

# BULLETIN

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL SOCIETIES COMMITTEE

1466 Bathurst Street

Toronto, Ontario M5R 3J3

No. 12

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## Comment

The big event in the recent O.H.S. operation has been the moving of the office from 40 Eglinton Avenue East in Toronto to 1466 Bathurst Street. We hope you have noted the new address and that you will use it. Members have become accustomed to the old address and even though we sent out a yellow notice with the membership billings, we are still getting a good deal of mail which has had to be re-addressed by the Post Office. The new quarters are larger and brighter, and when we get our new shelving, and get rid of the many boxes of books which are standing around the floor, we expect to be very happy in the new office.

Preservation is a topic which seems to be on the minds of a great many people. We get many calls asking for financial help to restore or preserve a building. Much as we would like to do so, we just cannot help in this way. Our Preservation Committee considers each request carefully, but it is not funded and can do no more than send a letter of support. We were very much interested in the plan which the Philadelphia Historical Commission has worked out. On the basis of studies made by the Commission staff, buildings are registered and given a registration number. Once registered, a building may not be demolished or altered outwardly without permission. A registered building is designated by a wall plaque and usually carries a higher valuation than one that is not registered. A guidebook has been prepared which lists many of the historic buildings and tells something of their past. This registration scheme has worked so successfully in Philadelphia that it is being copied by other cities. Its success seems to lie in a simple comprehensive law with a minimum of conditions. This is living preservation in contrast with the sterile historic house set-up which we see so often.

## The Ontario Historical Society

The Annual Meeting of The Ontario Historical Society is to be held this year on June 20, 21, 22 at Talisman Resort in Kimberley, Ontario. Our hosts are the Grey County Historical Society and an outstanding program has been planned. When you receive your announcement and program, you will note that the costs have been allocated in a different way than has been done in the last few years. The price of most meals is included in the room rate, so that the total cost of the week-end will be much the same as that to which we have become accustomed. Talisman is in the Beaver Valley - one of the most scenic areas of southern Ontario. If you become bored with meetings - or with your neighbours - you can go and swim in the pool - or play a round of golf - or simply go for a quiet walk along one of the nature trails. Altogether it is a week-end to look forward to.

#3 of The Ontario Historical Society's Research Series has just arrived in our office. It is titled "The Canada Land Company - the Early Years" and its author is Dr. Clarence Karr. It is uniform in format and price (\$2.25) with the first two volumes in the series. Schools should be interested in this.

### The Enoch Turner Schoolhouse

The Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation in Toronto has just sent us its Spring program. Under the heading "A contemporary educational heritage program in Toronto's first schoolhouse of free education" it provides for almost continuous use of a handsomely restored building. The activities range from 1848 lessons for children in the mornings to a modern theatre production for adults in the evenings. Sunday afternoons feature a tour and a slide presentation of Toronto's oldest schoolhouse with occasional craft demonstrations or a Canadiana antique market. Beginning on April 16th, there is a series of anecdotal presentations by ten popular authorities intended to revive the social character of the Toronto of the early 1800's. This series is entitled "The Toronto Behind Today" and carries the modest fee of \$20.00 for the whole ten evenings.

The restoration of the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse was initiated by a group of enthusiasts from Little Trinity Church to which the building belonged. After a period of intense effort and much discussion, a Foundation was set up and the property deeded to it. The necessary funds were raised and work began on the building which had become seriously dilapidated. Today, the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse at King and Parliament Streets in Toronto is a good example of what can be done with an old building.

### Lakefield College School

One of our members has sent us a fascinating account of the history and renovation of Atwood House by Lakefield College School. This old home of board and batten construction is not an outstanding work of architecture, but it is unusual. Miss Annie Atwood, who occupied the home celebrated her 100th birthday in it. When she died the following year (1971) the Board of the school bought the property and decided to turn it into a residence for 20 senior boys and a housemaster. Using the school's own maintenance staff as much as possible the transition to a school residence was undertaken. Every effort was made to preserve the significant details of the old house and retain its character. From the evidence of construction details it is thought that the house had been designed originally by a trained architect, and tradition has it that it had been built by the grandson of D'Arcy Boulton who had been responsible for the Grange, now a part of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Miss Annie Atwood was a niece of Catherine Parr Traill, who wrote "The Backwoods of Canada". She was the last of the Traill descendants in the Lakefield district. It is to be hoped that the boys who are lucky enough to live in the house realize that while one chapter of local history has ended, another has just begun.

### Canadian Friends Historical Association

Although this society is only a little over a year old and has a comparatively small membership, it has undertaken two important projects. First, the extensive Quaker Records presently in the care of the Archives at Western University in London, are being microfilmed by the Ontario Archives. These comprise approximately 400 volumes of

records, including some ancient volumes still in the possession of Monthly Meetings. Microfilming this material means that not only will an opportunity be provided for Friends to have a centrally-located set of microfilms for researchers in the Toronto area, but that it will help materially in the preservation of the actual record books.

