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

MARCH 2008

Volume 42: Number 1

SPECIAL EVENTS

March 26th

Annual General Meeting and Pot Luck Supper - Knox Presbyterian Church @ 6:30pm

June 8th

“*Concert in the Park*” – Lakeside Park. Dixieland Band and the Oakville Wind Orchestra will be performing. Rain Date: June 22nd. More info will follow in the June Newsletter and on our webpage.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

2008

May 21st

“*Pioneer Cooking*” – Dorothy Duncan

October 15th

“*Gun boats on the Great Lakes*”
– Cheryl MacDonald

November 19th

“*An Evening with Mike Filey*” – Mike Filey

Notable Event: The Underground Railroad, Next Stop Freedom! An exhibit which started February 13th, 2008 at the **Erchless Museum** is well worth seeing. Created by Parks Canada in partnership with the Ontario Black Society and the ROM, it is an outstanding effort by Fred and Claudette Shaw.

For many years, Anne Reynolds took on the responsibility of ensuring that the grounds around the Thomas House and the Post Office were clean. Any garbage on the ground was picked up and placed in the bins that are provided by the Town. Alas, Anne has moved to Stratford. The Society has received a request from the Town that we continue this tradition. If we all do our part it is no big deal and it will keep Lakeside Park a beautiful place.

Barbara Savage

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank **Norm Sadler** for all his work over the past several months in designing and bringing to life our new website. Norm has done excellent work for other organizations, including the Trafalgar Chartwell Residents' Association, which is where I "found" him. There has been much discussion around the board table over the role of the internet in furthering the aims of the society and the board firmly believes that we need to make more use of the web to get our message out. The improved website is a start, but it is a major step for the Society. Since the new website went "live", just after Christmas, we have received several requests for information, rental requests and offers of donations. If you haven't visited the new website yet, it can be found at www.oakvillehistory.org.

We were delighted to hear (through the website) from **Dr Gerald Coleman**, a great great grandson of **Dr John Urquhart**, who practised in Oakville in the mid 1800s. Dr Urquhart built his Medical Hall on Lakeshore Road in 1835. It still stands at 182 Lakeshore Road East. Dr Coleman contacted me to offer the Society his ancestor's pharmacopoeia, signed and dated 1826. When it arrives, it will be an important addition to our collection. It's amazing what interesting items are out there. If you have an item, or hear of any items that would be appropriate for our collection, please let us know.

In mid February, Barb Savage, Ev Bullied and my wife and I attended the annual Heritage Dinner hosted by the **Head of the Lake Historical Society** in Hamilton. This year their partner organization was the Hamilton Regional Police in honour of their 175th anniversary. We came home from the dinner convinced that a similar event could prove popular in Oakville. Stay tuned for further information.

Barb Savage continues to represent us on the **Doors Open Oakville** committee and we are pleased to announce that we have received a grant from the Community Foundation of Oakville to assist with this project. We have also applied to the Trillium Foundation.

I hope to see many of our members at our **Annual General Meeting**, set for Wednesday, **26 March**, at Knox. As usual, the meeting will be preceded by a **pot luck dinner**.

Oakville Historical Society E-mail
info@oakvillehistory.org

Archive Hours * Tues & Thurs –
1PM to 4:30PM at 110 King Street.

George Chisholm
905-842-5385
georgechisholm@sympatico.ca

COVER PICTURE: Our cover shows the various methods of communication throughout history, culminating in our WEBSITE. Hopefully, all preserve our history for future generations. Cover artwork by Carolyn Naismith.

Unearthing Oakville's Loyalist Roots

Finding Oakville's connection to the United Empire Loyalist period in Canada's history can be a challenge. Research shows that new homesteads established by UEL families were achieved at the end of rather circuitous routes. For these refugees of the **American Revolution**, 1775-1783, initial settlement in the British North American provinces related strongly to the point of departure in the Thirteen Colonies. If they had lived on the eastern seaboard or had sheltered in the New York City stronghold, they probably accepted the offer to settle in the Maritimes or what was known then as Nova Scotia. For instance, shortly after John Belyea of Philipsburg, Westchester County, New York, joined the British Army in 1776, his wife and family were forced from their farm and fled to New York City. When Sir Guy Carleton evacuated the Loyalists from NYC in 1783, the **Belyea** family settled in the Saint John River Valley in New Brunswick. From there it was a matter of time before they moved on to Upper Canada and eventually **Bronte** in search of better land.

