

OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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APRIL 2021

RESTORATION WORK AT HISTORIC BEAVERDAMS CHURCH



Photo - David Cowan

David Cowan, Beaverdams Church
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The Historic Beaverdams Church is an 1832 wooden frame structure that was built in the two-storey New England Meeting House style by a group of Methodist Episcopal pioneers who arrived in the Niagara area near Thorold in the 1790s from New Jersey after the American Revolution. Their first services were held in the home of Hiram Swayze, a local farmer who eventually donated one acre of his land for a church and graveyard. The right for Methodists to build a church resulted from an act of 1829 "for the relief of religious societies" whereby trusteeships could be formed to own property and construct churches, hence the 1832 date for completion of their new chapel.

The first preacher was Dr. Egerton Ryerson, a young country circuit rider who eventually founded Ontario's education system and for whom Ryerson University is named.

The Friends of the Beaverdams Church, a not-for-profit incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society in 2013, has 145 energetic members who are in the process of restoring this architectural gem to its original beauty. The first step was to purchase the church and graveyard from the City of Thorold in 2014, and then restore the exterior in five steps: install a new roof;

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OHS WINS LG'S HERITAGE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN CONSERVATION



Daniel Dishaw, Communications and Outreach Coordinator
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The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) is thrilled to announce that on Thursday, February 18, the OHS accepted the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation for the "Digitization and Sharing of *Ontario History* Journal Archive."

Ontario History journal, formerly *Papers & Records*, is one of the oldest history journals in Canada, established by the Ontario Historical Society in 1899. From 2013–20, the OHS digitized the full text of over 2,000 articles and book reviews from 280 issues, making the archive the largest single collection of stories about Ontario's history. The journal's archive contains a wealth of original documents and new research, written by a range of prominent Ontario historians, and comprises one of the most important sources for the history of the province. Through digitization, *Ontario History* journal has been made available to a much larger audience, and it has also been safeguarded for the use and enjoyment of generations to come.

"The Society is honoured and privileged to have the work of our staff and volunteers recognized," said Dr. Michel S. Beaulieu, President of the Ontario Historical Society. "Their efforts to digitize the full text of over 2,000 articles and book reviews, ensure students, teachers, historians, researchers, genealogists, and anyone interested can access our archive of *Ontario History* articles, the largest single collection of stories about Ontario's rich history."

OHS Project Manager and Librarian Sarah McCabe accepted the award, commenting, "On behalf of the OHS, I was thrilled to accept the prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation. My involvement with the initiative to digitize and provide access to *Ontario History* journal began in 2015, under the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant-funded OHS Reach project. Building on previous work by my OHS colleagues, and in collaboration with the Board's *Ontario*

'LG AWARD' CONTINUED ON PAGE 3...

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Michel Beaulieu, President
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Hello. Bonjour. Boozhoo.

As individuals and organizations, we have all had to face many changes and challenges over the past year. As you will read in this report, the staff and volunteers of the Ontario Historical Society rose, like they have for over a century, to meet them head on.

Our affiliated societies, member organizations, and member institutions play a key role in the over \$25 billion that Ontario's cultural sector contributed to the economy before the onset of restrictions resulting from COVID-19. Since March of 2020, letters have been written, virtual meetings attended, and information provided to affiliates, individuals, and the Government of Ontario reiterating the important role of heritage and history not only to the economy, but also to the very fabric of society in Ontario.

As you have read in my various President's Reports in the *Bulletin*, I set out in January 2020 to read through all one hundred and twenty-one years of *Ontario History*. I have spent a lot of time since completing this goal thinking about the content, debates, and changes reflected in the over 2,000 articles and book reviews published by the Society since 1899. Some of the many thoughts that I keep coming back to are the enthusiasm, dedication, thirst for knowledge, and support Ontarians have for our collective past. Incredibly, none of these were dampened in the past year.

Membership in the Society and subscriptions to *Ontario History* increased by over 4% in 2020 and the Society welcomed 110 new members and/or subscribers. In the first eleven months since the launch of the digitized back issues of *Ontario History* on the OHS website, over 3,000 issues have been downloaded. The Society has also seen a substantial increase in *Ontario History* readership through *Érudit* and, in 2020, 61,684 articles and book reviews were downloaded by users from more than 55 countries around the world. This represents a doubling from last year.

All of our efforts have not gone without notice. On Thursday, February 18, OHS Project Manager and Librarian Sarah McCabe accepted the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation for the "Digitization and Sharing of *Ontario History* Journal Archive" on behalf of the Society. It is an honour and privilege to have the work of our staff and volunteers recognized. Their efforts to digitize the full text ensures students, teachers, historians, researchers, genealogists, and anyone interested can access our archive of *Ontario History* articles, the largest single collection of stories about Ontario's rich history.



Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Her Honour Elizabeth Dowdeswell (top left), Ontario Heritage Trust CEO Beth Hanna (bottom left), and Ontario Heritage Trust Chair John Ecker (top right) presented OHS Project Manager & Librarian Sarah McCabe (bottom right) with the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation during a virtual award ceremony on February 18, 2021.

In December, the Society also launched an updated Ontario Heritage Directory & Map showing a list of over 400 of the Society's current Affiliate Members (incorporated through the OHS) and Institutional Members in Ontario. Our database of member groups includes a wide breadth of heritage organizations from all parts of the province, such as historical societies, historic sites, libraries, archives, museums, cultural centres, municipal heritage committees, and cemetery preservation committees. It has seen robust usage and is now the third most popular section of our website (after the homepage and *Ontario History* journal). Our Elibrary and Ebook Store are also seeing a lot of traffic.

All of the hard work done throughout these challenging times has only been possible thanks to our generous members, subscribers, and donors, who have supported not only the *Ontario History* digitization project, but also all of our activities this past year. I would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funds received.

All my best,
Michel

ONTARIO HISTORY SPRING 2021

The 2021 Spring issue features five new peer-reviewed articles and eight book reviews

"The Penetanguishene Decision: To Be a Naval Yard or Not to Be"

by Thomas Malcomson

"'I'd give anything to come home': The Farmerette Movement in Ontario during the First World War"

by Margaret Kechnie

"Turning the Light on: The Ontario Historical Society and Museum Governance"

by Robin Nelson

"Enemy Alien Internment in Ontario's Northland"

by Bohdan S. Kordan


"Re-Connecting with a Historical Site: On Narrative and the Huron-Wendat Ancestral Village at York University, Toronto, Canada"

by L. Anders Sandberg, Jon Johnson, Rene Gualtieri, and Louis Lesage

Single copies are available for \$20 plus shipping. Please visit our website for subscriptions to the journal: ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/ontario-history-journal/.

ONTARIO HISTORY

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Re-Connecting with a Historical Site: the Huron-Wendat Ancestral Village at York University
L. Anders Sandberg, Jon Johnson, Rene Gualtieri, and Louis Lesage

Richard Lane Smith examining Huron-Wendat pot shards at the Royal Ontario Museum. Photo courtesy of Craig Cipolla.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rob Leverty, Executive Director
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An urgent message to the OHS arrived on December 29, 2020 from the Vice President of the Central Manitoulin Historical Society, incorporated by the OHS in 1993.

“Our group and many concerned citizens have been in an ongoing battle with our council over the historic Old School building in Mindemoya. Unexpectedly at the last council meeting, it was decided to issue an RFP for \$150,000 demolition.... Once again, we are rallying the troops to try a last-ditch effort to save this beautiful, sturdy old building... If there is any advice you could give or a direction you could point me in, it would be GREATLY appreciated!”

Since the economic crisis of 2008, we have seen so many cases just like this one. Together, they represent an unprecedented crisis facing Ontario's history. You could call it the “3 Ds” – divestment, downloading, and demolition. Take your pick. And it is becoming clear that this relentless threat of destruction to our heritage assets is only being exacerbated by the current pandemic.

And so we ask, "Where is the leadership?" All are missing in action, with the exception our fellow citizens in communities across Ontario who generously donate their time and expertise to preserve and promote our history. The endangered heritage list seems endless. These assets include our lighthouses, barns, schools, churches, museums, archives, burial sites, mills, houses, train stations, industrial buildings, and more. When we lose these assets, we also lose all the related stories and community history that goes with them.

On January 5, the Friends of the Old School issued a defiant press release. “The school, a solid brick building and stone building, is historically significant, being one of the earliest Consolidated Schools (1922) in Ontario. We want to save this building not just because of its history, but also because tearing it down is such a terrible waste. We’ve become a throwaway society and that has to stop... We are certain that there is a future for this historic building and the urgent task now is to somehow forestall its destruction.”

I am pleased to report that after completing the incorporation criteria, including a well-attended community meeting, the OHS Board of Directors incorporated the Friends of the Mindemoya Old School (FOMOS) on January 29, 2021. This new, not-for-profit corporation immediately announced that, as an independent legal entity, it wished to either buy or negotiate a long-term lease for the Old School.

On February 9, Alison McAllister, FOMOS Treasurer, and I made presentations to the Property Committee, Municipality of Central Manitoulin.