The second important project is the renovation of the historic Quaker Meeting House on Yonge Street, near Newmarket. The Meeting House (1810) was the first place of worship north of Toronto (York). To accomplish the renovation, the Meeting House, which now sits on stone pillars, will be skidded to one side. A foundation housing essential services will be constructed and the building will be replaced on it. The changes will allow the Meeting to use the building on a year-round basis and will provide space for its expanding activities.

#### Lundy's Lane Historical Society

Early last year this society joined other historical societies from both sides of the Niagara River for the first Annual International Meeting of Historical Societies. The Lundy's Lane Society and the Niagara Falls (N.Y.) Historical Society were co-sponsors for this meeting. It was held at the Schoelkopf Geological Museum in Niagara Falls, N.Y. The gathering gave the attending societies an opportunity to describe themselves and their work. The host for the evening, the Curator of the Museum, gave an informative illustrated show depicting the geological history of the Niagara River and Falls.

Another interesting meeting was addressed by Mr. Basil Hall from the Carborundum Co., of Niagara Falls, N.Y. He described, with slides, the new Ceramics Museum then nearing completion. It will attempt to depict the history and development of ceramics through the centuries and should be of great value to all who are interested in the study of this subject.

#### Kingston Historical Society

The program of this society for its February meeting featured "Three Stories in Stone" - illustrated talks by the occupants of three historic houses in near-by Pittsburg Township. This is exactly the kind of thing we have been advocating - get your own members involved in your programs.

Kingston Historical Society has a "Clipping Bureau" which watches all kinds of local publications for news of what its members are doing. The latest bulletin has about 1½ pages, foolscap length, called "Names in the News". It lists news of members who are travelling, who have retired, who have been guest speakers at meetings, who have won awards and elections, etc., etc., etc. As a rule, people like to see their names in print and such a listing is an easy way to show our appreciation of their efforts. It is also an effective way of maintaining interest among the membership.

The Conference on Scottish Studies

This Conference will hold its next annual meeting at the University of Toronto on June 5, 1974. An interesting program for the meeting has been prepared by Dr. John Moir, Vice-President of the Conference and a Past President of O.H.S. Membership in the Conference is \$5.00 per year. It includes a subscription to Scottish Tradition which contains articles on many aspects of Scottish history and culture in Scotland, Canada and other parts of the world. Further information can be obtained from:

Prof. Henry B.M. Best, President,  
Department of History,  
Atkinson College, York University,  
4700 Keele Street,  
Downsview, Ontario.

Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Historical Society

Two interesting items come from the Annual Report of this very active society. The first one tells of a trip to Potsdam, N.Y. to hear an illustrated address on the historical houses of the area by Prof. Johnston of the Department of History at the New York State University in Potsdam. Following this, and beginning on February 6th, Prof. Johnston is giving a series of 5 talks on "Early Canada; the St. Lawrence Valley" at the University. The lectures are free to the public and include such topics as "New France" and "British Quebec, 1763 - 1791". This is another example of the "hands across the Border" movement which cannot help but lead to a better understanding between neighbouring countries.

The second interesting item is the report of the preparation of sixteen 15-minute television programs presented over Cable 11. Videotapes of all the programs have been kept and are in the Society's possession. These programs have created such wide interest that the Society plans to continue the series through 1974.

Peterborough Historical Society

The March bulletin from the Peterborough Historical Society asks help in preparing a bibliography of books relating to the history and development of the Peterborough area. There must be hundreds of books containing a chapter or paragraph describing as little as passing through Peterborough, or as much as a capsule history of the area. This bibliography would be a great benefit to anyone studying the area. If you know of any book that mentions the Peterborough area (county and/or city) please contact Mr. Sandy Stewart, 228 Charlotte Street, Peterborough, K9J 2T8.

An important activity sponsored by this society is the Junior Historical Club. The Club meets in its own attractive room in the Hutchison House. Last fall, the Club held a "dig" in the ravine behind the Hutchison House; had a two-week weaving project; went on a walking tour of downtown Peterborough and explored the Bradburn Opera Hall. A sleigh ride for early winter was planned. In March, a trip to the Royal Ontario Museum to meet the Saturday Morning Club was a highlight of the season.

Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society

Writing is one of the most important aspects of communication, and an historical society is usually fortunate in having people who are productive in this field. The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society feel that writing is important and that authors should be honoured. All Niagara Frontier area authors who have published a book, copyrighted in 1973 were guests of the Society at the third annual Authors' Evening last April 23rd. Awards were given to all authors attending. After the dinner and the presentation ceremonies, the senior librarian at the Society spoke on the library and its function. Society members and their guests were invited to attend.

