

Oakville Historical
Society
since 1953

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The WhiteOak

News from the Oakville Historical Society



*The Belyea
Family*
of **Bronte**

Volume 51 Number 2

June 2017

Oakville 190 years in the making

OHS volunteers and the folks at Halton Heritage Services have joined forces to put together our most ambitious exhibit ever.

The staff of Heritage Oakville have enthusiastically taken on a major portion of the job of producing the exhibit. They not only provide advice and guidance based on their considerable expertise but also roll up their sleeves to do research, design and production.

Come on in and see the exhibit on or after 11 June 2017.



OHS and George Chisholm, at left, recently hosted Halton Heritage Services. At left Mackenzie Gilles (Public Programmer), Julia Zungri (Curatorial Assistant), Brienna Lewis (Curatorial Assistant). At rear is Nathan McCarthy (School & Camp Programmer)

Mayor's Picnic

June 11th Noon to 5 pm

For the Adults There will be a draw for a selection of 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.

For the children 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.

For All Bands, Orchestra, Dancing, Face Painting, Oakville Hydro Bucket, Drama, Vintage Cars. Bring a lunch and a lawn chair.

Wednesday, 15 November 2017 our speaker is Mr. David Hobden on the subject of *"Opening Up Halton County – Mails and Posts of Halton from 1775 – 1918"* St. John's Church. 7:30. Donations welcome.

On the Cover The Belyea Boys take the Speers Girls for a sail on Redwing, Good Friday 1908. Note the stone ballast in centre board box.

Thanks go to Laraine and John Haworth at Atex Printing and Graphics for binding a document, at no charge, for the Oakville Historical Society.

A note from the Society President

The process of digitizing our photos and records is moving along well. At the time of writing, there are almost 800 photos available on line and more go up every week. Ella Boswell was hired several weeks ago to get the job started and is being paid from Society funds. Joining her soon will be an unpaid intern from Georgian College and we will soon be interviewing students from Sheridan College, one of whom will be paid by federal grant. We hope to have close to 3000 photos scanned and available on line by the end of the summer. There are somewhere around 8000 photos in the collection. The office is a very busy place these days.

As our photos become available on line there is increasing interest in the work of the Society. Several of them have been reposted on Facebook pages dealing with the history of Oakville – including our Facebook page - which is leading to new members and archival donations.

Thanks to Facebook and William Mewes, we now have a copy of the 1947 Oakville phone book which has been transcribed and made available on our website. The addresses in it, unfortunately, use the old street numbering system. Please have a look and help us match the old numbers with the new numbers. If you have information on any of the houses that would be appreciated as well – who built them, when and what they did for a living.

We were very pleased to be able to help the Oakville Army Cadet Corps with their recent trip to the celebrations at Vimy. An anonymous donor helped even more. This cadet corps was formed in 1924 at Oakville Trafalgar High School and I served as the Commanding Officer for several years along with Society member Ron Currell. When the school board decided they didn't want to sponsor cadet corps, we approached the Society through Harry Barrett. The Society agreed to sponsor the cadet corps on the condition that I join the board. I've been here ever since. The cadet corps is thriving and now meets at the Oakville Armoury.

A new exhibit will also be opening at the office in early June in time for the Mayor's Picnic, June 11th at Lakeside Park. We hope to see you there.

George Chisholm, President



Ella Boswell, who has taken on the task of digitizing our photos and records.

Truth and Reconciliation

Dr. Paul Racher

Our May speaker, Dr. Paul Racher, talked to us about Truth and Reconciliation. Dr. Racher is President of the Ontario Archaeological Society and a Principal at ARA Ltd., Ontario's oldest archaeological and heritage consulting firm. He has spent much of his career as a campaigner for the recognition of Indigenous rights, particularly as they relate to heritage and archaeology.

It seems Canada's history with regard to its native people is not as heroic as we might have wished. Pretty much all of the land mass of Canada is subject to treaty provisions promised to First Nations between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. These treaty rights typically included a cash settlement and a promise that the Nation concerned would have the hunting and fishing rights into perpetuity. In fact, those rights were rarely respected. Canada would soon forget all of the things that Indigenous people had done for them. Instead of treating the First Nations as one of the founding peoples of Confederation, Canada has treated Indigenous peoples as if they were incapable of taking care of themselves, as a burden.

It is this paternalistic attitude that The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, led by the First Nations leader, The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, sought to address. Six years in the making, the report documents the long and sad story of the residential schools, designed to assimilate the First Nations children and "kill the Indian in the child".