You can purchase your own mask like the one in the photo, only \$10! Let people know you want to save the Old School from the wrecking ball! And don't forget, if Friends of the Old School takes possession of it, your Municipal taxes won't go up. Just contact FOMOS Treasurer Alison McAllister at weesheep lady@gmail.com.

After a lengthy debate, just enough Council votes shifted to delay demolition of the building for six months, directing municipal staff to negotiate with FOMOS on its timely proposal to either buy or lease the historic school.

FOMOS President Janice McQuay declared, “This is a victory worth celebrating, but we have a lot of work to do now, developing our proposal and negotiating a contract with the Municipality.”

Linda Kelly, former Secretary, OHS Board of Directors, former Curator, Centennial Museum of Sheguiandah and a long-time resident of



Photo - Courtesy of Central Manitoulin Historical Society.

This photo, taken sometime in the 1920s, shows students being dropped off by some of the earliest "schoolbuses" used in Ontario. These horse-drawn sleighs had a wood stove heater and two rows of benches under the cover.

Manitoulin Island sums up the current situation well: “When I first learned that the Old School in Mindemoya was slated for demolition by the Council of Central Manitoulin, I immediately felt that the cultural and historical aspect of the building was being ignored. Since that initial meeting with OHS, the Friends of the Mindemoya Old School have incorporated and have now begun to fundraise. The decision whether to demolish the old school is basically on hold until September, but I prefer to believe that the outcome will favour those wishing to save the 100-year-old building for the *public benefit*. While a few have seen a liability, we see possibilities for its extended life and it is the latter which has overwhelming community support. Let's not be too hasty in ridding ourselves of the relics of our past, once they are gone it is too late for regrets.”



Mindemoya Old School in 1993.

For more information or to find out how you can help, please contact: MindemoyaOldSchool@gmail.com or Friends of the Mindemoya Old School, Box 146 Mindemoya, Ontario P0P 1S0, or visit mindemoyaoldschool.ca.

Since the end of November 2020, the OHS has incorporated seven new not-for-profit corporations dedicated to defending and promoting our history. They include: Leaside Heritage Preservation Society, Blue Mountains Historical Society, Friends of the Mindemoya Old School, Heritage Colchester, Friends of Century Manor, Friends of the Old Stone Mill House, and Grey County Black Heritage Society. Congratulations and we salute all of our fellow citizens who have worked so hard during the pandemic to establish and incorporate these six new historical organizations through affiliation with OHS under our *Special Act, 1899*.

...‘LG AWARD’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

History Committee, it's been my privilege to research how to address the many challenges involved (copyright, open access, financial sustainability, technology, etc.) and implement solutions. This award recognizes years of work and contributions, both intellectual and financial, by many people. What an honour!”

The OHS acknowledges the many generous members, subscribers, and donors who have supported the *Ontario History* digitization project, including the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the Laidlaw Foundation.

Please visit the *Ontario History* Digital Archive at ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/back-issues/.

HEIRS HARROW EARLY IMMIGRANT RESEARCH SOCIETY

Chris Carter, Acting President, HEIRS
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In May 1971, a group of interested persons formed a local historical and genealogical society. The celebration of Canada's Centennial in 1967 had brought attention to so many stories that needed to be researched and written, the artifacts that portray our culture, and the lineage of ethnic groups who are the descendants of immigrants to Canada. Our written history dates from 1792 in a Loyalist settlement—the two connected townships of Colchester and Gosfield.

In December 1971, we received our federal charter as a registered charitable institution, and not-for-profit status. Our name was chosen by founding president, Gladys Golden, to emphasize our roots, our ethnic groups, and our cultural heritage.

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS) has been supported over the years by government grants at all levels. Donations have been, and continue to be, received from many community organizations, families, and individuals. We are affiliated with the Ontario Genealogical Society, who inform and support us.

HEIRS has been instrumental in saving important buildings from the wrecking ball, and included in developing a local registry of locations of historic value to the Town of Essex.

HEIRS purpose is to encourage genealogical research, to preserve historical records, to contribute to the preservation of buildings of value, and to foster an appreciation of history.

Allowing the preservation of historical records and artifacts requires an environment that supports them. Our resource centre, located in the community arena, is expanding rapidly. We welcome members and visitors from around the world, dedicated volunteers, interested students working on projects, and also local university students who come through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Two of those students have gone on



to study history at university, and then Information Science at graduate school.

We regularly have visitors from all over Canada and the United States. We welcomed a member from California, making her first-ever trip to Canada. She came to Harrow and visited HEIRS to collect research on her ancestors. Our membership files are extensive and often draw the attention of people who now live elsewhere, but want to know their history.