If the Loyalist families had lived in upper New York province, chances were they fled northward through the Champlain/Richelieu corridor, to live in one of the refugee centres in Quebec, east of Montreal like Sorel or Machiche. Other families who supported the activities of Butler's Rangers along the Mohawk Valley and in upper Pennsylvania sought security at Fort Niagara. Late in the war itself, a few of those families were allowed to cross the Niagara River to farm the area for produce to support the war effort. However, full-scale settlement of the Niagara Peninsula, as well as the rest of present day Ontario, had to wait until ownership was settled and the land surveyed.

In those days, the area we now know as Oakville was owned by the Mississauga Indian Band. In 1805, the Assembly of Upper Canada purchased the land between Etobicoke and Hamilton, with the exception of the lands at the mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek (Bronte Creek), the Sixteen and the Credit River, which remained in the hands of the Mississauga. After lots were surveyed in 1806, settlers moved along the newly built Governor's Road (Highway Five) and a few settled on the shore of Lake Ontario. Family histories of those settlers sometimes indicate the United Empire Loyalist origins, but often over time, the link has been lost. Familiarity with family names on the UEL List, the **1805 Wilmot Survey** and land records, provide further possibilities of Loyalist heritage. Other sources, such as *Annals of the Forty*, reveal the patterns of the second and third generation Loyalists as they moved to newly surveyed areas.

Originally, Charles Anderson and his wife Ann, the only daughter of Loyalist **W. Henry Nelles**, had settled east of the Forty Mile Creek on 100 acres. When Trafalgar

Township was surveyed, he was granted Lot 13, 2nd Concession south of Dundas Street. This land borders the west side of the 7th Line and the ridge now called the Red Hill runs through its southern section.



John Peter Inglehart

John Kaiting settled on Lot 12 along Dundas. Through his first wife, Jemima Biggar of Saltfleet, and his second wife, Margaret Fisher, his twenty one sons and daughters further established their Loyalist heritage through intermarriage with other Loyalist families who settled in northern Oakville.

In the Palermo district, at one time referred to as Hagersville, descendants of the **Buck, Hager, Inglehart and Lawrence** families, can easily trace their lineage back to the United Empire Loyalists who settled first in the townships along the southern shore of Lake Ontario.

The corner now called Trafalgar was once called Postville, the area settled by the “sons and daughters of **Jordan Post**, a “Late Loyalist”, who had come to York from New England in 1802.”

By 1813, **Philip Sovereign** and family arrived at the Twelve Mile Creek. Originally from Sussex County, New York, they had settled earlier in Waterford in the Western District of Upper Canada.

Their new farm extended along the lakefront, west of the Indian Reserve on the old Lake Road.

On February 28, 1820, the five principal chiefs of the Mississaugas surrendered to the Crown their reserves at the Twelve and Sixteen Mile Creeks. Fresh opportunities for the entrepreneurial settlers opened up.

Alexander Proudfoot established a store at the south-west corner of the Ninth Line at Dundas Street about 1820. His wife was **Amelia Jarvis** whose Loyalist father, Stephen Jarvis, had settled in York.



**Elizabeth Inglehart,
nee Fisher.**

It is recorded that the first mill in Trafalgar Township was built on the Sixteen by **Phillip Triller**, a Loyalist, who in 1806 had brought his wife and ten children from New Jersey to Upper Canada. Triller drew Lot 20 of the 1st Concession south of Dundas Street through which the Sixteen runs, but to get a mill site, he requested Lot 32 on the lakeshore, not far from his home. However Lot 32, already belonged to **William Allan** (for whom Allan Street in Oakville was named,) and it was **Charles Sovereign** who later secured it and, built a sawmill. Unsuccessful with his petition, Triller proceeded with the work of establishing a mill at Dundas Street.



Hagar Homestead - Palermo

In 1827, the Lieutenant-Governor received at least two petitions regarding the development of mill sites on the Twelve and Sixteen Mile Creeks. Many Bronte area names with Loyalist connections included William and Ezekiel Lawrence, William and Hiram McCraney, Mahlon and Daniel Bray, Jacob and William Triller, Thomas Hinton, Philip and Charles Sovereign and Jesse Belyea.

Perhaps there is greater familiarity with the Chisholm story. **George Chisholm** of Tryon County, New York joined the British army in 1777 and at the end of the American Revolution, moved to Shelburne, Nova Scotia. In 1796, the family moved to a tract of land on the north shore of Burlington Bay. In 1812, his son, William, married **Rebecca Silverthorne**, also of Loyalist lineage. They settled on a farm on Dundas Street in Nelson Township in 1816, and there established a general store. In August 1827, William Chisholm acquired 960 acres of “Old Oakville” for \$4116.00. By the time of his purchase, William Chisholm had been a member of the House of Assembly, a Parliamentary Commissioner assigned to supervise the building of the Burlington Bay Canal and also had served on the Board of Directors for the Welland Canal.