Over 130 residential schools were located across the country and housed more than 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children. These government-funded church-operated schools ran from the 1870s until the 1990s. Designed to deprive the First Nations children of their culture and language, the program forcibly removed the children from their families, housed them in substandard conditions, underfed and subjected them to extreme abuse. Accounts of this abuse were hard to hear and are available at our office for anyone who would like to understand this shameful blot on our history. In particular, there is a letter from a First Nations man to the Indian Affairs Branch who served Canada overseas in the Korean War, describing the atrocious conditions to which he had been subjected at The Mohawk Institute at Brantford, a building that still exists for all to see.

The recommendations of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission are available on their website as well as suggestions as to how we can help compensate for this injustice.

Dr. Racher stayed long after his presentation answering questions and explaining his interest in this subject. He also declined his honourarium, asking that it be donated to the Oakville Historical Society. He generously made available to the Society, his presentation which you can view at our office.

The *Belyea* Family of Bronte

Julie Thompson

Granddaughter of Lillian Hammond Belyea

This article tells the story of the discovery of my family roots here in Bronte. I was born in New Brunswick, have lived in many cities across Canada and recently Victoria, B.C. We moved to Bronte three years ago to be closer to children and grandchildren. I noticed Belyea Street right away. And I began to wonder.

I joined the Oakville Historical Society and started asking questions. My sister-in-law helped very much with ancestry.ca, Find-a-Grave, Provincial Archives and other research sites. Betty Strong and the Bronte Historical Society provided images and information.

The history of the Belyea family dates back to before the War of Independence when thousands of Loyalists moved to Canada. The spelling of the name has evolved throughout the generations.

In 1670, Louis Boulrier Bulljee was born in Saintonge Province, France. (Saintonge was also the birthplace of Samuel de Champlain in 1574, the founder of Quebec.) Louis Bulljee was a Huguenot, who were French Protestants. The reigning monarchs of England and France were Catholic. King Charles II of England, trying to return England to Catholicism, entered into a secret treaty with King Louis XIV to get support and he in return would help France invade the Netherlands.

However, they encountered great resistance from William of Orange, the Netherlands monarch.

He later became the King of England. But not before the Edict of Nantes, which had been issued in the 1500's to protect the rights of the Huguenots, was revoked. This resulted in officially sanctioned persecution of the Huguenots. Between 210,000 and 900,000 Huguenots left France and they took with them their skills and knowledge in many industries such as silk art, plate glass techniques, silver-smithing, watchmaking and cabinetmaking.

The French Boulrier was pronounced "bool-yay" and it evolved to the Dutch spelling Beljee, pronounced "bell-yee"

Louis made his way to the English colony of New York where he was one of the first European settlers. He settled in the Dutch community of Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Westchester County. Louis married Annetje Konninck who was from Oostburg, Zeeland, Netherlands. They married on May 23, 1697 in the Old Dutch Church in Sleepy Hollow. Around this time Boulrier surname changed to Beljee, reflecting the Dutch influence.

Belyea of Bronte...

The French Boulier was pronounced “bool-yay” and it evolved to the Dutch spelling Beljee, pronounced “bell-yea”.

Frederick Flypse (Philipse) was the holder of a land patent for 52,000 acres in Westchester County, extending along the east bank of the Hudson River. The land became known as Philipsburgh Manor. Louis and Annetje lived at Philipsburgh and became the first of many generations of tenant farmers.

“Tensions with English rule around taxes, export embargos and import duties grew.”

During the years leading up to the War of Independence, the Belyeas farmed in the same area. By 1720 the Anglo population in the English colonies in New York reached 7,000. Tensions with English rule around taxes, export embargos and import duties grew. Events such as the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party pushed tensions between the British and the colonists.

Meanwhile, in Philipsberg, N.Y., the son of Louis and Annetje, John, married Helena Williams in North Tarrytown and had eight children. One of these was Henry (Hendrick) Bulyea. He was born in 1720 in Tarrytown, NY and died in Greenwich, Kings County, New Brunswick in 1802.

Henry is the common link between the Belyeas of New Brunswick and the Belyeas of Bronte. Henry married twice. He had four children with his first wife, Deborah Carpenter, who died in 1755. Henry's second marriage to Angelica (Engelte) Storm produced nine more children.

Angelica came from a line of Dutch and Huguenot immigrants to New Amsterdam, and later settled at Philipsburg Manor. Her grandfather, Dirck Storm, came from Utrecht in 1662. He became the recorder for the Dutch Church where Henry was christened and where his parents were married - a very close family helping each other and farming the same land for many years.

