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*Preserving Oakville's  
Historical Heritage  
Since 1953*  
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**THE OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

JUNE 2007

Volume 41: Number 2

SPECIAL EVENTS

June 10th, 2007

Band Concert – Lakeside Park, 12 to 4:30 P.M.

A rain date has been arranged for the following Sunday, June 17th

June 24th, 2007

Dedication of the Memorial Fountain

* 2 to 4pm. Everyone is welcome.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

2007

May 16th

“The effects of British History on the settlement of Oakville” by Professor Neville Thompson – Retired Professor of History, University of Western Ontario.

October 17th

“Oakville Heritage Committee” – a panel discussion with Harry Barrett and friends.

November 21st

“Remembering Trafalgar Township” – Ruth Blair Archival Research.

Note: All presentations held at Knox Presbyterian Church @ 7:30 P.M., unless otherwise noted.

HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS

MONTH	MAIN ST.	HERITAGE HOUSE	TRAFALGAR RD.
JUN	Sun 10 th , 2 pm	Sun 3 rd & 17 th , 2 pm	Sun 24 th , 2 pm
JUL	Wed 25 th , 7 pm	Wed 11 th , 7 pm	----
AUG	----	Wed 8 th , 7 pm	Sun 26 th , 2 pm
SEP	Sun 9 th & 30 th , 2 pm	Sun 2 nd & 16 th , 2 pm	Mon 3 rd , 2 pm
OCT	----	Sun 14 th , 2 pm	Mon 8 th , 2 pm

- **NOTE:** Main Street and Heritage House walks start at 110 King Street, while the Trafalgar Road walks start from St. John’s United Church, 262 Randall Street. **Tours take 2 hours.** All walks cost **\$12.00/ person** and light refreshments are served for the Main St. and Heritage House walks. **RESERVATIONS REQUIRED** – please call (905) 844-2695 to book tour. Special groups may arrange other scheduled times.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you read this, the Society's busy season will have already started. The Thomas House will be open for the season, walks will be about to start, the last speaker's night of the season will be over and many special events are lined up. You will find further information on these events elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are very pleased that work on the Volunteer Memorial Fountain is just about complete. The water was turned on this past week and, one of the first admirers was a bluejay, which had a very exuberant bath. The official dedication will be held in June.

After having vacancies for the past couple of years I am happy to report that the board now has a full complement. We welcome back to the board, Lance Naismith who, has taken over this newsletter with help from a committee. Drew Bucknall, is new to the board, but is already proving to be a valuable addition. Drew is also a citizen appointee to Heritage Oakville.

I am also pleased to report that membership seems to be on a bit of an increase with several new members this year. Interest in the Society is growing and more people contact us for information online.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or, suggestions concerning the Society, please contact me.



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COVER PICTURE: Juliet Chisholm – graduating from McGill University Medical School.

Pioneering Women of Ontario

Two of the dictionary definitions of a pioneer are: **A**, an initiator of an enterprise or **B**, an originator of an action to be followed later by others. However, the most common use of the word pioneer is that referring to a settler and it is fair to say that as settlers in Upper Canada, the **Strickland sisters** are probably the best known. **Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Trail** arrived in Canada, with their husbands in 1832, both eventually settling in the Peterborough area. Coming from a genteel but impoverished literary family, neither they nor their ex-army husbands were equipped to cope with the privations of the Canadian wilderness in which they had to settle. Through hard work, determination and incredible fortitude they survived, raised large families, and became acknowledged in the literary world in both Canada and Britain.

From the 1880's onwards, Ontario was developing rapidly; factories of all kinds were requiring workers and large numbers of immigrant women came to work in them. The conditions were usually appalling, with long hours and low wages. In 1895, a **Miss Margaret Carlyle** was appointed as the first female factory inspector, shortly to be joined by a **Mrs. James Brown**. It took many years, but these two ladies were responsible through their reports and recommendations to the Governor, for many improvements in the workplace - such as separate lunch rooms for women, regular breaks, good ventilation and clean washrooms to mention just some of the changes they were responsible for.

In the field of medicine, the names of **Jennie Trout** and **Emily Stowe** spring to mind. However, a remarkable young woman named **Leonora Howard King** is an unsung medical hero. Her home was in Farmerville, Ontario, now called Athens. Unable to train in Canada, she went to Michigan and, on completion of her studies at the age of twenty-six, she went out to China as a Methodist medical missionary. In 1879 she opened a hospital for Women and Children. A few years later she founded the first medical school for women. She lived in China for 47 years, where she was awarded the highest honour. She was made a Mandarin by the Empress Dowager, the first western woman to receive this honour.

Elizabeth McMaster of Hamilton, who moved to Toronto with her family in the early 1880's, was responsible with a group of friends, for establishing the first hospital for sick children. These ladies finally raised enough money to purchase a small house, No. 21 Avenue Road, where they were able to care for six little patients. In the late

1880's, larger premises were needed and with the support of John Ross Robertson, then editor of the Toronto Telegram, funds were raised and the new hospital on College Street opened its doors in May, 1892. It was felt that Mrs. McMaster should be the first Superintendent and she went down to Illinois to train as a nurse for two years, prior to the opening of the hospital. Elizabeth McMaster was also responsible for running the first First Aid classes in Toronto.

