



**THE OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

JUNE 2014

Volume 48 Number 2

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday
Oct 15 **Ms. Kealy Wilkinson** is from the Canadian Broadcast Museum Foundation which collects, preserves and celebrates the National Broadcast Collection including programs, artifacts, oral histories, etc. from private and public broadcasters. She will share some of these with us.

Wednesday
Nov 15 **Ms Bev Dietrich**, Curator of Guelph Museums. Her talk will be, "In Flanders Fields: John McCrae's Story".

**Above presentations are held at St. John's United Church at
Randall and Dunn Streets, 7:30 - 9:00 pm
Admission is free and refreshments are served**

The Mayor's Historical Picnic will be held on Sunday June 8th at Lakeside Park. **Mayor Rob Burton** and our OHS Crier, **Ian Burkholder**, will open the picnic at 12:00 noon. Oakville's **Dixieland Band** will play until 2:30 and following that the **Oakville Wind Orchestra** (Canada's oldest Concert Band) will play until 4:30. Picnickers will be entertained by the **Oakville Ale and Sword Dancers** and children will be treated to balloons as well as face painting.

The **Oakville Firefighters** will once again be present with their Fire Engine and will demonstrate auto-extrication as part of their public education special projects. **Oakville Hydro** will be giving "bucket" rides in their special "cherry picker". Antique **Ford** cars will be on display.

It is an afternoon of music and free family fun . Bring friends and family, a picnic lunch, lawnchairs and sunhats. *Marianne Hawthorne*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another summer season must be upon us as the Thomas House is open for business and the Mayor's Picnic is all set to go. I hope to see many of you there.

This past winter has been one of the coldest and longest in recent memory. It was so cold, in fact, that for several months the sewers at the office were frozen solid. If made for some dashes across the lawn to the Museum. With the warmer weather, they're fine now so bring on the crowds of summer visitors.

If you are a member of another group, please consider booking one of our group walks. We now offer four – Old Oakville Heritage Houses, Main Street, Trafalgar Road and the new Oakville and St Mary's Cemetery. At this point, we are only offering them to groups. If we get enough interest, however, we can easily set one up.

I would like to thank all those who gave best wishes on the safe arrival in Regina of our first grandchild – Geneviève Rose Chisholm, a member of the 8th generation in Canada.

George Chisholm, President

Five of our board Members were recognized in April by the **Ontario Government's Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration** for years of volunteer dedication with Oakville Historical Society: Harry Barrett (60 years), George Chisholm (20 years), Greg Munz, Mary Davidson and Susan Wells (5 years each). George also received an award for his work with his Robotics Team. We are very grateful for the dedication and contribution of each of these hard-working board members.

Harry Barrett received enthusiastic applause, especially from the young volunteers in the audience. Harry's association with Oakville Historical Society began in the 1950s when he discovered old ships' manifests and other documents while working at Erchless and brought them to the attention of Mrs. Hazel Chisholm Mathews, founder of Oakville Historical Society. Mrs. Mathews used these documents in her noted history of Oakville, *Oakville And the Sixteen*. We are grateful to Harry for his ongoing work dedicated to the heritage of our beautiful town. *Andrea Stewart*



H. Barrett(l), M. Davidson, G. Chisholm,
G. Munz

Oakville and the Mississauga in the 19th Century

by Don Smith

After the American Revolution British American settlers loyal to the Crown arrived on the north shore of Lake Ontario. They encountered the Ojibwe First Nations. For some unknown reason the non-Aboriginal settlers termed the Ojibwe on the north shore of Lake Ontario, “Mississauga”, the name by which they are still known to this day. It is not their designation for themselves. In their Ojibwe language they call themselves, Anishinabeg, often written “Anishinaabeg.” They belong to a First Nations group that extends from the Great Lakes to the Northern Plains. The Ojibwe came down from the north, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century had expelled the Iroquois or Five (later Six) Nations from southern Ontario. As the Royal Proclamation of 1763 stipulated, the British made treaties with the Mississauga on the north shore of Lake Ontario before actual settlement proceeded.



