

Oakville Historical
Society
since 1953

www.oakvillehistory.org

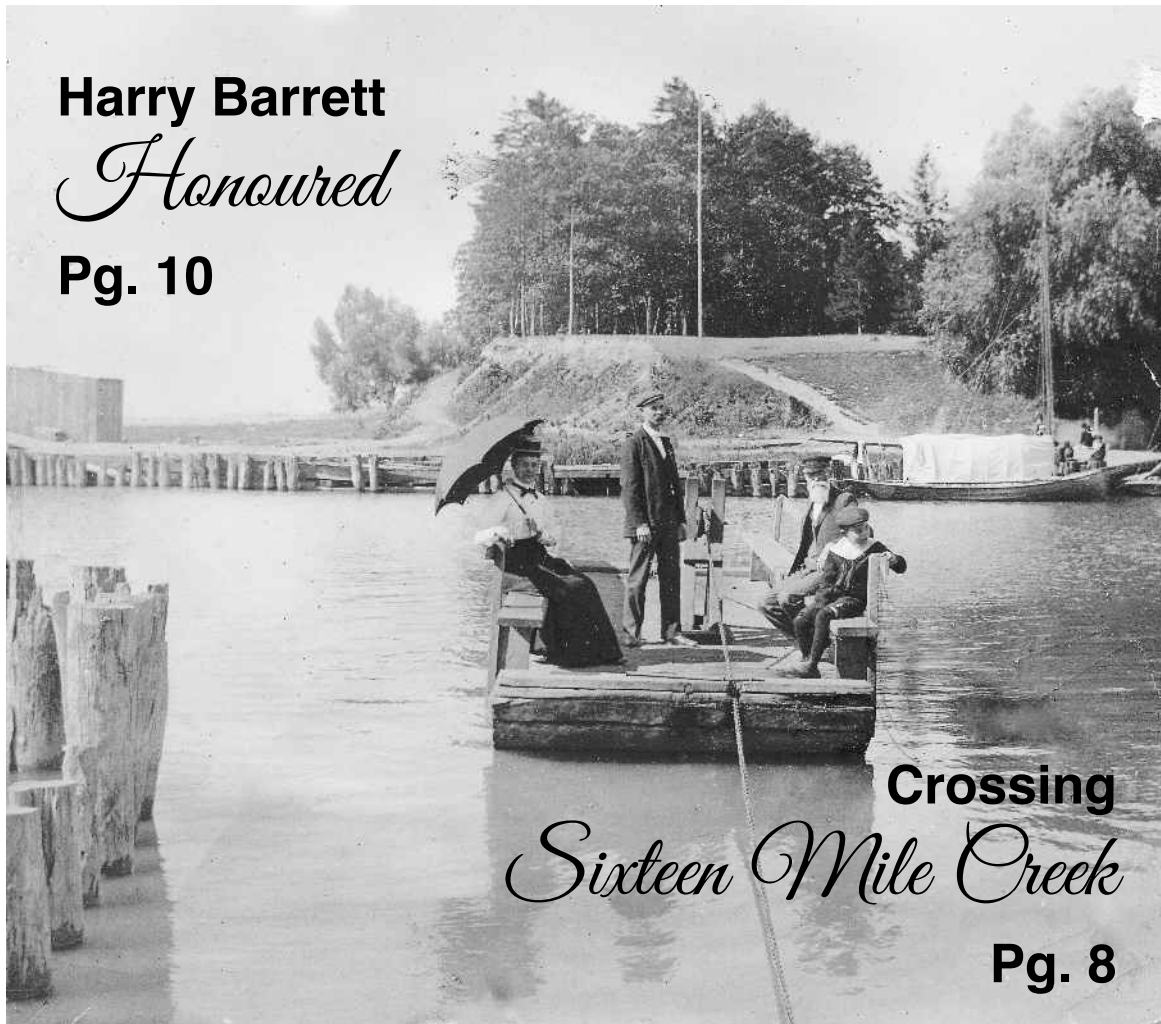
The White Oak

News from the Oakville Historical Society

Harry Barrett

Honoured

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Crossing

Sixteen Mile Creek

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Volume 51 Number 1

January 2017

Annual General Meeting and Potluck Supper

When: Wednesday, March 15th 6:00 to 9:00

Where: St. John's United Church

Dr. Justin Galer

When: Wednesday, April 19th 7:30 to 9:00

Where: St. John's United Church

How will you be remembered? Dr. Dustin Galer will present the many various ways of preserving your own or your family's memories. These can be from photographs, recordings, movies, interviews, postcards and so much more.