Two women who became exceptional in the business world were **Martha Matilda Harper**, born in 1857, whose hair restorative lotions and treatments were eventually marketed internationally and, **Florence Nightingale Graham**, born in 1882, better known to us as **Elizabeth Arden**. Both women, the former from Oakville, the other from Etobicoke, came to their careers from unlikely BEGINNINGS. Martha was in domestic service for 25 years, begging at the age of seven. Elizabeth had been a secretary/bookkeeper before finally opening her first salon on 5th Avenue in New York. Alas, Martha Harper's name is not well known today, but she was without doubt, one of the first and foremost franchise pioneers in Canada, whereas Elizabeth Arden's name and products continue to be known world wide. In her lifetime, she gave generous financial support to many organizations. On her death in 1965, she left a fortune of some \$400,000,000. U.S.. Her great love of horses and the connection with Kentucky gave the name 'Blue Grass' to one of her most popular cosmetic lines.

In the field of education we have many remarkable women. **Agnus McFail** became a founding member of the Women Teachers Association of Ontario and later was elected to parliament in 1921, a post she held for 19 years. She was the first woman to be elected as a member of the Canadian delegation to the League of Nations and was also a founding member of the Elizabeth Fry Foundation. **Kate Morris** became the first woman on the Toronto Board of Education in 1919. She held the post for 21 years and was largely responsible for the development of school playgrounds and swimming pools in the city.

Lilian Smith, a pioneer within the Toronto Library system, started the first girl's and boy's department, as it was then called, in the Toronto library on St. Georges Street in the early 1920's,. Lilian Smith became President of the Ontario Library Association and founded the Canadian Association of Children's Libraries. Today, the Lilian Smith Library houses the Osbourn Collection of 1,800 children's books written since 1700. The collection was presented to the Toronto Library in recognition of her work and was donated by **Edgar Osbourn** from the county library in Derby, England. The Lilian Smith library is on the 5th floor of the library at 239 College Street and is well worth a

visit. Lilian Smith died in 1983. It is said that she made a larger contribution to the personal enjoyment of many human beings than any other Canadian.

It is thought that the first Canadian children's book was written by **Catherine Parr Traill** in 1852 and it was published in London. The book was called *Canadian Crusoe's* and tells the story of several children lost in the forest for 3 years.

Another Oakville lady whose contribution to the Town should not be forgotten is **Juliet Chisholm**. In 1949, Juliet Chisholm had bought a 70 acre parcel of land in the Sixteen Valley. Her idea was to leave the flood plain in its natural state and farm the table-land. However, this proved unsuccessful and Dr. Chisholm approached both the Department of Lands and Forests and the Trafalgar Township with an offer to donate the land with the proviso that the area was not opened up to the public as parkland. As neither organization would accept this condition the land remained the property of Dr. Chisholm until in 1961 she was approached by members of the newly formed Sixteen Mile Creek Conservation Authority, who agreed to her conditions. The Authority wanted to erect a cairn in honour of Dr. Chisholm but she vetoed this idea and as a result few people know how or why the Authority obtained this small but important piece of land. Correct management of the flood plain has minimized the severe flooding to which the Sixteen was often prone.

Among the activists of the 1890's were two women whose activities were to have a profound effect on the women of Canada. These were **Ishbel, Lady Aberdeen**, the wife of Lord Aberdeen, Canada's Governor General from 1893 to 1898 and, **Adelaide Hunter Hoodless** of Hamilton.

Their contribution has had a lasting effect on women, resulting in such organizations as the Women's Institute, the National Council of Women and the Victorian Order of Nurses.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless was born in Brant County, the youngest of twelve children. In due course she married a Hamilton man, John Hoodless, and settled down to domestic life. However, her life changed in 1888 when her youngest child, John Harold, died at the age of eighteen months. On learning that his death had been caused by drinking impure milk, she vowed to do everything in her power to educate other women in order to prevent other tragedies.

She was also a founding member of the National Council of Women in 1893 and, through that body, was responsible for domestic science courses being introduced in Ontario schools. In response to an increased demand for domestic science teachers, Macdonald College in Guelph was founded, with Mrs. Hoodless spearheading the drive for funds. Also, she was active in the establishment of Macdonald College near Montreal.

In the beginning the idea of home economics being taught in schools was dismissed as a fad. Fortunately for us, Mrs. Hoodless carried on despite these criticisms.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Cairn

Adelaide Hoodless died in 1910 on the evening before her fifty-second birthday, collapsing while speaking in Toronto at a meeting of the Federation of Women's Clubs. During her short life she had done a great deal to improve the lives of Canadian women.

