

PROMINENT FAMILIES OF THE PERIOD

RICHARD DOVER CHATTERTON 1802-1885

*The light he shone on Cobourg yesterday
Illumines its story for us today.*



WHO HE WAS:

R.D. Chatterton was the son of a contractor known as the Plumber of Bath. Chatterton Sr. died saving others in a fire. His widow, Emily (nee. Dover) was left with enough money to raise her family comfortably, but not enough to secure their future.

So, at 26, Richard turned to the outposts of the British Empire to make his fortune. **He wanted enough money to marry and support his long-time fiancée**, Frances Howard (1800-1864).

HOW HE GOT HERE:

Following leads from home, Chatterton searched unsuccessfully for employment in Flamborough and then walked the 200 miles to Lake Huron, where he was unsuccessful again. Finally, the home connection came through as Judge Wm. Falkner, a former resident of Bath now living in Cobourg, persuaded Chatterton to locate here.



Frances "Fannie" Howard

WHAT HE DID HERE:

By dint of hard labour (we suspect) by January 1831 Chatterton had raised enough money to begin publishing **a weekly newspaper which he called the Cobourg Star**. Started in the rear of Benjamin Clark's store at the north-west corner of King and Division Streets, it was an immediate success.

Chatterton's first editorial called it...

"A Journal of Intelligence... it is hoped it will always afford to the pursuit of knowledge and the path of truth a steady and attractive light."

By 1833 the Cobourg Star had proved profitable enough that Chatterton sailed to England and married his sweetheart "Fannie" Howard.

OWNER AND EDITOR OF THE COBOURG STAR

- The Chattertons were conservative and members of the Church of England so naturally the editorial policy of the Star reflected the views of the Tory and Anglican elite. Richard printed the Anglican newspaper, The Church.
- Rivals to the Cobourg Star did spring up, but all either ceased publication or were swallowed up by the Star.
- Well established by its founder, the Cobourg Star continued to prosper, and became the oldest weekly newspaper in Canada and a lasting legacy from Cobourg's earliest era.

THE MILITIA

All able-bodied men between 16 & 60 were automatically members of the Local Militia. Richard Chatterton was no exception. In the aftermath of the Rebellions of 1837 there were continuing skirmishes between Government troops and those who had fled following the Rebellions. One such skirmish, which occurred on the Niagara Peninsula, became known as the Battle of the Short Hills. **Richard Chatterton was there.**



"In the early morning hours on Monday, June 11, 1838 the steamer Red Jacket edged up to the Canadian shore opposite the head of Navy Island. It discharged its cargo of twenty-six men ...All quietly left the ship and disappeared into the woods. They headed west on what they described as a secret mission "to bring independence to Canada."

"To their great dismay, however, the frontier fighters discovered that the area was not ripe for rebellion and that the anticipated support from the populace in the peninsula never did materialize."

Historical Narratives of Early Canada

WHAT ELSE?

In addition to his newspaper business, Richard Chatterton:

- opened a land agency and general registry office
- operated an auction house
- served as Clerk of the County Court and Surrogate Court
- built a handsome "modest mansion" on Havelock Street at George, where he and Fannie lived out the rest of their lives (they were childless).



The Chatterton Home Today