Canadian Black history is a major piece of our work. We hear from universities across Canada and the United States that are researching this important part of our history. In the mid-1800s, 60% of the residents of Essex were of African descent. Once the Civil War was over, some of these residents returned to the United States. Among the more famous names were Elijah McCoy, “the Real McCoy,” who was born in Colchester; Josiah Henson, whose first settlement in Ontario was in Essex; and Delos Rogest Davis, the first Black King’s Counsel in Upper Canada, who settled in Anderdon Township, Essex County.

In 1792, Colchester and Newark were the first planned towns in Upper Canada, southwest of Kingston. Colchester was settled by many people who came across the Detroit River as they remained loyal to the Crown. People of colour, French, Indigenous peoples, Métis and Europeans are included in this group. Many of them settled in the Colchester area.

OHS WORKING CLOSELY WITH BAO ON CEMETERY PRESERVATION

Heather Anderson, OHS Executive Assistant
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In January 2016, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) created a delegated administrative authority called the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), to be responsible for administering provisions of the *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002* (FBCSA), while the Ministry would continue to be responsible for legislation, for regulation, and for burial sites, war graves, cemetery closures, and abandoned cemeteries. This effectively created two new registrars for Ontario’s bereavement sector: a registrar for burials within the Ministry, and a registrar for cemeteries in the BAO.

In the spring of that year, our Executive Director Rob Leverty and I invited the then-newly appointed Registrar of Burials (MGCS) and the CEO/Registrar of the BAO to the John McKenzie House to tell them the history of the OHS’s involvement in Cemetery Preservation in the province of Ontario. We talked about the work of the Society’s Unregistered Cemeteries Committee and our responsibility to respond to cemetery closure notices as laid out in the FBCSA’s regulations. As you will read in Laura Suchan’s article on page 6, this is a responsibility the Society takes very seriously, and acts on whenever necessary. It was at that second meeting with BAO CEO Carey Smith, that he suggested the OHS should nominate a representative to sit on one of the BAO’s new Advisory Committees and speak on behalf of the needs of historic cemeteries with other bereavement professionals. After some discussion, I offered to volunteer as the OHS representative and, with help from Rob (and the OHS Preservation and Cemeteries Committee), we put together a nomination package. In September 2016, the OHS’s nomination was accepted by the BAO and I was appointed for my first three-year term on the BAO’s Cemetery, Crematorium and Municipal Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee has nine members who meet approximately twice a year to provide advice to the BAO’s CEO and Board of Directors on matters relating to the regulation of cemetery and crematorium services in Ontario. Six members of the committee represent cemetery operators, two members represent



crematorium operators, and one member (myself), who does not work for the bereavement sector directly, represents the consumers’ best interests. Since the Advisory Committee’s first meeting in early 2017, I have had the opportunity to learn so much about the bereavement sector in our province, far beyond what I think most heritage professionals would encounter, and I have really enjoyed participating in discussions about the many ways our society lays the dead to rest, while also helping to remind my fellow committee members of our responsibilities to Ontario’s historic cemeteries, even centuries after the last interments have taken place.

In late 2019, I was appointed to my second and final three-year term on the advisory committee and, when the pandemic began, the committee made the switch (as so many have) to meeting online. I have really enjoyed the opportunity this appointment has given me these past four years, and feel very strongly about how important it is that the heritage sector has a voice in our province’s bereavement sector.

If you have any questions or concerns about cemeteries—particularly about education needs for not-for-profit heritage cemetery operators—please email me at handerson@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca and I will bring it to the BAO’s attention in our future committee meetings.

MUSEUM MILESTONES

Dr. John Carter
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When the Women's Canadian Historical Society disbanded, its collection was distributed to museums, archives, and other historical societies throughout the province. As a Provincial Museum Advisor, I was asked to assist in this process. On the second day of this dispersal, I spied a signed and framed poem by Wilson Pugsley MacDonald. Wilson who? That's right, nobody else knew. MacDonald (1880–1967), originally from Cheapside in Haldimand County, was once a well-known Canadian poet, most popular in the 1920s. He actually made his living as a poet by giving readings and lectures in Canada and the northern United States. Fortunately, one of my clients was the Wilson P. MacDonald Memorial School Museum, located near Selkirk. I put the framed poem aside and took it to that museum on my next trip there, where it resides to this day. For more details about this fascinating memorial museum in a schoolhouse, please see curator Dana Stavinga's lead story below.