Another of the first purchasers of the newly surveyed land in Oakville was **Jacob Randall**. His father, also known as Jacob Randall, left New York in 1783 for Nova

Scotia. In 1822, the father and five sons moved on to Upper Canada, where they all received land grants. Jacob Junior found employment in William Chisholm's shipyard at Burlington Bay before moving on to Oakville.

In 1831, Justus Wright Williams moved from Burlington Bay to Oakville with his wife, **Nancy Aikman**, the daughter of John Aikman and Hannah Showers Aikman, both members of old Loyalist families who had settled in the Niagara Peninsula. Nancy's sister, Hannah, became the wife of Egerton Ryerson, known as the founder of the Ontario Public School system.

In 1833, Robert Smith acquired Lot 22 of the 4th Concession Trafalgar Township. He was the son of Joel Smith, a merchant in Nelson Township and William Chisholm's partner at the time Oakville was founded. His mother, as a daughter of a Loyalist, **Sgt. Robert Campbell of Butler's Rangers**, was granted land as well. In 1838, Joel bought the adjoining Crown Reserve Lot 23 from King's College. Hiram, another son of Joel and Margaret Smith, bought Lot 21 bordering the 4th Line from Kings College in 1840.

Thus Loyalist heritage took early root throughout the Oakville community. No doubt there are many more family names that could be included in our community history. In time, more of these personal stories of settlement will be rediscovered.

Fred H. Hayward UE, Hamilton Branch
- United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada

References:

Philip Brimacombe, *The Story of Bronte Harbour*

Hazel C. Mathews, *Oakville and the Sixteen: The History of an Ontario Port*

R. Janet Powell, Ed., *Annals of the Forty, Vols. 1-10*

Photos: Courtesy of the Trafalgar Township Historical Society via Oakville Images and compiled by Elise Cole, Oakville Library (Central Branch)

Visit the OHS website at www.oakvillehistory.org for the enlarged and colour version of this newsletter and, explore the many informative areas of the website for event and tour dates.

AROUND THE SOCIETY



Solution to “The Way Things Were” – December 2007

The store is **William Buckle's Butcher Shop** located on the northwest corner of Lakeshore Road and Dunn Street. At a later date the Woolworth's store was located here. Currently, RBC Insurance has an office building on this site. The photograph shows a Christmas display of poultry decorated with holly. Pictured are William Buckle, Evans Long and Ernie Buckle. The floor is covered in sawdust, used to absorb blood of meat as it was butchered. According to Chief Constable George Sumner's diary, he paid \$1.76 for an eleven pound turkey at a price of 16 cents per pound.

May Isaac

“Remembering Trafalgar Township”

Our November presentation was given by **Ruth Blair**, Blair Archival Research (www.familyhistorysearches.com). An informative talk was given on places and persons in and about Trafalgar Township with insight to those areas no longer in existence. It was very well received. Pictured is Director **Jim Young** with Ruth Blair.



Lance Naismith



**Barb Savage introducing
Ruth Blair**



**“Our Refreshment
Volunteers”**



Admiring the postcard display

Book Launching

A work of love, the well documented book “**Oakville Street Names & Landmarks**”, co-authored by **David Ashe** and **Joyce Burnell**, was launched at

City Hall on November 19th, 2007 to a receptive audience. **Mayor Burton** did the honours. This book, which is a must for anyone who enjoys Oakville's rich past, is available at local bookstores and at the Society.

Lance Naismith



David Ashe – Joyce Burnell

The Oakville Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of Oakville's history as an archival society. Documents pertaining to the growth of our Town are precious in that they let our future generations understand just how Oakville evolved. For those tracing their residential or family history, these documents are priceless. If you have any pertinent documents or photographs, please share these with the Society either in their original form or copies. Contact a volunteer and we'll let you know how you can help preserve our past.

Annual Wine & Cheese Party

The 2007 Annual Wine & Cheese Party seemed to be a success by all appearances. Members were able to meet one another and enjoy the comfortable ambience of the Society building. Our Town Crier, **Ian Burkholder** opened the festivities with a flourish. The Societies' President George Chisholm presented **Ann Reynolds** with an appreciation gift for her service to the Society over the years and wished her luck in her new endeavours in Stratford.



