supply of bark and the canning factory was forced to close due to an inadequate supply of vegetables. In 1893 John S. Hart was also among the founding shareholders, and sat on the first board of directors, of the Facer Hammered Solid Steel Car & Locomotive Wheel Company Ltd. of Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>35</sup>

In 1864 Hart was named a Justice of the Peace, he was a Town Councillor and trustee of the Perth Board of Education for many years and was a long-standing activist of the Conservative Party at both the provincial and federal levels.

John Semple Hart was the driving force behind creation of Perth's Elmwood Cemetery in 1872 and served as treasurer and manager of the cemetery company for over 15 years.

Throughout his life John S. also pursued an active interest in military affairs. He rose to the rank of Major in the sedentary militia and during the 1861 *Trent* affair<sup>36</sup> was a leading figure in the local drill association (home guard).

During the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, when the Dominion Militia Department decided, for the first time, to establish field hospitals for wounded and sick soldiers, John S. was at the forefront of equipping and supplying the hospital at Moose Jaw. Prompted by his long connection with the Militia, and further inspired by the selection of Perth native Johanna Matheson (1842-

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<sup>32</sup> The other partners were Thomas Aspden, Alexander Morris, William John Morris, John Manion and a Boston, USA, Company.

<sup>33</sup> Located at Bathurst Township C-3/L-2, at Gravely Bay on the north shore of Christie Lake.

<sup>34</sup> Other Directors were T. A. Code, T. A. McArthur, W. A. Moore, Dr. Grant, J. G. Campbell and J. M. Rogers.

<sup>35</sup> With a capital stock of \$600,000 (6,000 shares of \$100 each); other Perth shareholders were Albert Wilson, Churchill Wilson and Robert John Drummond.

<sup>36</sup> When the U.S. Navy forcibly seized two Confederate States diplomats from a British ship, the *RMS Trent*, during the American Civil War the incident threatened war between the United States and Britain until U.S. President Abraham Lincoln backed-down and released the diplomats to the British.

1916)<sup>37</sup> as one of a 12 nursing sisters sent to staff the hospital, Hart canvased his fellow townsmen for cash and in-kind donations. On May 29, 1885, only five days after the first casualties reached the Moose Jaw field hospital, the *Perth Courier* reported that Hart had already despatched a consignment of medical supplies and more were on their way;

*Moose Jaw Hospital - The Town of Perth has contributed so far eight packages of hospital supplies for the use of our wounded volunteers in the North-West, at the above hospital, containing besides supplies purchased by cash subscription, the following articles donated by individuals, and kindly received and packed by Mr. Hart at his store:*

*7 white bed quilts, 17 pairs sheets, 40 pairs pillow slips, 10 pillows, 2 blankets, 24 nightshirts, 70 towels, a quantity of socks, 5 men's undershirts, 70 prepared bandages, 4 yards Canton flannel, 19 yards cretonne<sup>38</sup>, 13 packages absorbent cotton, 3 leg rest cushions, 1 sofa cushion, 1 dozen camp stools, 3 dozen small pin cushions, several pieces of gray & bleached cotton, parcels of old cotton, old linen & flannel, parcels of prepared wipes for wounds, 2 trunks, 10 Bibles.*



**Moose Jaw Field Hospital, 1885 - the requisitioned Moose Jaw Hotel**

John Semple Hart's involvement in the Militia, the Riel Rebellion and Elmwood Cemetery converged when, on May 12th, 1885, Perth native Lieutenant Alexander Walker Kippen (1857-1885)<sup>39</sup>, of 'The Dominion Land Surveyors Intelligence Corps', was killed at the Battle of Batoche. When Kippen's body was brought back to Perth and buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Hart led another round of fund-raising, this time to erect a suitable monument marking the grave of Perth's fallen hero. Two years later the local newspaper reported,

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<sup>37</sup> Joan Matheson, the daughter of Roderick Matheson (1796-1873), a prominent Perth Merchant and Canadian Senator, had trained at Bellevue Hospital Training School for Nurses, New York, USA. See *Joan of the Northwest* by Ron W. Shaw at <http://perthhs.org/documents/nurse-of-the-northwest-b.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> A heavy cotton fabric usually used for upholstery.

<sup>39</sup> Son of Duncan Kippen (1831-1926), Perth Postmaster for 16 years and Perth Mayor 1893-1894



*The monument to A.W. Kippen was finally put up in its place last week and is the most conspicuous object in the Elmwood Cemetery. It consists of a plain massive pillar with sloping sides on a base which in turn is placed on a terraced platform. Both pillars and base are of Canadian grey granite. Standing upon the monument proper is a sculptured figure of a Canadian volunteer in white marble, a little under life size, keenly gazing toward a possible enemy. The rifle is upright at his side and a field glass is grasped in his left hand*<sup>40, 41</sup>.

In 1857, a year after the Harts had opened for business at 27-29 Gore Street East, John Semple Hart married Margaret Brown (1836-1863), daughter of William Brown of Glasgow. They had four children.