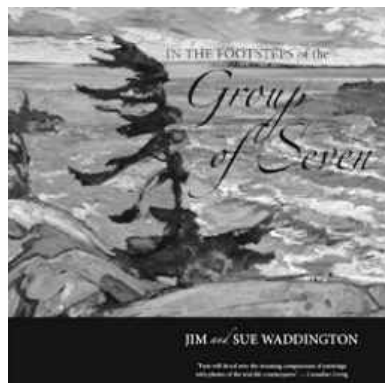
Doors open at 7:00. Refreshments served.
Free of charge. Donations welcome.

Oral Histories

Relating to our Speaker's Night, we hope to be able to help our members and any friends of members not able to write/type but who are interested in collecting their stories – short anecdotes, or special events that they would like to save for future generations. We have a volunteer willing to visit you and record your story and present it for your approval, for our Oakville Memories: Old & New website and Book 2 of the same name. Give us a call and we will set up a convenient time.

Tracing the Footsteps of the *Group of Seven*

Our February speakers were Jim and Sue Waddington presenting *In the Footsteps of the Group of Seven*. For 36 years Jim, a retired physics professor and his wife Sue, a retired nurse, have been looking for the spots which inspired the Group of Seven artists. They tracked down clues and traced the movements of the artists all across Canada, from sea to sea and to the Arctic.



With uncanny precision, they showed the original paintings alongside their contemporary photographs, at times superimposing one on the other. With an engaging and personal note, they entertained us with stories and anecdotes about the artists. They have published a beautiful book *In the Footsteps of the Group of Seven* depicting their journey and findings, the proceeds from which go to The Art Gallery of Sudbury.

A note from the Society President

Twenty something years ago we first started investigating digitizing the collection and records. We did quite a bit of research but were unable to come to any decision. Finally, it's happening. A few weeks ago the records for all 1300 books were made available online and can now be searched. Part of the process involved taking photos of each book, adding to the existing bookcases so that there would be room for them all and verifying the collection. Mark Verlinden bossed the job and the results look great. Having finished the books, he is now on to our main archive. This is a major project and involves checking and reorganizing our entire collection. There have been some great finds that haven't seen the light of day in some time. We've applied for grants to hire summer students to help with the process.

Thanks to Facebook and other initiatives our profile in the community is growing rapidly and we're getting increasing recognition. Donations are coming in the door every week. Barrie Watts and Nuala Johnston are very busy documenting each donation.

We're very pleased to announce that David and Suzanne Peacock's book, "Old Oakville" is back in print.

Unfortunately we've had to raise the price a bit. Information on all the books we carry is available on the website.

Greg Munz is hard at work creating a new exhibit for Canada's Sesquicentennial which is also Oakville's 190th birthday. Some will say 160th but Oakville was founded in 1827 and known as Oakville within a year. It was incorporated as a

Town in 1857. The exhibit will be titled "Oakville Celebrates". If you have photos or items that you think might be of interest and appropriate for the exhibit, please contact Greg. We'll also be working with the Oakville Beaver on a series of articles. The Mayor's Picnic will be an extra special event this year as well.



We've recently started working with the Town to make the office building more accessible to those requiring wheelchairs. This will involve making our main and washroom doors wider, adding in a ramp, replacing some fixtures and some other minor work.

Along with all the growth and activity comes an increasing need for volunteers. Don't hide your light under a bushel.

George Chisholm, President

Oakville Celebrates Canada's **Sesquicentennial** and Oakville's 190th

The Oakville Historical Society's sesquicentennial display theme is "Oakville Celebrates". Many aspects of Oakville's rich heritage will be highlighted in a display including the years 1867 and 1967. If you happen to have saved some momentos from Canada's Centennial Celebration in 1967 and you are willing to loan them to the OHS, we would be more than pleased to include them in the display.

Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary Celebration

To celebrate Canada's 150th birthday we are asking couples who will be celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary at any time in 2017 to submit a picture of the bride and groom along with a current picture of the bride and groom if possible. Even if the bride and groom are no longer a couple we would still appreciate a copy of your wedding picture from 1967 for inclusion in our 2017/18 display.