L/R Ian Burkholder, Anne Reynolds, George Chisholm

Joyce Burnell signed copies of the book she co-wrote with David Ashe and was



Dr. Angela Kaslauskas & Joyce Burnell (R)

presented a bouquet of flowers by **Dr. Angela Kaslauskas**. The success of this well attended party was not only due to the spirit with which the members attended, but also the volunteers who helped with the refreshments and organizing.

Barb Savage noted, "That many people helped make the Wine and Cheese party a great success. Too many to list, but our thanks to all the women who made sandwiches and squares, as well as all the people who went out of their way to pick up cheese and fruit trays and make the wine. This is why the Society is succeeding, because everyone helps out when it's needed. **Everyone should take a bow!!!**"

Lance Naismith

WHY NOT BRING A FRIEND TO OUR NEXT MEETING



“The Gathering”



L/R - Becky Lindsay, Ian Burkholder & June Hitchcox



“Harry and Friends”



L/R – Marianne Hawthorne, Dr. Angela Kaslauskas, Joyce Burnell, Mayor R. Burton, Wendy Burton & Sheila Chreighton

The Collection

Margaret Buxton has been very busy cataloging a new acquisition to our photographic collection. **Bronte Outer Harbour** is a far cry from what it was in the early part of the last century. The outer harbour (photo c. 2001) has been built and is a very busy port, with its own restaurant. The record of its construction is an important part of our local history and fortunately it was recorded and the



photographs donated. These photographs will give future generations a chance to see how our area has changed over time. With that in mind, please look at your photographs and documents before you trash them. These small pieces of history are important to the Society in giving one the bigger viewpoint. And remember, today's documents and photographs will be tomorrow's history.

Here are some from the collection, showing various stages of construction of Bronte Outer Harbour.



**Bronte Outer Harbour –
laying stone 2001**



**Bronte Outer Harbour –
preparing Marina 2001**



**Bronte Outer Harbour
Marina 2001**



**Bronte Outer Harbour –
Lighthouse Restaurant -
2001**



**Bronte Outer Harbour – Lighthouse Restaurant finished
2003**

A Fond Farewell

So long, it's been good to know you.

To the many friends I've made at the O.H.S. over the last 22 years, thank you for being a special part of my time in Oakville. I will keep in touch and please, if you are in Stratford, let's get together. (Contact information at the Society – Editor)

Ann Reynolds

March Presentation

Catherine Slaney's talk (Knox Church on February 20th) on **Dr. Anderson Abbott** was most interesting. Catherine discovered that she is the great granddaughter of Dr. Abbott, the first black man to graduate at U of T in 1861 as a medical doctor. Little is written re Dr. Abbott but he organized hospitals for the Union Army and became a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln. Catherine did not know of her black history, and she later wrote a book – "**Family Secrets, Crossing the Colour Line**".



Barbara Savage with Catherine Slaney (R)

Barbara Savage

Oakville's a'changing

Some of you may have noticed the area bounded by Kerr Street, Speers Road and Shepard Road has been slowly changing. First to go in that area was the old Swiss Chalet. Now, the three homes and the "Alexander" apartment building are vacant and awaiting redevelopment.

The two dwellings at 531 and 533 Kerr Street are of interest, as they are listed on the Town's heritage registry. Other than the Stoneboat Restaurant in Bronte, they are claimed to be the only remaining stone houses in Oakville.

The developer, Empire Communities (Water Garden Communities), has stated they wish to incorporate the structures into the proposed development of three apartment towers. Hopefully the two buildings will be saved for future generations.

Below are some pictures of the site as it is today.





[Post Office Exhibit](#)

For those of you who have not visited the Society lately, you are missing a very intriguing exhibit on the postal service, as it was in the early days of Oakville. Put together by **Mary Noad and Rosemary Seeton**, this display educates one on the various aspects of our early post office. Items such as cross writing, which enabled one to double the use of one side of paper and thus save postage, is visually displayed - as well as envelopes, stamps and other memorabilia. Make a point of visiting and enjoying this display.





Membership Renewal

Reminder

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2008, we ask you to do so soon, preferably before the Annual General Meeting, March 26th - particularly if you wish to vote at that meeting. A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you.

Andrea Stewart

THE WAY THINGS WERE



1. Can you identify the man 3rd from the left in the topcoat?
 2. Can you identify the man, middle front with the hat and goatee?
 3. What was he known for?
 4. Can you identify anyone else in the picture? If so, let us know.
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The Oakville Historical Society: 110 King Street, Oakville

Archive Hours: Tuesday & Thursday * 1:00 to 4:30PM

Tel: (905) 844-2695 Fax: (905) 844-7380 Website: www.oakvillehistory.org

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