



OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

December 2015

Volume 49 Number 4

PUBLIC SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday
February 17 2016

Mr. Arden Phair will present "Life & Death on the Welland Ship Canal" and inform us about the Memorial being set up to commemorate a tragic event.

Above presentation will be made at St. John's United Church at Randall and Dunn Streets (enter by the Randall Street entrance)

Oakville Historical Society Annual General Meeting
Wednesday March 16th 2016 Pot luck at 6:30 pm, AGM at 7:30
St John's United Church



Calling All
Oakville Historical Society Members!

Christmas Wine and Cheese

Meet fellow History Enthusiasts
Renew Acquaintances

Friday December 4 6:00 - 10:00 pm
OHS Offices ~ 110 King Street.

2015

As 2015 winds down, our last day open at 110 King
St. will be Sunday 20th December 2015
We will open again Tuesday 5th January 2016

2016



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another season of Ghost Walks is just over and we're now headed for Christmas. The walks continue to be an important source of income for the Society and also bring many visitors in the door. This year we've had several new guides and helpers from local high schools. My thanks to Mary Davidson and Wendy Belcher and all those involved for all the work they do organizing and conducting the walks.

A couple of months ago I started an email exchange with a man in Montreal who visits Oakville regularly and became very interested in the mill that stood in the valley at the head of navigation on the Sixteen. He had read that there was a tunnel under the Hog's Back to bring water down from a dam that was upstream from the railway bridge but couldn't reconcile the placement with what he had seen in the area. We met last week and followed the spine of the Hog's Back down into the valley. We could find no sign of the outlet of the tunnel as it must have been covered up by either the oil line through the area or by gabion work done to protect the bank. We did find one of the iron hoops that bound the wood conduit used to bring water down from the dam and when we worked our way upstream, we found the inlet to the tunnel – now collapsed. The remains of the dam are also clearly visible on the other side of the creek at the foot of the hill behind St Mary's Cemetery. At the top of the bank on the west side, we also found a cache of bottles left from the **Roux** hair care products factory that was on Shepherd. **Susan Wells, Mary Davidson** and I visited the area again today so Susan could take some photos. Our history is all around us.



See Art Bullied's recollections in the OHS September 2015 Newsletter for his remarks on the flume.

Under the leadership of **Greg Munz**, a small group is hard at work on our next exhibit, **Pleasure Boating in Oakville**. Stay tuned for further information.

We are very sorry to report the passing of **Margaret Buxton**, our long-time archivist. Margaret's dedication to the work of the Society helped make the Society what it is today. She is missed.

We've recently received word that **Bill Nesbitt**, Supervisor at the **Oakville Museum**, is retiring at the end of the year. Under Bill's leadership, the relationship between the Museum and the Society has flourished. We wish him well in his retirement.

Our annual members' Christmas event is scheduled for Friday, 4 December. I hope to see you there.

George Chisholm, President

Oakville in Retrospect *by Art Bullied*

Some of the People in Town

Probably 95% of the population were of English, Scotch or Irish descent. We had a number of coloured people (also referred to as 'Negroes'. Seldom, back then, were they referred to as 'blacks'.) There were enough of them in Oakville and Bronte to support the A.M.E. [African Methodist Episcopal Church, now Turner Chapel Antiques, 37 Lakeshore Road West]. No doubt most of these people's ancestors had come from the United States by the 'Underground Railroad' or were freed slaves. It is interesting to note that in other cities and towns they attended the B.M.E. [Baptist Methodist Episcopal] Churches. For years we went to school with these kids and played with them in harmony and respect. Mr. Alonzo Wayner was one of the first citizens chosen 'Man of the Year' in Oakville. After his retirement he could be seen walking around [west of the 16] where he lived, with his silver-headed cane given to him when he achieved the honour. For as long as I could remember he had been our 'garbage man' driving a team with a wagon. He cared for the horses. He was not a tall man, but broad, with amazing strength. He was always Mr. Wayner to me. No doubt he had limited formal education, but he studied and graduated as a Deacon in the A.M.E. Church and was the resident Reverend in the Oakville Parish.

Alvin (Zeekie) Duncan who is a radio and television repairman in town now and his brother were two-thirds of the Oakville High School Orchestra. The third member, Karl Lehman was, as we were, white.

