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

JUNE 2009

Volume 43: Number 2

SPECIAL EVENTS

June 14 **“Concert in the Park”** – Lakeside Park
Sunday, June 14th, 2009 – 12noon to 4:00pm

September 26-27 **Doors Open:** The 2nd annual Doors Open in Oakville is planned for September 26th and 27th 2009, 10am to 4pm. Last year was a great success and this year we are adding even more sites. We need many volunteers to assist with crowd control and explanations re the sites. Please telephone Julie Hawryzko at 905 845-6601, Ext 5122 to register as a volunteer. This will be voice mail so be sure to leave your name and number.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

October 21st *The War of 1812:* Speakers - Lieutenant Colonel Robert Nichol and Mrs. Nichol (in costume)

November 18th *The History of the Lorne Scots:* Speaker - Rick Ruggle

Note: Evening programs are at Knox Church at 7:30pm for 2009, unless otherwise noted.

Have you started planning for the summer yet?
Don't forget to visit our website at
www.oakvillehistory.org and check out the
upcoming **Heritage** and **Ghost** walk schedules.

Cover Picture: Grammar School Class C. 1865

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In March we held the **Annual General Meeting** of the Society. At the meeting it was announced that two directors have decided to retire from the Board. **Evelyn Bullied** and **Walter Jennings** have both served our Society for many years and have done exemplary jobs. Ev has maintained our library and has been a fount of knowledge on Trafalgar Township and the main street of Oakville. She has always been a keen volunteer for just about any event in which the Society has been involved. She has been a true ambassador for the Society. Between Ev and Harry Barrett, there isn't much they don't know about our town. We will certainly miss her at the board table as there will be no one there to make sure Harry's recollections are completely accurate. Walter Jennings has served this Society well as Treasurer for a long time and it is due in large part to his well-prepared budgets and grant requests that we are in such good financial health. In addition to his duties as Treasurer, Walter has prepared exhibits and prepared and runs the Main Street Walk.

I am pleased to note that **Phil Brimacombe** has come on to the Board to replace Ev. Phil is a long time member of the Society and was on the Board briefly several years ago. He is a retired history teacher from E.J. James School. After a difficult search, I am also pleased to announce that we have found a new Treasurer for the Society. **Greg Munz** agreed at our last board meeting to be appointed to the Board and to serve as Treasurer. Greg is new to the Society but I am confident that he will fit in well on the Board.

On Saturday, May 2nd, we offered a wine tasting in conjunction with the Oakville Museum. **Dan Sutherland**, owner of Rosehall Run Winery in Prince Edward County, educated about 40 of us about his wine in the Studio Theatre at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. Musical entertainment was provided by The **Matildas**, a quartet from Hamilton. Excellent cheeses were provided by **Whole Foods Markets**. This tasting was the second in a series. Stay tuned for further information about our upcoming beer tasting and appropriate entertainment.

Summer is fast approaching and your Society will be very active as usual. There is an ongoing need for volunteers for the Thomas House and many of our other programmes as well. You'll read more about them elsewhere in this newsletter.

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

Early School Days

The 960 acres of land at the east and west of the Sixteen, known as "the Indian Reserve" was offered for sale in August 1827 and the Reserve was purchased by **William Chisholm**. Chisholm called his new parcel of land the village of Oakville. At this place, on the banks of the Sixteen, between the stream and Navy Street, to the north of the Lakeshore Road (known then as Colborne Street), he had a meeting-house erected, a frame building put up in late 1827.

At the beginning, the meeting-house was used by any denominations of the Church for Sunday worship. The **Methodists** were the first denomination to build their own "home", a chapel at Lakeshore Road and Thomas Street, on the northeast corner. The Methodists could not afford the new chapel; the **Anglicans** bought it, and it became **St. Jude's Church**. The Methodists then resumed worship at the meeting house. Legislation had by that time encouraged education in many communities. A community, provided at least twenty pupils were in attendance, could build a school house, and get a grant to assist with the cost of the teacher's salary. The community could elect three trustees, who would "examine a teacher's qualifications, engage or dismiss him, lay out a course of study, select textbooks, and draw up rules for regulating the conduct of pupils." There were no school taxes, only attendance fees. Fees ranged from seven shillings six pence per quarter for each scholar; the school master was paid fifteen to twenty pounds per year. When a school building was needed, the meetinghouse was also used for that purpose. As the number of pupils increased, there was need for a larger building and one was built at the same site.