Peter Jones at age 31 on the eve of his departure from England for Canada. Artist: Matilda Jones. Courtesy of the Victoria University Library, Toronto

Oakville remained a reserve on each side of the Sixteen Mile Creek, 960 acres in extent, until 1827. In that year Oakville’s founder, William Chisholm, purchased the tract from the Crown. The British believed that the treaty of February 28, 1820, gave them the right to sell the reserve. The British used the payment to help pay for the construction of log cabins for the Mississauga. At the Credit River to the east, Mississauga converts to Methodism (Methodists are now part of the United Church) built a model village.

From 1826 to 1847 the Credit Mississauga hunters, and fishers adapted to a new lifestyle of clearing land and practising European-style agriculture. Their own Ojibwe leaders such as Chief Peter Jones led the community. When in residence in the village the children and young adults attended the mission school and learned English. Literacy in English allowed them to record their own version of past events. The Credit Mississauga recalled the February 1820 treaty in terms quite different from the British. In 1847, Head Chief Joseph Sawyer and Chief Peter Jones recorded the Mississauga recollections of the treaties.

The list they prepared of “tracts of land, which to the best of their knowledge and belief have never been surrendered to the crown,” included, “the Reserve at the 16 mile creek now Oakville.” They believed that the British had promised to protect their land, not to sell it.

Oakville is blest that Hazel C. Mathews, William Chisholm’s great-granddaughter, wrote *Oakville and the Sixteen*. She was so thorough. In 1947 descendants of John Aikman Williams (1829-1921), an early resident of Oakville, allowed her to copy his memoirs. The original manuscript has not survived but her extensive summary does. In his memoirs Williams recalled how in the mid-1830s a group of Credit Mississauga returned to Oakville each summer. They encamped in a clearing on the east side of town site, near present-day First Street. Mathews summarized in *Oakville and the Sixteen*: “They made baskets, moccasins, bows and arrows, axe handles, ox yokes, brooms and mats to be traded in Oakville. Small Indian boys amused the white boys by shooting coppers out of a stock split so as to hold a copper while the sharp end was pushed into the ground. Old George Crookfinger was one of their leaders.”

Apart from Williams’s manuscript little additional knowledge survives about the Mississauga in early Oakville. In 1847 the Credit Mississauga moved further westward after the British refused to grant them security of tenure to their Credit River Reserve. They relocated west of Hamilton, near Hagersville, and there founded New Credit where they live today. In the late nineteenth century, well into the mid-twentieth century some New Credit people returned to Oakville but not to the lakefront. They and other First Nations berrypickers travelled in the late spring for a number of weeks to the strawberry farms north of town, such as that of John Cross north of the railway where Cross Avenue now runs. No written accounts record their memories.



Mississauga Place-Names at the Western End of Lake Ontario

One important reference does survive of a Mississauga visitor to Oakville. Hazel Mathews located it. In the *Oakville Star*, an early Oakville newspaper, she found an 1889 news story which reported that “Saigitoo, the medicine man from the Mississaugas of New Credit, ... son of the well known Indian doctor Maungwudaus,” visited Urquhart’s Medical Hall with a “full supply of medicines from his father’s recipes.” [The actual building in which Mr. Urquhart sold his herbs still stands at 182 Lakeshore Road East. For over twenty years it has been the home of TO SET A TABLE, which sells kitchenware and tabletop gifts on the same site in the same structure that Urquhart’s Medical Hall once occupied a century and a quarter ago.] Allan Sherwin noted many non-Aboriginal Canadians in the nineteenth century appreciated the experience and wisdom of the First Nation herbalists.

Saigitoo, or George Henry Jr. to use his English name, was in his mid-60s at the time of his Oakville visit. His father, Maungwudaus, or George Henry, had worked as a Methodist missionary assistant after several years of schooling at the Old Credit mission.



Maungwudaus, “a great hero,” in English George Henry.
second from left, 1851

The entrepreneurial Maungwudaus came to find Methodist church life too confining. In 1844 he broke away, and toured in Europe with his family in what would later be called a “Wild West Show.” Saigitoo, the best archer of Maungwudaus’s sons, spent his teenage years abroad. Each member of the troupe received a silver medal from the King of France in Paris. They were welcomed to the home of the Duke of Wellington in London. Queen Victoria’s first cousin, Sir Augustus d’Este, befriended them. Around 1854 Saigitoo took up residence at New Credit and married Mary Finger, one of George Crooked Finger’s granddaughters. As Allan Sherwin describes in *Bridging Two Peoples* Saigitoo became a prominent member of the New Credit community serving on their Council in the late nineteenth century.