I recall only two Jewish families, the Browns and the Burkes. Mike Brown had come from, I believe, Romania. He worked at the Basket Factory and owned a vacant lot opposite our place on Maple Avenue where he grew vegetables. They first lived on Pine Avenue but later moved to Inglehart Street. Mike and Mrs. Brown gave their children a good education. Aaron was a very successful lawyer and one of the youngest judges ever appointed in Ontario. Unfortunately he died very young. Thelma still lives in Oakville, where she was a professional photographer. Harry Barrett and I went to Mike's funeral at the Synagogue on the Eighth Line. He was a model citizen.

Morris Burke had a scrap metal yard on Forsythe Street on the south side of Rebecca.

When Terry McDermott and I were at the 'boat-building' stage we went to buy a Model T Ford steering column to make into a propellor shaft for our homemade boat. Mo started at \$1.00. He offered to toss in one of the resident rabbits - if we could catch it. He finally settled for 30 cents. It must have been a Monday morning! I understand that Mo still goes to work every day at his business on Speers Road.

The article reprinted here was written by Mr. Arthur Bullied (1914 - 1996) in 1991 and was provided with kind permission by his wife Evelyn (Savage) Bullied. Space does not allow for the whole recollection to be printed and will be continued in later issues. See our March and September 2015 issues for previous excerpts. Here is an indication of the size of Oakville ~ In 1932 when Art was 18, the population was about 3,900.

Oakville in Retrospect *continued*

*The following article featuring **Ruth Burke** is from THE NEW TANNER, JUNE 17, 2010*

Ruth grew up in Oakville and attended Oakville High School. Two days after graduating Ruth started her first job working in an office where she remained for two years.

Her father already had a business, Burke's Salvage which sold used car parts. He decided to expand and opened a new business selling new car parts.

Ruth had two weeks holiday and during this time she helped him organize and stock the shelves. As a child, she had helped him with invoicing and paper work, so she decided to carry on working for her father's company, which is where she remained until she retired.

The scrap yard business belonged to Ruth's grand-father originally, and was later sold.

Ruth's mother was diabetic so Ruth accompanied her to the hospital and became interested in diabetes. She was on the Board for the Canadian Diabetic Association in Oakville for 23 years, and on the Ontario Diabetic Board, which was located in London, for one year. She would have remained on the Ontario Board longer, but found the driving tiring.

She has always enjoyed knitting and during the war, knitted for the Red Cross. She knitted numerous sweaters, helmets etc. She still knits for the Catholic church in Oakville, making pneumonia vests for children in Africa and India, where the days may be hot but the nights can be cold.

She knits slippers, touques and sweaters for orphaned children in Siberia which are shipped by a Pentecostal church in Milton. She tells me she has knitted 1,800 articles for this project alone.

Art Bullied continues.....

There were three Chinese families in town. **Joe Ming** operated the Savoy Cafe on Colborne Street (now 145 Lakeshore Road East). Next door at 147 was Guey Lem, better known as **Lem Guey**. Lem's cafe was not quite as prestigious as the Savoy which was more Oriental - it had more booths with higher sides. The Murray House, Oakville House and the Gibson House (Halton Inn) all served meals. After hockey or baseball games we went to Lem's or Joe's. Lem's specialty was a Western Sandwich and Joe's was Boston Creme Pie. Joe's daughter Wanda still lives in town I believe.

Lem Guey also owned the Anderson Block, no 134, across the street, now the Courthouse Restaurant. His major tenant was the Town of Oakville for the Town Offices, Council Chamber, Courthouse, Jail and Police Station.