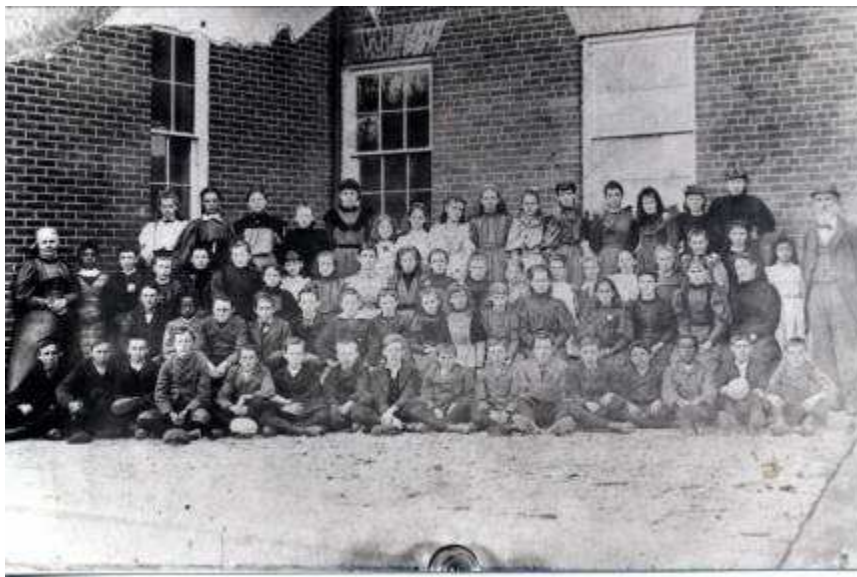
Oakville's first school, the **Oakville Common School**, began in 1836. The first school master, **William Tassie**, was aged 21, tall and handsome. He was of Scottish descent, but had been born and educated in **Dublin**. The trustees (one of which was Justus Williams) drew up their rules. Among them were; hours of operation, care of health - particularly regarding infectious diseases, conduct - no swearing, avoiding "all screaming and useless noises" at breaks; during school hours not be allowed to



Dr. William Tassie

whisper and laugh. Good fires were kept during wet and damp days. With respect to this item, the teacher required of each subscriber to furnish his quota of firewood, have it cut and properly piled. There were no rules included about the teaching of writing, reading, arithmetic or penmanship. One of the important tasks for the teacher was the cutting of quill pens. After three years of these duties in Oakville, Tassie moved to Hamilton, then after fourteen years he went to Galt where he taught for the next twenty years. William

Tassie died in 1886, aged seventy one.



Central School Group

The next schoolmasters appointed by the Common School were **C.G. Friend** (c. 1840) and **John Cook**. Friend lived "on Lot 9, Concession 4 S.D.S. He was described as a "stout, genial gentleman", well

liked by parents and pupils. We don't

know anything about Mr. Cook. We know a good deal about the next incumbent head master of Oakville Common School, **Arthur Cole Verner**.

Arthur Verner was born in Ireland, a younger son of Sir William Verner, in 1811. He was unfortunate to have been born with a deformed right arm, but was quite able to use the left arm, to the extent that he would manipulate it and use it to show people, particularly children, sleight of hand tricks. Verner was a graduate of **Trinity College**, Dublin. After his marriage to Harriet, (his wife's family name is not recorded.) they produced a son named Frederick, in the year 1836, so they were probably married no later than 1835. They decided to go to Upper Canada at Trafalgar Township, and in 1837 applied to purchase the north half of a Clergy Reserve of Lot 12 of the Second Concession S.D.S. Arthur Cole Verner asked William Chisholm to examine the proposed land and it was in Chisholm's opinion that the land was poor for cultivation, and the Lot was worth fifteen shillings per acre.

That is what Verner agreed with the Department of Crown Lands, fifteen shillings per acre or seventy five pounds for the one hundred acres. Verner promptly built a home on the property at the north western corner (ie. at the intersection of Upper Middle Road and 7th Line). His teaching began at **Wellington Grammar School**, and the family lived at Guelph until the late eighteen-forties when he was engaged as the headmaster of Oakville's Common School.