In the 1890s the Elders had not forgotten that the British had sold their last remaining reserves, at Oakville, Bronte, and the Credit. On November 20, 1894, Saigitoo himself spoke at an important meeting at New Credit about land issues. The Hamilton Spectator reported the next day: *A Claim to Be Made to the Government For Payment for a Large Tract of Land on the North Shore, Including the Site of Oakville.* In Dr. Peter E. Jones's words the Dominion and the Provincial Board of Arbitrators decided, “*against the Indians’ claim.*”

Don Smith, a professor emeritus of history at the University of Calgary, was raised in Oakville. A member of the last graduating class of old Central School he attended Oakville Trafalgar High School, and then the University of Toronto. After graduate studies in Canadian History at Université Laval in Quebec City (M.A.) and the University of Toronto (Ph.D.), he taught at the University of Calgary from 1974 to 2009. He is author of *Sacred Feathers* and *Mississauga Portraits Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada*.

Allan Sherwin is a professor emeritus of neurology at McGill University where he taught and practiced clinical neurology. Dr. Sherwin’s clinical practice included work at a clinic responsible for the health of a First Nation community, which led to an appreciation of Indigenous traditions. He is author of *Bridging Two Peoples Chief Peter E. Jones, 1843–1909*.

OHS June 2014 cover is from *Mississauga Portraits* by Don Smith and reproduces the painting of Maungwudaus, completed by the famous Canadian artist Paul Kane around 1851. All illustrations accompanying this article are courtesy of Don Smith.

AROUND OAKVILLE



Al Wilson (at left) and Jack Mason meet every week and recently I had the pleasure of joining them. Al was born and grew up in Oakville while Jack moved here after serving in the army in World War II.

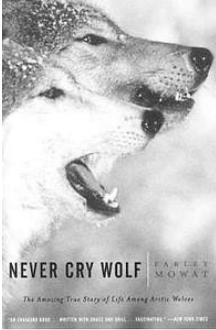
If you need to know anything about life in Oakville in the last 85 years, these are the men to ask. Between them they can tell you what an Oakville house lot cost in 1945 (\$50); where the rat-infested dump was (near the mouth of the 16); what happened after the basket factory workers went on strike (the pay rate went *down* from 15¢ to 12¢ per hour); where Count Basie played c1940 (the Country Club, in the former Jacob's Jam factory, Randall St.); cars Al has owned (one a 1962 Silver Grey Studebaker Lark); how 7 and 9 year old brothers enjoying a Sunday afternoon sail on Montye Macrae's schooner the *Anitra* and explained their absence to mother when it turned into a two-day race to Kingston against World War II training vessels; and other recollections a family paper cannot print. *Susan Wells*



Jack owns a pot manufactured by the aluminum factory that stood at the northeast corner of Trafalgar Road and Randall Street, currently the site of Trafalgar Lodge.

AROUND OAKVILLE

IT ALL STARTED RIGHT HERE IN OAKVILLE



Farley Mowat, May 12, 1921 - May 6, 2014, spent time with his grandparents at 212 King St. Oakville.

From *Never Cry Wolf* :

“It is a long way in time and space from the

bathroom of my Grandmother Mowat’s house in Oakville, Ontario, to the bottom of a wolf den in the Barren Lands of central Keewatin, and I have no intention of retracing the entire road which lies between. Nevertheless, there must be a beginning to any tale; and the story of my sojourn amongst the wolves begins properly in Granny’s bathroom.”



212 King St., Oakville

For Sale, see RE/MAX Aboutowne
Realty Corp., Brokerage

Correction. On page 9, March 2014 issue, we misspelled Whitaker. The name has one T. Thanks to a reader who alerted us. We welcome all comments and suggestions.