Burke's Salvage c1960

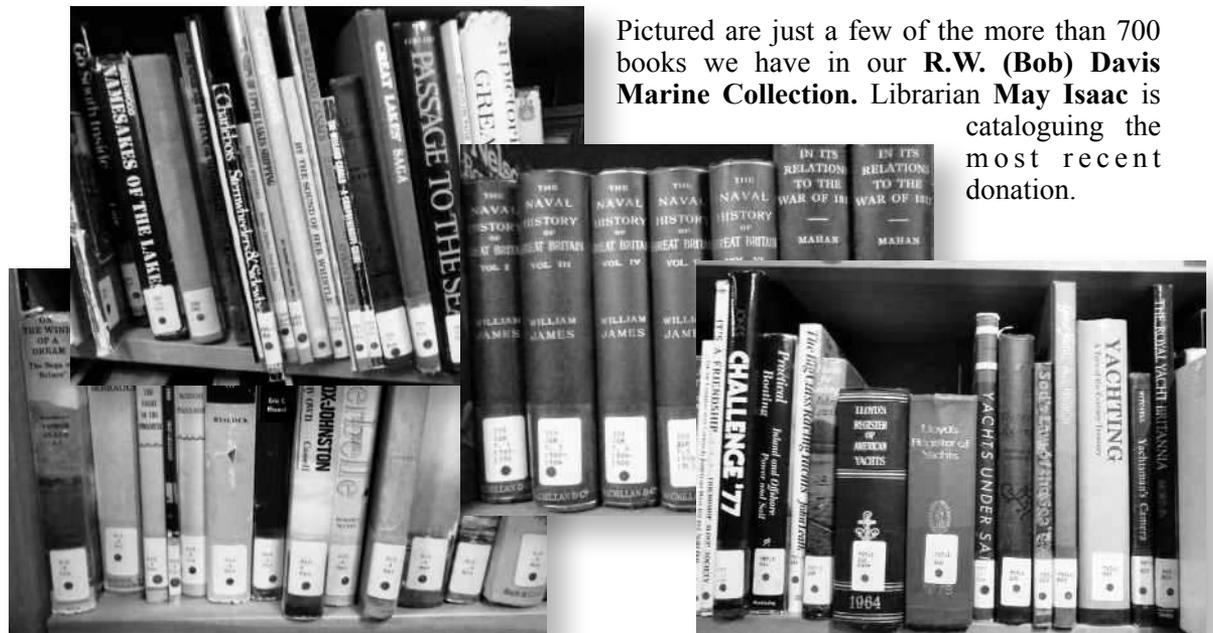
Oakville in Retrospect *continued*

Tom Young operated a laundry back of where McCutcheon's Camera Store is now. The store in front he rented to Kelley's bicycle shop. Tom's relaxation was fishing. The Litchfields had a boat house on the east bank of the Sixteen about half-way around the curve on Dunn Street. In the evening after work Tom would sit on the dock and fish. His greatest delight was to catch a turtle, up to 18". Then the Youngs had turtle soup and other delicacies. Tom moved to Montreal to be near his son. A few years ago he came back for his ex-neighbour **Benny Thornton's** 80th Birthday Party. He even remembered that my laundry mark was A1. I often wondered if that was a description of me in Chinese. I wore a starched collar with a white shirt on Sundays to church. I have a feeling that Tom moved from the old Royal Exchange Building after it burned. It was where what is now known as the Old Library was located.

The Palumbos were the only Italian family I can remember. They had a fruit and vegetable store at 218 Lakeshore Road East.

Oakville never had what might be referred to as 'slums'. There were some houses not as pretentious as others. The closest thing to a slum area was 'Wrangle Island' on the road running east of the Sixteen, north of the Oakville Golf Club.

Watch this space for further recollections from Art Bullied.



Pictured are just a few of the more than 700 books we have in our **R.W. (Bob) Davis Marine Collection**. Librarian **May Isaac** is cataloguing the most recent donation.

AROUND OAKVILLE



Chartwell Road and MacDonald Road in 2015



32 Thomas Street in 2015

There have been a few residences turned into hospitals before the soon-to-be-closed OTMH was opened in the 1950s.

In the 1930s the **Taylor Nursing Home** operated at the corner of Eighth Line (Chartwell Road) and MacDonald Road, run by June Taylor and her husband Frank. There were six bedrooms for maternity cases and convalescents. Also in the 1930s, the house at 32 Thomas Street was a maternity home.

Pills 1 part opium, 2 parts camphor mixed together with flour and a little peppermint water or spirits. Vinegar and Redpepper for scarlet fever.

For a Metic or Vomit

Boil slipperyjohn bark to a jelly. Strain and cool it to one quart. Add 1/2 oz of metic tartar, 1 oz salsoda, 1 spoonful Lodlum, 1 Do of vinegar and 1 of honey. Shake them well and they will be fit to use. 1 spoonful for a Grown person, 1 teaspoonful for a Child.