A few years later (1854) when the **Oakville Grammar School** was formed, he became headmaster of both the Common School and the Grammar School. Just a year earlier Verner began to exploit his land by designing a series of small-holdings, which he called the community of "Vernerville". The land fronted on the 7th Line, and the first purchases were in 1856. 7th Line was a plank road, part of the Trafalgar, Esquesing and Erin Road

Company, built to bring wheat to Lake Ontario from northern farms. The plank road was not a success. The new village declined almost as soon as it started. Verner gave up his teacher's position in order to promote **Vernerville**, and a new headmaster of Oakville Grammar School was appointed, **William Oliver**. We lose sight of Arthur Cole Verner from this point, but his son, Frederick, became a noted artist, specializing in animal paintings. He moved to London, England to live and was later knighted - Sir Frederick Verner.



Ninth Line School (Maple Grove)

Harry Buxton

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

SCHOOL DAYS IN OAKVILLE



Munn's School Group * 1903 - 1905



Unidentified School Class C. 1890

AROUND THE SOCIETY



Solution to “The Way Things Were” – March 2009

The name of the sawmill in the foreground was “Doty” and, the building on the right stored coal, brought in by steamers. Housewives quickly learned to bring in their washing when the ships brought the coal in to the harbour.

Lance Naismith

Concert in the Park

Organized by the Oakville Historical Society and sponsored by the Town of Oakville, you are invited to the **BAND CONCERT IN LAKESIDE PARK**, Sunday, June 14th 2009 from 12noon to 4:00PM. Enjoy some lively tunes by the St. Paul’s Dixieland Band from 12noon to 2PM and then an eclectic mix of music by the Oakville Wind Orchestra from 2:30pm to 4:00pm.

Bring your family and friends to this FREE concert, with your lawn chairs and picnic hamper.

Barb Savage

Your membership dues make this Newsletter possible

Outreach

Part of the mandate of our Society is to ensure that the rich and vibrant history of Oakville is made available to the community in a variety of ways. Newsletter, website, Thomas House and our viewable collections are just some of the ways. **Volunteers** also go out and discuss our historical past with various groups or lend information posters for events. Here are just some of them:

- June 11th Chartwell Retirement
- June 12th Halton Region Morning Walk
- June 23rd T.D. Bank Group
- August 19th Parkinson Tours – bus tour of Oakville

Barb Savage

New OHS Sunday Hours

To accommodate those members who are unable to visit the Society during regular hours, we will be open **EVERY THIRD SUNDAY** as well. If you would like to volunteer to assist, please contact the Society. It would be one way to get further involved in Oakville's history.

Thomas House

On Thursday, April 30th, Pat Mack welcomed 62 students and 8 supervisors to the Thomas House. The group was comprised of Grade 7 exchange pupils from **Quebec** and pupils from **St. Josephs in Oakville**. Everyone enjoyed the warmth of the fire as they explored the history of the Thomas family and the house. They ended each session with the fun of playing with the toys of the period.

Pat Mack

Presentation

Bastards, Lumps, Tittlers and Loaves!!! If you had been at the Society recently, you would have learned that they were terms used to describe sugar moulds. We recently had a presentation by **Richard Feltoe**, Curator of the Redpath Sugar Refinery Museum.

Redpath Sugar was founded in 1857. Sugar comes from sucros, which is sugar cane. It grows in the tropics - India to China, Middle East and Malta.

There was no natural supply in the west. The most reliable source for Redpath is Brazil – also Australia. Sugar was originally thought of as a spice. It was a bit of a status symbol to serve, with 1 K of sugar being worth \$1000.00. It was also used as a wonder drug to treat wounds in the 1500's, the Napoleonic Era and, the Spanish Civil War. It would be placed on a large open wound.



Sugar cane is not transported in its natural state, but is crushed by rollers and then placed in a barrel. **Molasses** drops to the bottom with molasses being the lowest form of sugar and has to be separated in the refining process. In the early 1870's, the centrifugal machine was adapted for use at Redpath and this speeded up the refining process. (**Ed. Note:** Centrifugal machine originally designed for Victorian Laundries and adapted for other uses in the 1860's-1870's)

Redpath produced packaged sugar in 1912. They used blue paper to increase the white look of granulated sugar. The commercial uses are fertilizer, paper, gasoline and all types of spices – over 70 % of production is commercial. Brown sugar is white sugar sprayed with molasses.

