



Our story

The Oakville Historical Society is a charitable organization that is passionate about preserving and promoting the historical heritage of the Town of Oakville, Ontario. In the early 1800s, a prosperous merchant and entrepreneur named William Chisholm purchased 960 acres of land around the mouth of Sixteen Mile creek and founded the Town of Oakville. Many generations later, in 1953, his great-granddaughter Hazel Chisholm Mathews created the Oakville Historical Society to discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge of the town's history.

Run entirely by committed volunteers, today the Oakville Historical Society hosts activities and events for all ages, to raise awareness of the Town of Oakville's legacy while connecting with the community. We also celebrate the history of local commercial and residential properties by creating historical plaques for buildings built in or before 1970. In addition to an extensive library of books on Oakville's history, our offices always have an exhibit displaying our fascinating archival collections. We also publish *The White Oak*, a quarterly newsletter sharing interesting moments in the Town of Oakville's past and present.

The Society (as we affectionately call it), operates out of two Cottages joined into one structure on the Erchless Estate, which were previously inhabited by Oakville's founding family. These cottages were restored by Society volunteers in the 1990s. Shortly after its founding, the Town of Oakville became an official Port of Entry to Canada for ships arriving from all over the Great Lakes and beyond. It's only fitting then, that we are within walking distance from the lakeshore which has always been buzzing with activity.

Our office is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. We're also open on the third Sunday afternoon of each month. Visitors are free to explore our library and displays. We offer guided walking tours of historical Oakville sites and we take pride in answering your questions about the Town of Oakville's history.

How we do what we do

The Society is funded through revenue generated from membership and support received from The Town of Oakville, Ontario Heritage Organization Development Grants, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and local businesses who purchase advertising space in **The White Oak** newsletter.

We also have Society members who support our cause by volunteering their time from painting our plaques to maintaining our gardens. A volunteer board of directors oversees the Oakville Historical Society's operations. We're proud that George Chisholm is President of the Society, given his unwavering commitment and birthright. George Chisholm's great-great grandfather *George*, was the younger brother of the Town of Oakville's founding father William Chisholm.

Celebrate Oakville with us

To promote awareness of Oakville's history and for fundraising purposes, we host annual events and regular activities throughout the year. Here's a summary of some recurring offerings. For more details on these and emerging events, please visit us at www.oakvillehistory.org.

Ghost Walks

Our most popular event by far, the Ghost Walks series is an opportunity to tour the old Oakville neighbourhood while guided by the "ghosts" who previously inhabited the historical homes! Engaging actors in costume delight small groups on walks through famed streets while sharing interesting facts about the real-life characters they play. Every October, Ghost Walk tours can be booked online at www.oakvillehistory.org or by calling the Oakville Historical Society at 905-844-2695.

Speakers' Nights

We showcase guest speakers from Oakville and beyond in an intimate setting followed by light refreshments and socializing. Some speakers are authors and others are history buffs. Previous guests have spoken to us about historical events such as the building of the Welland Ship Canal and Halton municipality's experience of wars from WWI to modern day. Our Speaker's Night is held a few times a year, watch our website for details on our next presentation.

Thomas House

Built in 1829 as the original home of the Merrick Thomas family, the Thomas House is furnished and presented as a pioneer home of the early 1800s, complete with many original family items. The house is operated by the Oakville Historical Society and is open during the summer months when our volunteers act as guides. Admission to the Thomas House is free, although donations in any amount help sustain the house which is maintained by Society volunteers.

Mayor's Historical Picnic

We are honoured to work with Oakville's Mayor to host this annual event every June. We celebrate with live music and Scottish country dancing recognizing the Society's heritage. The entire family will enjoy this casual event including children's face painting, balloon sculptures and more.

Annual Yard Sale

Thanks to the support of our many volunteers and community members, we collect gently used household items and every May, we host a yard sale with proceeds going towards the Oakville Historical Society.

Doors Open

We join this annual municipal event to invite the community to explore our collections and displays, our library of books and our historical offices.

Community Partnerships

There are a number of historical societies and municipal organizations that share our vision of promoting and preserving the heritage of the Town of Oakville. Some of the organizations we partner with to cross-promote events in and around Halton are: Oakville Public Library, Oakville Museum and historical societies in neighboring cities such as Mississauga, Burlington and Milton. For more details, please visit the *Activities* pages of our website.

Thank you

For all media inquiries please contact:

mediarelations@oakvillehistory.org | 905-844-2695

www.oakvillehistory.org