A plaque outside the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless homestead reads as follows:

Adelaide Hoodless

To the Homestead will come women from Canada, the United States, and many parts of the world, from all walks and all races and creeds; the Young Women's Christian Association, the national Council of Women; the Home Economics Associations; the Victorian Order of Nurses; the Associated Country Women of the World; all interested in a Canadian woman of vision, Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

In co-operation with Lady Aberdeen she worked to promote the formation of the Victorian order of Nurses and, in 1897, founded the Women’s Institute.

The **May Court Club of Oakville** is a service organization that was founded by Lady Aberdeen, VON’s founder, in 1898.

“In the towns they will go to those who cannot now afford the care of trained nurses and often die for lack of it; on the prairies, in the forests, in the mining districts, everywhere through the country they will go hither and thither amongst our brave pioneers and bring help to those heroic people who are building up the future of this beautiful country amidst many hardships and privations.”

Lady Aberdeen, Founder VON Canada 1897

In politics, the sciences, engineering, sports and the arts, there are countless names of women who were instigators and originators - some better known than others but all who have improved, enriched and advanced the lives of our communities both near and far.

Pioneers

*Is not one joy on us alone bestowed?
For us, the master joy – O Pioneers
We shall not travel – but we make the Road.
(Anon.)*

Ann Reynolds

The OHS Annual Ghost Walks (2007)

SEPTEMBER	THURSDAYS	SATURDAYS
7:00 P.M. & 8:30 P.M	.	22 nd and 29th
OCTOBER		
7:00 P.M. & 8:30 P.M	4 th , 11 th , 18 th , and 25 th	
6:00 P.M., 7:00 P.M. & 8:30 P.M.		13 th , 20 th , and 27th
COST	\$12.00 PER ADULT	\$6.00 PER CHILD

- **Please note:** Begins and Ends at the Society, 110 King Street. Following the Walks, refreshments will be served. **Length of Walk:** 1 Hour. Wear good walking shoes. **Register** early as there is limited enrollment. **(905) 844-2695**
- **CASH ONLY – NO CREDIT CARDS.**

AROUND THE SOCIETY



Meeting Major General James Murray

The February public meeting was a very special occasion when we were honoured with a visit from **Major General James Murray**, 1st Governor of Quebec, who was making his first public appearance in well over 200 years. The General entered to the strains of “**Rule Britannia**” and the assembly was invited to sing the chorus.



Anne Reynolds, John Rutherford, Barb Savage

In his address to the gathering, the General spoke of his military responsibility after the death of General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham and of his liberal governorship of Quebec. History came alive that evening. Thank you **John Rutherford**, we hope you will come again.

Ann Reynolds

Special Note of Thanks

June Hitchcox, May Issacs, Ernie Carroll and Joy Sanders are a special team of ladies who have provided delicious refreshments at our public meetings this past season. Their efforts are much appreciated by all those who have attended.

Barb Savage

Outreach During the Month of May

A request from the New Toronto Historical Society was met by a presentation outlining the history of Oakville and, Grade 8 students at St Mathews School were given a lecture concerning the ups and downs of Oakville's economy during the past and present years.

During the month of May your Society is celebrating Oakville's 150th Anniversary by reaching out into the Community and decorating store windows with items and pictures of early Oakville.

Barb Savage

Solution to "The Way Things Were" – March 2007

The portrait is of Merrick Thomas, 1806-1856. He had a long association with William Chisholm. He was employed by Chisholm as general manager in charge of the shipyard and sailing fleet in Burlington Bay. When Chisholm purchased land in Oakville in 1827, Thomas moved to Oakville. His main task was to supervise the building of the harbour, to lay out the new community of Oakville, and to act as steamship agent. He had a personal connection when he married Chisholm's sister-in-law, Esther Silverthorn.

May Isaac

The Secret Garden

For those of you who have visited the Society lately, you will have noticed a number of people very busy around the outside of our building. We would like to thank the Town of Oakville for their efforts in not only refurbishing the garden but their fine work in the restoration of our grounds. This will certainly enhance the appearance of our building and present our visitors an attractive entrance.

Lance Naismith

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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007??

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HISTORICAL

Of or concerning History. A study of history based on its development over a period. Belonging to the past. Has to be factual, true, verifiable, real, documented.

HISTORY

A period of important or public events. The study of past events, especially human affairs. The accumulation of developments connected with a particular nation, person, or thing.

HERITAGE

Anything that is or may be inherited. Nation's historic buildings, monuments, countryside etc., especially when regarded as worthy of preservation.

Board of Directors – 2007

The Society has elected the following for the Board of Directors – 2007. Although elected to manage the Society, they require the help of all members to ensure the future success of the Society and look forward to your help in regards to YOUR Society.

President	George Chisholm
Vice-President	Barb Savage
Secretary	Jim Young
Treasurer	Walter Jennings
Honourary	Harry Buxton

Directors:	Harry Barrett
	Drew Bucknall
	Ev Bullied
	Margaret Buxton
	June Hitchcox
	Lance Naismith
	Andrea Stewart
	Karen Woolley

THE WAY THINGS WERE



- 1: Where is this building located?
- 2: When was it built?
- 3: What purpose did it serve?

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**The Oakville Historical Society: 110 King Street, Oakville**

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