Ohio Historical Society

An in-school demonstration program has been started by the Natural History division of the Ohio Historical Society. It offers a series of ten demonstrations on such topics as feeding birds, insect life cycles and the weather. Most demonstrations include the use of specimens and slide shows. Others involve the students in learning how to make things like bird feeders. The response of both students and teachers to these demonstrations has been highly favourable. This sounds like an excellent start for a Junior History Program.

South Dorchester Historical Society

During its fall tour, the South Dorchester Historical Society visited several interesting sites in the Township. The members met at the round barn, a well-known landmark on Highway 73. This barn, not now in use, was built of brick around a large silo. The group then visited a fine early homestead, not changed to any extent over the years. They also visited three early cemeteries, the last being a well-fenced knoll in a corn field with a single massive granite monument and six headstones. The paper given here told the poignant story of the deaths of two children, their burial in 1861 and the deaths of their parents some forty years later. The sites of two early Methodist churches were also visited and different members gave a brief history at each site. The tour ended with tea.

It is unfortunate that the South Dorchester Historical Society has not replied to our invitation to join The Ontario Historical Society. Any local group cannot help but gain through contact with other, and often more experienced, groups having the same aims and activities. A wise man once remarked. "No man is an island unto himself". We think this should apply to local historical societies too.

Gleanings

This Dentifrice was one of Queen Victoria's very own specialties. Mix well together 1½ drams powdered myrrh; 3 drams Peruvian bark finely powdered; 10 drops oil of cloves; 1 ounce prepared chalk; 2 drams orris root powder; 1 ounce rose pink. Keep the mixture closed tightly.

A demonstration of the art of drying flowers by various methods was held by the Oakville Historical Society Auxiliary at its Autumn meeting. Members were shown how to arrange these winter bouquets in their own containers, and arrangements done by well-known local people were exhibited.

A new and attractive Historical Highlights of Norfolk County by Bruce M. Pearce has just come to hand. Mr. Pearce is a Past-President of the Norfolk Historical Society and a retired newspaperman who is an authority on his subject. The book contains 160 pages and is profusely illustrated. It comes in both soft and hard covers and can be obtained from Mr. Pearce, 50 Orchard Avenue, Simcoe, Ontario, N3Y 3H1.

Ontario's Historical Plaques seem to be travelling abroad. Last September, a plaque to commemorate Count Frontenac was unveiled at his birthplace near Paris, France. A special ceremony was arranged to take place in the cour d'honneur of the Royal Chapel at St. Germain-en-Laye. It was sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, in co-operation with the Department of External Affairs, French Government Ministries and the municipality of St. Germain-en-Laye.

Gananoque Historical Society is happy to announce that the great knowledge of local history acquired by Mr. Harry Hawke, through many years of study will be available when his book, "Historic Gananoque" is published in April. It will sell for \$5.00 and will contain 100 pages with pictures of old and modern Gananoque. The society is planning to hold a reception in the Town Hall to introduce the book and honour Mr. Hawke.

A Canadian Studies Centre has been set up at Duke University in Durham, N.C. It plans to develop teaching on Canada at the undergraduate level and to attempt to increase American interest in, and knowledge of, Canada and Canadian problems. The Centre plans a Secondary School Teachers' Conference in Durham in 1974 and a month-long seminar on Canada for American university and college teachers at R.M.C. in Kingston in the summer of 1975. The Director of the Centre is a Canadian, Prof. Richard A. Preston.

We would like to remind Newsletter Editors that there are Copyright Laws. One Newsletter that we receive is copying a chapter from a local history each month. This is an interesting idea, which no doubt spreads a lot of knowledge of the locality but it is a dangerous one. If you wish to copy an author's work, you should be sure to have his written permission before you start.

The Guelph Historical Society is again holding its annual tree-planting ceremony in the John Galt Gardens on April 23rd. This will mark the 147th anniversary of the founding of Guelph. Since this is also the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Ontario Agricultural College, representatives from the University of Guelph have been invited to take part.

Our congratulations go to the North Lanark Historical Society which has been revitalized. One of their publishing projects which especially caught our eye is a packet of ten postcard-sized recipe cards in a variety of colours. There are such pioneer recipes as Raspberry Vinegar, Maple Syrup Pie and Lumber Camp Baked Beans. This attractive packet should prove a money-maker.

All local historical societies are reminded that "An Award of Excellence" will be presented at the Annual Meeting in June. If your society has had an unusually successful year, or has come up with an original project, or has done some organizational work beyond what is necessary - in short, if your society has furthered the study of local history, you are eligible for the Award. You should apply for it by telling us about it as soon as you can - before May 4th at the latest. The size of your society is not important - your work is.

Affiliated societies are reminded that annual reports for 1973 are due as soon as possible after your annual meeting. Many societies have already sent in their reports and we thank you for them. Some of the reports are handsome and are a credit to the societies issuing them. We are revising the back cover of Ontario History, and if your report is not in, and your name is missing, it is your own fault. So be warned!