The Mayor's Annual Picnic 11th June 2017

At the Mayor's picnic this year we are offering a free draw for a selection of our Oakville Historical Society books, valued at \$150.00. All you have to do is register at the picnic. The winner will also receive an Oakville Historical Society family membership for the remainder of 2017. The winner will receive our quarterly newsletter, notifications of social events, ghost walks, speakers' nights and our annual Christmas party. This is a great way to meet other members and to socialize. This draw is open only to non-members. Society members, come and bring your extended family and friends.

In addition to the usual attractions the OHS is planning some special events at the picnic this year. Not only will 1967 wedding photos be on display in the OHS facilities at 110 King St but we are hoping that anyone celebrating their 50th anniversary will join in a walk about the park. And if you have been married for more than 50 years you will get to lead the parade. A group of very talented actors will be presenting a Moment in Oakville's History, a short play based on real characters from Oakville's early days.



This year you may just get a chance to meet and chat with some of Oakville's ghosts who usually don't present themselves until closer to Halloween. Children attending the picnic are invited to search out these friendly characters and have them sign a Picnic Passport. Participating children will then be eligible for entry into a draw for a variety of prizes.

Greg Munz

The *Fine Art* of Throwing Money Away

Jed Gardner

Stop what you are doing and listen! Many of us will put significant assets into an investment that is virtually worthless. You only have to read this article to make yourself a much better consumer. This may sound like fake news or a bad infomercial, but the reality is that most homeowners are spending large amounts of money on an investment that has almost no resale value. I know this because not a week goes by that I am not put into the unenviable position of having to tell consumers that their prized dining room suite that they purchased from the most posh vendor is worth almost nothing. The fact is that most items today are made poorly (and with cheap materials). Consumers assume when they go to more expensive shops that the items have some inherent value.



This Group of Seven, A.Y. Jackson painting has gone up steadily over the years

Turner Chapel Antiques

The reality is, however, that these items are not any more saleable than the cheapest scratch and dent bargain pieces.

The more expensive furnishings may initially look more impressive, but in reality they are usually made from inexpensive woods or extremely thin veneers to give the appearance of quality. Even in very good condition these pieces would only realize pennies on the dollar in an auction or consignment store. With the most minor flaws they are worth nothing. Recently, I was asked to value an estate of reproduction office furniture made in the US. The items were very expensive when purchased in the eighties. The owner was shocked to hear that they had very little resale value in the current market. He sent the items to a local auction with the hope that they would do better than predicted.

“Even in very good condition these pieces would realize only pennies on the dollar in an auction or consignment store.”

Unfortunately they did far worse. Half a million dollars in high end office furniture only sold for little more than two thousand dollars. In this case, if the purchaser had bought antiques and original artworks from a reputable auction or dealer he would have been much better off. How much better off? Obviously the answer depends on what art was purchased, but objects from a Sotheby's catalogue from the same era appreciated on

The *Fine Art*...

average 3 to 10 times. That's a three hundred percent to one thousand percent return on the original investment.

There are many factors that go into the resale value of an object but one of the main factors is what I call the "primary depreciation". Put simply, the primary depreciation is the percentage a commodity goes down immediately after it has been purchased. We are all aware that a car driven out of the showroom is worth 10-20% less as soon as it leaves the lot. What most of us don't know is that this reduction in value is actually relatively small compared with other categories of items. Jewelry, for example, is devalued by 50-70% while furniture is worth only 10-15% of the original purchased price. That means that a dining room suite that cost \$10,000 could expect to be sold for only \$1000 - \$1500. As you might expect, real estate would have a very low primary depreciation and a property bought well might well be worth more than its selling price. Art and antiques also have very good investment potential. This is because their value, like property, is primarily influenced by supply and demand. Also, like property, they are being sold in a secondary market. This means that their selling price may have no relation to their original cost.



We have all heard stories of objects being bought for little that are later sold for staggering profits. I can tell you from experience that this happens with some regularity.