To make Rheumatic Drops

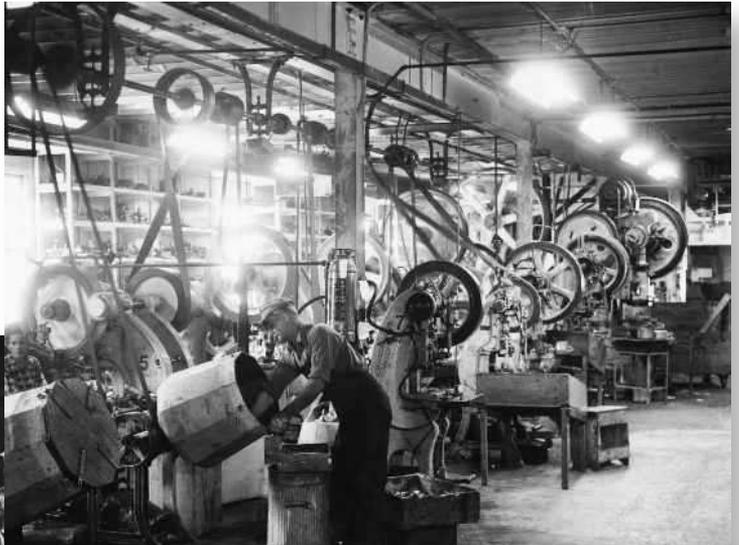
Take 1 gal of alcohol or fourth proof Brandy. 1 lb of Gummyrrh. 1 oz of cayenne pepper. Pulverize the two latter & put the whole into a stone jug, sit it into a kettle of cold water, put it over the fire and boil it 10 or 15 minutes.

Above concoctions -
Justus Williams'
Remedies from his shop
ledger dated 1830-6

AROUND THE SOCIETY



We are updating our files to reflect the existence/condition/disappearance of **House Plaques** (like the one here on Thomas St.) We have been researching house history and preparing Pride of Ownership carved wooden signs for decades but some have disappeared and some need repair. We need volunteers like new member **Nicole Léger** to walk up and down the streets, study the façade and record the details. If you enjoy a saunter through our Town's older streets, give us a call and we can set you up with a clip board, a name tag and a list of streets.



The three photographs here are of the aluminum pot factory that was at the north corner of Trafalgar Road and Randall Street.

OCTOBER SPEAKERS' NIGHT

Cantor Ron Graner came to speak to us about the life and music of the little known composer **David Nowakowsky** (1848-1921). With the backdrop a beautiful concert of Nowakowsky's music given in St. Catharine's of Alexandria in St. Catharines Ontario, Mr. Graner related a fascinating story of how the music which had been lost for over a century eventually came to light.

Born in 1848 in Ukraine the prodigy Nowakowsky became, at twenty-one, the musical director of the Brody synagogue in Odessa. He is thought to have written a piece of music every week for fifty years but his music, through a series of pogroms, revolutions and wars was hidden until the 1950s.

In the pogroms of 1881, many fled from Odessa but Nowakowsky remained. When he died, poor and deserted, in 1921, none of his many works had been published. He left five children. During the Bolshevik revolution, Nowakowski's daughter, Rose, smuggled the works to her own daughter, Sophia, then a prominent concert pianist, in Berlin.

The family suffered much anguish as they wandered across Europe to evade the fate of Auschwitz. They settled in the French village of Colonges-sous-Saleve on the Swiss border near Geneva, taking with them Nowakowsky's papers. When Vichy France was overrun in 1943 Sophia and her son Alexandre fled to Switzerland leaving behind Sophia's husband, Boris, who saved the works by burying them on a farm.

The collection was brought to the US in 1952 when Alexandre won a scholarship to Columbia University and found a permanent home in the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music in New York in 1955.

During their travails the family were treated kindly by the Seventh-Day Adventists, the Catholic clergy and the Dutch-Paris Underground movement. Ron hopes to give an ecumenical Jewish-Ukrainian concert to honour the martyrs of the Dutch-



Mr. Graner (left) with Greg Munz

Paris Underground and Ukrainian Catholics who saved many Jews during World War II.