This all changed with the War of Independence. Sir Guy Carleton evacuated thousands of Loyalists from NYC in 1783. They lost their farms, possessions, left their birthplace behind and began a new life in Canada. Their journey to New Brunswick by boat was captured in a journal of the time. It took a month to sail to New Brunswick, waiting for winds and tides.

“We are all ordered to land tomorrow, and not a shelter to go under.”

Finally on June 28, they found themselves on the St. John River. *“Our land is five and twenty miles up the river. We are to have here only a building place of forty feet in the front and a hundred feet back...I long to set my feet once more on land...June 29 – This morning looks very pleasant on the shore. I am just going ashore with my children to see how I like it. Later – it is now afternoon and I have been ashore. It is, I think, the roughest land I ever saw...We are to settle here but are to have our land sixty miles farther up the river. We are all ordered to land tomorrow, and not a shelter to go under.”* Journal of Sarah Frost, 1783.

Belyea of Bronte...

A son from Henry's first marriage, John, married Susannah Sniffin of Westchester County. John was a boat builder and fought in the King's American Regiment 1776-1779 and the Loyal American Regiment 1779-1783. He settled and established a boat building business in Saint John and in 1795 was named a Freeman of the City. John and Susannah had 13 children.

One of these children was John, born in 1776 and in 1799 he married Isabella Goodwin who was from Westchester County, N.Y. He fought in the war of 1812, and then moved his family to Bronte to settle on what was then Native land.

A son from Henry's second marriage, William, married Phoebe Tucker and they had 6 children. One of their sons, Joseph, stayed in New Brunswick. He had a son named Joseph Lawrence, who was my great grandfather. He was second cousins to John Belyea who moved to Bronte. Joseph Lawrence Belyea is the great grandson of Henry Belyea. Charlotte E. McBay and their one child, my grandmother, Lillian Hammond Belyea was born in Glenwood, Kings County, N.B., on October 25, 1894.

Over the centuries my ancestors been displaced and moved from one continent to another and from one country to another. And now here I am living around the corner from the homestead of my second cousin, three times removed.



This house at 3128 Seneca Drive was constructed in 1919 by builder Dalt McDonald for Fred (1889-1959) and Ida Belyea. They were born in Bronte and married in 1915. Fred is the great great grandson of John Belyea. Fred established a commercial fishing business with his brothers. Fred's father, Emanuel, a mariner on the Great Lakes, owned the clipper-bowed fishing boat "Redwing" around 1908. The builder of the house, Dalt McDonald, was one of Bronte's well-known shipbuilders who built around 30 fishing boats and 22 houses in Bronte. WO



Bronte Cemetery headstone of John Belyea, died 14 April 1825 aged 50 years.

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How Will You be *Remembered* ?

Most of us are eager to tell our family stories but we don't know how to begin or don't seem to find the time. Ordinary people living our lives; we often think someone should be writing down the stories but we leave it too late. Our April speaker Dr. Dustin Galer talked to us about how to get started and told us of the services available to help.

Dr. Galer is a social historian with a PhD in History from the University of Toronto. He is a master story teller with ten years experience interviewing, writing and publishing historical research for public and academic audiences. As well, he was a caregiver with a background in social and community services.

We all have photographs but without a story we are left to infer what was going on. He suggests starting with an oral history and a tape recorder. Sometimes it is easier to tell stories to someone else other than those closest to us, and it can be therapeutic resolving conflicts or leaving a model for the young to follow. The process is as important as the product. He recommends that we label the old photos because the events, places and times are most often lost to time.



Dr. Dustin Galer (r) with another storyteller, Elise Cole

Dr. Galer can provide those services or can provide advice on how to go about it. He can produce an audio disc or a full in-depth biographic commemorative book. You can find out about his services at www.myhistorian.ca or phone him at 1 289-442-6790. *Andrea Stewart*



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In & around the Society



Rebel Talk *The brave adventures of Colonel William Chisholm and his struggles against malignant and disloyal rebels during the recent unpleasantness of 1837.* Peter Coffey, Trish Sinclair and Michael Brown are preparing to entertain guests at the Mayor's Picnic, June 11th, Lakeside Park at 2:30 pm. Spoiler alert! Despite her determination, Esther does not influence husband Merrick's plans.

Volunteer Rosemary Seeton has recently added her research talents to the Plaque Committee.