Eldest son, John A. (1857-1946), began working in his father's bookstore in 1874, but in 1882 struck out on his own, moving to Winnipeg to take the position of manager at 'R. D. Richardson and Company, Stationers'. A decade later he opened his own store at 412 Main Street Winnipeg under the trade name 'John A. Hart Company' and operated that business until his retirement in 1926. He was also a partner in the 'British Columbia Stationery and Printing Company'. He married (1894) Wilhelmina Falconer (1875-1903). John A. was a founding member of the Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts, the Winnipeg School of Fine Art and the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba. He died at Middlechurch, Manitoba.

John Semple Hart's second son, William B. (1859-1936), joined his father's business at Perth. Daughter Jane (1863-1863) died as an infant and daughter Jessie M (1861-1901) was unmarried and died at Perth.

Margaret Brown-Hart died in 1863 and in 1870 John S. married Mary Irving (1835-1922), daughter of John Irving of Montreal. They had one child; Annie Isabel (1876-1943) who married (1909) William Hardie (1873-1920). She died at Ottawa.

John S. Hart was a widely travelled man. According to his entry in the 1888 edition of the *Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*,



*John Arthur Hart  
(1857-1946)*

*... he has visited nearly the whole of Canada from east to west, making the tour of the lakes from the Saguenay to Duluth, and the principal towns and cities of Ontario, on various occasions, and all the principal cities of the Northern and New England States, either for pleasure or business.*<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Perth Courier*, June 10, 1887.

<sup>41</sup> In 2009 the Kippen memorial was refurbished by Dr. Alan J. Drummond of Perth, a former Canadian Army Doctor, but of no relation to Lieutenant Kippen.

<sup>42</sup> *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography: Being Chiefly Men of the Time*, edited by George Maclean Rose (1888).

When John Semple Hart died in 1917 the *Perth Expositor* commented that he had been “... a remarkable man in many ways, full of vigor and life; he continued practically in business to within a few weeks before his demise and passed away at the age of 84 years”.<sup>43</sup>

The *Renfrew Mercury*, in its tribute, described his bookstore as a “fountain of knowledge to the people of Lanark & Renfrew Counties” and observed that “... thousands of people had heard of the store for years without ever seeing it, and large numbers knew John S. Hart by reputation only”.

John Semple Hart was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Perth, the cemetery he had done so much to create.

### William Brown Hart (1859-1863)

William B. Hart, second son of John S. Hart and grandson of bookstore founder John Hart Sr., worked in the family bookstore from a young age, as an employee and then partner, and assumed full ownership of the business when his father died in 1917.



Although the *Gye & Perth Advertiser* had ceased publication sometime in the late 1860s and *Hart's Almanac* had folded in 1914, the bookstore continued to provide the wide range of other products and services for which it had been famous for over 65 years. Those services were broadened even further in 1920 when William B. was appointed agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and established the CPR ticket office in the bookstore.

Like his father and grandfather, William B. Hart's interests were wide and varied. While still in his 20s he was a Town Councillor for six years in the late 1890s and was for many years Vice President of the Perth Board of Trade, a Trustee of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and a member of the Perth Board of Education.

William Brown Hart married Margaret McCallum Caldwell (1869-1945) in 1902, a daughter of lumber baron Boyd Caldwell (1818-1888). They had two children; Margaret C. (1904-1972) who married (1932) Dr. Arthur Coulson Fowler (1899-1987) and John Semple Hart II (1907-1972) who married (1934) Betty J. Edmison (1904-1935)

With an offer of \$25,000 in loan guarantees, Perth Town Council lured the Guelph Carpet Works to Perth in 1911<sup>44</sup> and William B. Hart became president of the re-named Perth Carpet Company. The new factory got off to a solid start in 1912 with a large 2,000-yard order from Ottawa's new Chateau Laurier<sup>45</sup> hotel, but the factory experienced problems from 1915 and closed in 1916, with the machinery shipped back to Guelph.

<sup>43</sup> *Perth Expositor*, September 1917.

<sup>44</sup> Guelph Town Council sued in an attempt to stop the deal but lost.

<sup>45</sup> Constructed between 1909 and 1912, at a cost of \$2,000,000.

In 1927 William B. Hart was named manager of Perth's first Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO)<sup>46</sup> outlet. The following year, after a decade at the helm of the Hart Bookstore, he sold the business<sup>47</sup> to John L. Scott of London, Ontario, "... *for the past five years, a commercial traveller, [who] prior to being a traveller had considerable experience in the bookstore business*".<sup>48</sup> Scott told the *Courier* that he intended to "*enlarge the stock, add other lines and improve the interior of the store extensively*" but fortune was not on his side. The store continued to operate under the name 'John Hart', as it had since 1850, but already weakened by the advent of the motor car, allowing consumers to conveniently shop over a wider area than their hometown, Hart's Bookstore was unable to survive the financial crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic depression of the 1930s. An institution that had served Perth and beyond for 84 years closed its doors in 1934.

William Brown Hart died at Perth, aged 77 years, in 1936. He was buried in Elmwood Cemetery. His wife Margaret Caldwell-Hart died in 1945 and was buried beside him.

- **Ron W. Shaw (2019)**

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<sup>46</sup> Establishment of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) in 1927 by the Conservative Government of Premier Howard Ferguson (1870-1946) brought an end to the prohibition era of 1916-1927.

<sup>47</sup> Exclusive of the building.

<sup>48</sup> *Perth Courier*, July 20, 1928.