The tax man knows this. That is why the CRA made a separate tax category for Art and Antiques. While many items depreciate over time, art and antiques often become more valuable. Executives used to be able to claim depreciation on their Group of Seven painting in their office. They would claim that the Tom Thompson they bought for \$5000. had gone down to a few hundred dollars when, in reality, its value had skyrocketed to over a million. Obviously not all art works go up and fluctuations in the market can sometimes reduce values significantly. On average, though, art will appreciate over time. We cannot say the same for cars, computers, electronics, or office equipment.

I do caution my clients that values can change as fashions come and go. When I started in this business Danish teak and rosewood furniture was almost completely unsaleable but the modern seventies style has come back into fashion and today a good signed Danish

This figural Royal Doulton can be found for as little as \$30. It is completely out of fashion.

The *Fine Art*...

table is worth more than all but the finest antique tables. I can find many examples of these pieces on line for well over \$5,000.

In essence, there are depreciating assets and appreciating assets. Property and art tends to go up, and things like new cars, computers, and kitchen renos, all tend to go down ... way down!! In our modern culture we all consume items and we are aware that some items will be used for a time and then thrown away, but in some instances we do not think about the potential future value of an object. It is one thing to knowingly invest in a luxury good because of lifestyle choice; it is entirely another to be shocked and blindsided when we realize just how costly these choices can prove to be. Think of your prized luxury car at trade-in time, or call around and offer dealers your dining room suite to find out how we sometimes make really foolish investments. Just being aware of this phenomenon makes you realize that many individuals participate, unknowingly, in "the fine art of throwing money away." WO

'HELP WANTED' for the Thomas House in Lakeside Park. We have been fortunate in previous years to have members who volunteered for a regular afternoon each week. If that is not for you, whatever afternoon is available to you would be appreciated. All necessary historical background is available and you will be paired with someone else until you feel comfortable on your own. We need extra help to cover holidays and substitutions when family events need our attention. We are also looking for someone to schedule the Thomas House volunteers, so if you know your way around a calendar and telephone, please consider giving this task a try.

Thomas House is open 1:30 to 4:00 pm
 Victoria Day Weekend - Sunday, Monday
 June - Weekends
 July and August - Weekends, Tuesdays,
 Wednesdays, Thursdays and Holiday
 Mondays

December 2016 White Oak - In our feature of the Wilson house we spelled Cort Wilson incorrectly, and on the cover, Architecture.



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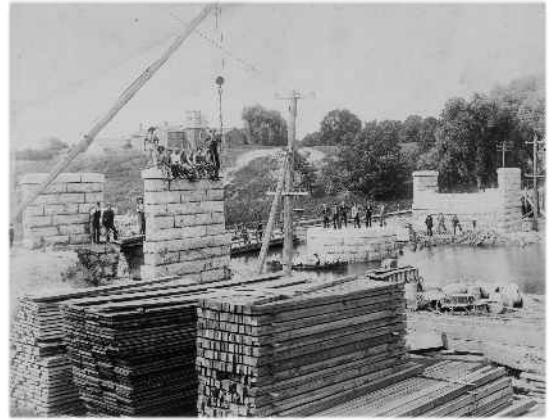
The *Bridges* Over the Sixteen

Diverted traffic will alert drivers to the fact that the bridge over Sixteen Mile Creek on Lakeshore Drive is being demolished. The new bridge will be the 7th in this location.

The first was built in 1832 and the second in 1850. Below, is the west end of the third bridge, built in 1878. Doty's Foundry is beyond.



Next erected (at a cost of \$11,000) was the Aberdeen swing bridge named for Governor General, Lord Aberdeen. It officially opened 18th September 1895.



Above shows the building of the Aberdeen Bridge c1894. Central School (now Centennial Square) can be seen in background. A turntable allowed the bridge to swing sideways letting schooners go up (and down) stream. Demolished in 1924.



Aberdeen Bridge c1900

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Cover photo shows the Sumner Family crossing the Sixteen Mile Creek by ferry, downstream of the bridge location, looking west.

The *Bridges* ...

The next structure (below) was erected in 1924 and served until 1968. Note the 1894 Aberdeen swing bridge turntable foundation still in place in 1968. WO



The current bridge being taken down, February 2017



1924 bridge being demolished in 1968

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Former Mayor Harry Barrett receives Heritage Conservation Award

Oakville Mayor Rob Burton is offering his congratulations and thanks to six-term former Mayor Harry Barrett as he receives the National Trust for Canada's 2016 Lieutenant Governor's Award. The award recognizes individuals who have made a profound impact on heritage conservation in Canada.