Columbus brought sugar cane and slaves on his second trip and went to the West Indies. The slaves came from **Timbuktu**.

Tip: To prevent hardening of brown sugar put a cup of soft brown sugar into a ziplock bag and put it into the freezer. It will be soft when you use it.

Ernie Carroll

If anyone would like to be added to our "**HERITAGE EVENT**" email list, please email info@oakvillehistory.org. We interact with seven other Halton Heritage groups in order to promote all up-coming Heritage Events.

OHS LOTTERY

The Society's mandate is to not only be an archive and protect historical documents relating to the Town of Oakville, but we are also a source for those doing research – professionally and as a hobby. In order to protect our collection, it is necessary for us to ensure a protective environment. However, we want our history to be open to all to enjoy. In this regards, we are moving forward and looking at putting our collection into an electronic format that will be accessible to all via the internet.

Of course, this costs money and we have limited resources. This is one reason your **membership dues** are so important. In order to raise funding for our future needs, we will be holding a lottery at specific events, starting with the Concert in the Park (Lottery tickets will also be available at Midnight Madness, the Thomas House and Doors Open).

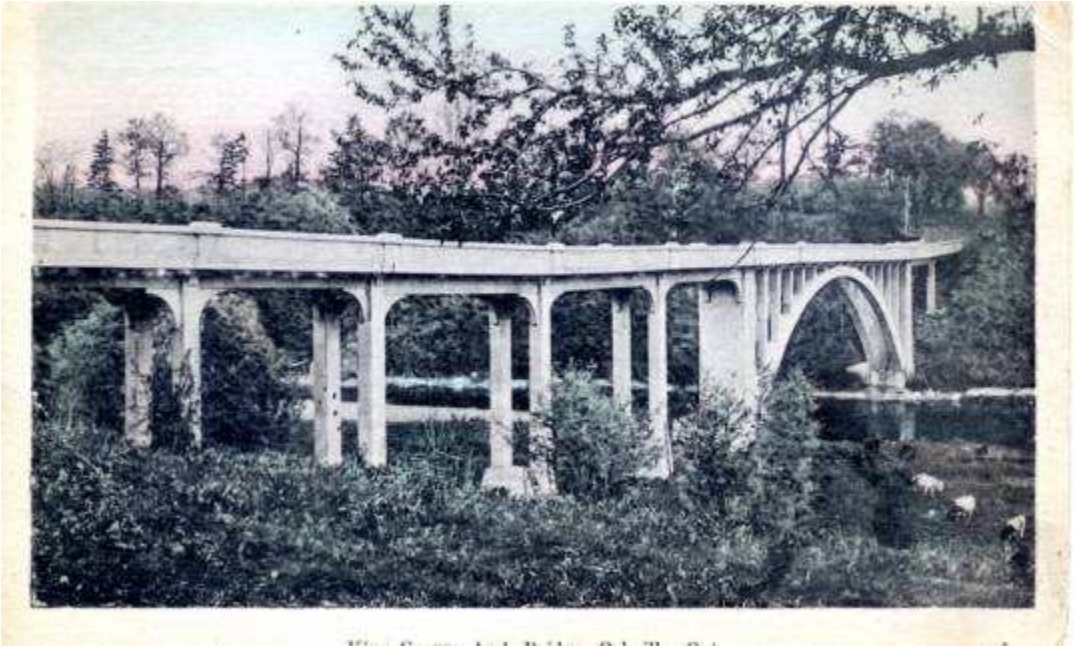
And the grand prize???? One return trip for two (2) people, to any scheduled WestJet destination (charters exempt) – worth over \$4,600.

WestJet has graciously donated these tickets to help the Oakville Historical Society bring its collection into a new era of accessibility. Please consider buying these tickets when offered - \$5 for one, 3 for \$10.00.



Lance Naismith

THE WAY THINGS WERE



1. What was the bridge's original name?
2. When was this bridge built?
3. Where is it located?

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

Postal Address: P.O. Box 69501, 109 Thomas Street, Oakville, Ontario L6J 7R4