DOORS OPEN

Mark your calendars for the weekend of September 27 and 28. The Town of Oakville will be participating in a Halton-wide **Doors Open** event which will include many new sites in Halton Hills (Glen Williams), Milton and Burlington. A brochure describing the various sites will be available over the summer at our office, as well as Town of Oakville public spaces. We will welcome volunteers who are interested in assisting as hosts at our various sites. Please let me know if you are interested. *Andrea Stewart*

AROUND THE SOCIETY

Thomas House 2014

open 1:30 - 4:00 pm

May & June Open weekends and Holiday Mondays as of Saturday May 17, 2014

July & August Open weekends and Holiday Mondays plus Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

September Open Labour Day & Sundays until the end of September

Saturday & Sunday, September 27th & 28th Open with extended hours to coincide with the other venues throughout Halton for **Doors Open**

Do drop in and visit with our volunteers – bring your visitors for a glimpse of Oakville history.

Mary Davidson

Yard Sale 2014

In spite of the weather, we had a good turnout for the Yard Sale May 3rd and had some great things to sell.

Our grand tally at 3:30 pm was \$996 which was rounded up with an anonymous donation of two toonies, making the total an even \$1000.

I would like to thank all of you for your contribution of sale items, hard work setting up for the sale and selling to the public, today and during past sales. We had great support again from The Friends and other friends who helped out, including the Lakeside Rate Payers Association.

Several attendees expressed an interest in the Speakers Nights and in obtaining a membership in the Society. I think everyone enjoyed themselves and hopefully gave the OHS some added exposure, while earning a few extra dollars for the coffers of the OHS.

Jim Young



Volunteers and bargain hunters

AROUND THE SOCIETY

Our April speaker was **Mr. Terry Reardon** (r), author of *Winston Churchill And Mackenzie King So Similar So Different*, an intriguing title, the difference being obvious. While Mr. Churchill was famously extraverted, charismatic and impetuous, Canada's Prime Minister Mackenzie was a cautious introvert. But whatever the differences, they built a working, somewhat personal, relationship whose significance would have a profound effect on the outcome of World War II. Canada's role in the war was incalculable; it is estimated that our per capita contribution was three times that of the US. The sacrifice of the young men who went to war, the sacrifice made by Canadians in financial aid, technology and food all played an essential role. It is said that without Canadian food aid the British would have starved. King, working as intermediary between Churchill and Roosevelt played a large part in gaining the support of the American public in supporting the war. Mr. Reardon is to be congratulated on this readable and fascinating story and interesting account of the negotiations that took place in the course of World War II. Copies are available at a discount to our members through our office. *Andrea Stewart*



Hi Members,

There are some forty memberships which have not yet been renewed for 2014. We should hate to lose interested members. If you have not yet renewed, please complete and return the enclosed yellow renewal form.

Please note that we are now having our mail delivered to the office rather than the PO Box number. **Our new address is 110 King Street, Oakville, ON L6J 1B1**
Andrea Stewart, Memberships

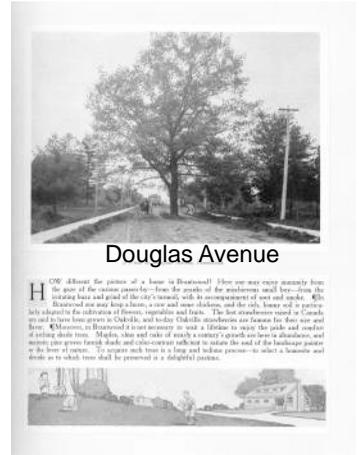
THE WAY THINGS WERE



Power Store on Kerr St. opening day, September 1959. To the north (right, in above picture) is the Liquor Control Board, now Salvation Army. The Power Store building has been replaced.



In 1814, land that is now **Glen Abbey** was granted to King's College. In the 1930s Toronto mining executive André Dorfman purchased 350 acres for a country estate, which he called Raydor (ré-Dor). The Toronto diocese of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) purchased the estate for \$265,000 in 1953. It was used as a retreat until 1963 when Clearstream Developments purchased the property for a golf course.



Brantwood Survey Booklet. Copyright 1913 by Cumberland Land Co. Limited. Brantwood Survey is bordered by Colborne St.(now Lakeshore Rd.), Spruce Ave., Allan St. and Gloucester Rd.

Send all mail to:

**110 King Street
Oakville, On
L6J 1B1**

**Our office address
is now our postal
address**

Archive Hours:

**Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 pm
Third Sun. of the month 12:30 to 4:00 pm**

(905) 844-2695 www.oakvillehistory.org