Mayor Rob Burton presented the award alongside National Trust for Canada board representative Michael Seamen at October's Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee meeting in Town Hall.

"Many of Oakville's most treasured public assets are a direct result of former-Mayor Barrett's leadership and vision over the years," said Mayor Burton. "We have Harry to thank for preserving Oakville's tremendous waterfront and harbours for the entire Oakville public to enjoy."

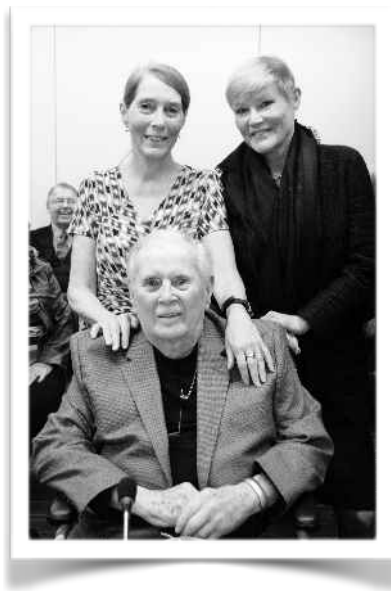
As Chairman of the Oakville Planning board in the 1960s, Harry Barrett convinced Council to pass a by-law allowing the town to take ownership of waterfront lands when they were sold or developed. This served as the foundation of a town-wide policy which continues to this day and culminated in the creation of the Harry Barrett Waterfront Parks System in 2012.

As Mayor from 1973 to 1985, he was instrumental in the purchase and preservation of Oakville's harbour lands, as well as the Erchless Estate – now home to the Oakville Museum.

In 1981 he also helped establish the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District, only the third of its kind in Ontario at the time.

"Council continues to draw upon Mayor Barrett's legacy of heritage conservation to this day," said Mayor Burton. "Harry understood how important it was to help foster a sense of shared identity and civic pride in the community. I can think of no one more deserving of this award."

~ Courtesy of Mayor Rob Burton



Harry Barrett with his daughters, Carol and Laurie

The *Coach House* next door to the OHS offices on King St. is a 117-year-old heritage building on the grounds of the Erchless Estate — home of the Oakville Museum. The east side is an apartment while the west side was home for horses and coaches and it has had many roles over the years, including its most recent use as a museum storage facility. Now that the Museum has access to storage facilities at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre, the Town has been asking for citizens' opinions on what the future will be for this Arts and Crafts building. Ideas being considered are space for Museum programs, wedding hires or small gatherings.



Dudley and Minnie Hitchcox in front of their Coach House apartment, 1919

What I Do ...

... at the Oakville Historical Society
I have performed as a volunteer for the Plaque Program, from October 2015 to present. My duties include:

- Updating and adding back-logged alphanumeric data in a continuously growing Excel spreadsheet and capturing pertinent data to properly track the OHS Plaque Program, one of the Society's sources of funding.
- Conducting microfiche historical research in order to locate information regarding the year the house was built and the name and occupation of the original owner.
- Communicating by email and telephone with the co-ordinator to discuss my tasks.
- Attending monthly Plaque Program meetings.
- During the summer of 2016, I co-ordinated volunteers to take pictures and conduct research on approximately 600 residential properties to determine if the home could be considered for the Plaque Program. Nicole Léger





HISTORICAL TOURS

Patricia "Trish" Sinclair
905 845-4030
jakpat@cogeco.ca

www.oakvillehistory.org

Renew Your *Membership*

There are still members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2017. If you have forgotten or do not wish to renew, please contact A. Stewart, 905 844-2695

The way things were...



The White Oak December 2016 featured a laundry stick. These hand-carved laundry sticks were used to stir and lift out the clothes from tubs of scalding water, water that sometimes had caustic lye added.



Do you know?

Where this is?

What is happening?

Look out for the answer in our next issue!

Yard Sale 27th May 2017

Please donate your basement finds and pre-loved knick knacks. Drop off at the office the week before the sale. Phone Jim Young at 289-259-0955 if you need help getting them to us. No clothes or large furniture please.

Archive Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 pm
Third Sunday of the month 12:30 to 4:00 pm

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