You can find much information about this story on Mr. Graner's website www.musicalpawns.com or by viewing a copy of the DVD he was kind enough to give us. Copies of the DVD are being sold to raise funds for the concert.

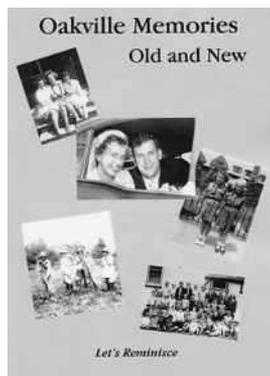


Thanks to **Shona Rochefort** (above at left) for her assistance with the audio-visual equipment.

AROUND THE SOCIETY



If you have visited the OHS offices at 110 King St. you will have admired our beautiful gardens. This work of art is almost entirely due to the great efforts of volunteers **Averil and Joe Jany**. They gather donations of surplus perennials and place them in the right spot. They nurture them all summer while trimming away and brushing the surrounds. In the fall there is more clearing and raking. They cannot continue taking on all this work by themselves and if the beauty of the gardens is to be preserved we must have some more volunteers. Please give us a call now or in the spring with your offer to help. Green thumbs not required!



Our new publication **Oakville Memories Old and New** is a perfect Christmas gift! The contributions in the book are from the last 8 decades, so are really quite recent! \$23 for members, at our offices.

Membership Renewal

Your membership comes up for renewal at the end of 2015. If you haven't already done so, please complete the enclosed membership form and return it to us, together with your cheque, to:

The Oakville Historical Society
110 King Street
Oakville, ON L6J 1B1

New Members 2015

We are pleased to have welcomed 20 new members this year:

**Sean Duffy Family, Josie Saunders Family
Brendan Nickel and Jordan Baker, Marie
Descent**

**Nicole Léger, Carol Bridge, Edward and
Patricia Bayley, Elise Cole at Oakville Public
Library**

**Ross and Judith Dickie, Rev James and
Bonnie Gill, Anna Hewitt, Michelle and Jeff
Knoll**

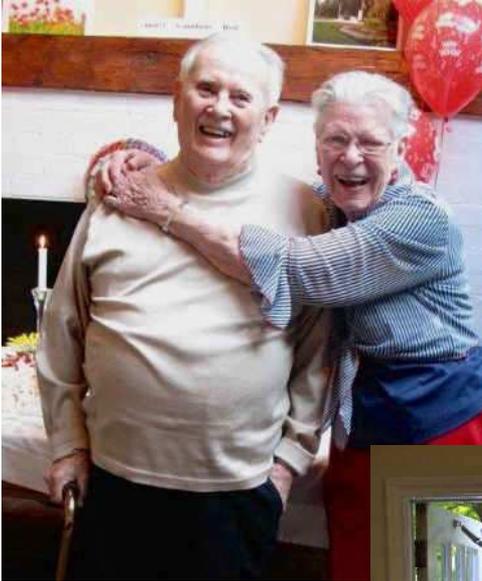
**William Mewes, Kelsey and Wesley Mason
Louise Perrin, Hilary Speed, Sylvia Valevicius
Mark and Ruth Verlinden, Myra Valley
John Wright**

Thank you for your interest in the Oakville Historical Society and we hope you will fully enjoy the benefits of membership.

Andrea Stewart, Memberships

If you are a member of **Facebook** you may want to join in the conversation at **Oakville, Past, Present and Future**. The site is full of photos and discussions about our Town. You may meet old friends and see old images, new to you. Also on **Facebook** see our own **Oakville Historical Society**.

AROUND THE SOCIETY



Harry Barrett (above) receives congratulations from **Evelyn Bullied** on his recent birthday. *photo: Marianne Hawthorne*

Outside our door (right) an artist takes advantage of the perfect light and vista.



Ghost Walk guests receive drinks and cookies prepared by volunteers **Norma Marchetti** (right) and her son **Michael**.



Ghosts (far right) **Sarah Hammond**, **Bryn McCulloch** and **Mira Meikle** prepare for their appearances.



THE WAY WE WERE September 2015

Brantwood School 1920 - 2010
221 Allan Street
The building has been purchased by the
Town of Oakville.



THE WAY WE WERE



What was this building?

Where is it?

What is it now?

Archive Hours:

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

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