Hazel Holbrook (l) dropped in to give the Society her memories of living most of her life in the Kerr St. area. Her niece Sandy Moshenko (r) and Greg Munz listened to her story. You too can share your memories of your life in Oakville. Give us a call so we can add it to our second volume of Oakville Memories.



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take a *Walk*



Our volunteer Trish Sinclair (in her guise of Esther Thomas) leads walks around Oakville on foot, in buses and at seniors' homes. Call Trish or OHS to arrange a tour.

in the *Neighbourhood*

The 117-year-old Coach House on Erchless grounds has a new purpose.

On Monday, April 3, Town of Oakville Council approved the recommendation to redesign the heritage building for cultural programs, exhibits and events.

The preferred refurbishing includes converting the main space of the building into a multi-purpose space for museum-led exhibits, programming and cultural events, as well as community uses such as meetings and weddings.

There will also be space for an artist-in-residence program, a small outdoor performance venue and space to accommodate food and beverage service for special events and performances.



Oakville Historical
Society
since 1951

HISTORICAL TOURS

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

www.oakvillehistory.org

Streetsville Historical Society Walking Tours

Saturday June 17 10 am - 1 pm

Sunday July 16 1 pm - 4 pm

Friday August 18 7 pm - 9:30 pm

Saturday September 20 10 am - 1 pm

All are free and no registration is required.

Anyone interested in joining a group for carpooling, get in touch with the OHS office.

Clout On Snout Cures Fever Of Histeric Whistle

The tannery whistle went off into hysterics late last night, June 23, 1888, and drew a large crowd in a short time.

The valve had an attack of spring fever and was letting off some steam, which could be heard from miles around.

A timely clout on its snout quieted it down quite quickly and no more has been heard from it since.

Members and Donors

The Oakville Historical Society is pleased to welcome the following new Members.

Ms. Andrea Brennen Mr. Reid Brown
 Ms. Gloria Cilliers Ms. Marilyn Gauthier
 Ms. Rebecca Hayward Mr. Daniel Holland
 Mr. Darryl Austin Litchfield Mr. Harris Petch
 Ms. Janice Monahan Mr. Ernest F. Wilson
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lucas

We wish to thank our new Donors for their gifts to the Society. Their generosity will continue to support the work of our volunteers.

Mrs. Heather Appleton Metroland Halton
 RBC Foundation Ms. Kira Thomson
Andrea Stewart and Marie Descent

Our Webmaster Stan Smurlick is continuously upgrading our website www.oakvillehistory.org A new feature allows visitors to pay for memberships and make donations online.

Get Involved

Thomas House opened Saturday, 20 June for the Victoria Day weekend and will be open June on Saturdays and Sundays. Volunteers who would like to participate as interpreters during July and August, please contact coordinator Mary Davidson at mary.davidson2@bell.net Afternoons from 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm Tuesday to Thursday and weekends are available. This is a great way to become familiar with the history of the family who lived in this house and a time to meet many of the interesting people who visit our Town. New volunteers will be partnered with an experienced person.



The Society's fountain, dedicated to volunteers, is being given its annual coat of paint by Jamie Macrae before he installs it at the front entrance of 110 King St.



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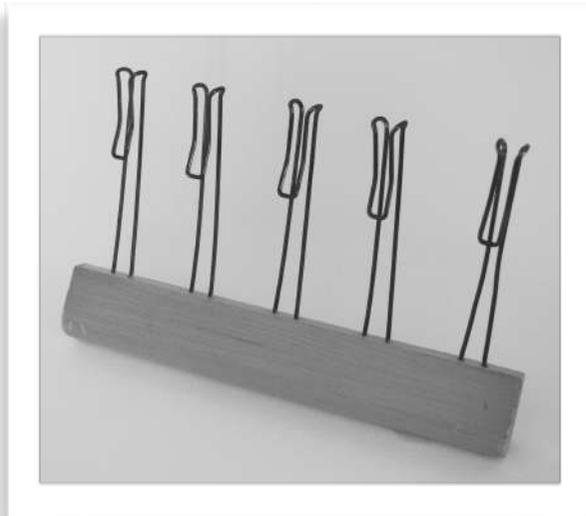
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The *way* things were...



Do you know?

What this is?

Where it was used?

Look out for the answer in our next issue!



In 1988, a 65-foot wide, two-story, 2,800 square foot house was carried down Sixth Line and deposited at 350 Atwood Lane, Oakville. It was a March of Dimes prize, won at the Mississauga Home and Design Centre the previous year. The house alone was worth \$350,000.

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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