COVID-19 still has many Ontario museums closed to the public. Because of this, various museums have developed creative programmes that are available online. The Thunder Bay Historical Museum (TBHM) has continued to offer its popular lecture series. The most recent one, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the opening of Chippewa Park in Thunder Bay. These lectures are part of the museum's long tradition of holding free public lectures (now online), and are co-sponsored by the Department of History, at Lakehead University. Also at the

TBHM, in lieu of any in-person events, staff are offering April Break Camp-in-a-Bag Kits. This program, named Historical Endeavours, is an at-home activity that engages with local history in the Thunder Bay area, highlights some of the artifacts in its collection, and includes a variety of related crafts. Kids can grow their own geodes while learning about local mines, create some toys, see what children played with in the past, and relax with some art therapy. Kits can be purchased for \$25 and, perhaps most importantly, include details and instructions for parents so their children can have fun and learn at home!

The Museum of Dufferin (MOD), located near Rosemont, is currently closed to the public. However, it is offering an opportunity for the public to learn online. The "Lanterns of Hope Activity Kit Programme" is designed as an inspiration, a helpful distraction, and an opportunity to learn new things. MOD members will be provided with a variety of designs to build and customize their own elegant and functional faux lanterns. The kit also includes an information card about fascinating lantern traditions and celebrations around the world. Contact MOD for further details.

Castle Kilbride in Baden had re-opened to the public before the most recent shutdown. The museum selling tickets online for groups of five or less, at www.castlekilbride.ca. The 1877 mansion has created the exhibit, "My Dearly Departed," commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of Canada's Flax Mill King, and original owner of Castle Kilbride, James Livingston. The museum has also created a short video made to celebrate its re-opening. Hopefully these wonderful programs can be resumed soon. Because of the continuing challenges with COVID-19, for this program and others at all Ontario museums, please check in advance to confirm which activities, exhibits, and programs are currently available to the public.

Congratulations to the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association in Windsor. It was voted as one of the top five finalists (in two categories) in Best Things to See and Do in Windsor Essex. Kudos to this southwestern Ontario museum!

BACK TO SCHOOL: WILSON MACDONALD MEMORIAL SCHOOL MUSEUM

Dana Stavinga, Museum Curator – Community Development & Partnerships
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The Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum, formerly McGaw School Section #2 Walpole, is nestled along Lake Erie near the quaint little village of Selkirk.

Little red schools were built all across rural Ontario around the time of Confederation in 1867. School legislation in the 1870s provided free and compulsory education in Ontario, and set up the public and high school system.



Photo – Courtesy of Haldimand County

The Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum (formerly McGaw School Section #2) was built in 1872.

A written examination was required for public school graduation. Children between 7 and 12 years old were to go to school for at least four months each year. County Inspectors would be appointed to keep educational standards up.

In the later part of the 19th century, small hamlets were bustling with activity. The number of children attending school increased. All around the countryside, new one-room schoolhouses were being built. In 1925, there were 79 one-room schools in Haldimand County. When the schools were built, the province was divided into school sections, so no child had to walk more than two miles to get to school.

Built in 1872 to accommodate the children of a growing community, the one-room red brick schoolhouse McGaw S. S. #2 Walpole had as many as 57 pupils at one time. For many years, the school served as a focal point for community activities.

A major change in the school system came around 1965, as schools moved to a centralized system and children were bused to their corresponding schools.

Once these central schools were introduced, most of the one-room schools were torn down, sold, or converted into homes.

Following the closure of McGaw school, Reverend Earl Sider, his wife Elsie, and several others from the community requested the building be maintained as a museum. On June 3, 1967, it re-opened as the Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum.

The Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum offers you the opportunity to connect to the past through a unique collection of materials, artifacts, and cultural programs. The museum offers visitors a chance to experience the unique history of educational development in rural Ontario from 1872 to 1965, through exhibits, workshops, talks, and many other public programs.

The museum strives to bring heritage education to our community and to celebrate and promote Haldimand County. It is important to commemorate the cultural fabric of our community and our collective heritage in new and inventive ways.

Step into a classroom from 1925 when the Union Jack waved over the schoolhouse, classes started with “God Save the King” and penmanship was practiced using straight pens and black ink. Costumes, role-playing, lessons, and games help modern youngsters learn about their heritage and the history of education.

The museum also serves as a memorial to the Canadian lyric poet Wilson Pugsley MacDonald. Wilson Pugsley MacDonald was born in Cheapside on May 5, 1880. His mother, Anna Maria, was the musically talented daughter of a local merchant and lay preacher, William Pugsley. His father was Alexander MacDonald, a recent arrival from Scotland. Alec MacDonald had trained as a tailor but wanted to pursue a career as a minister. Something of a dreamer, he tried a number of occupations and failed. He moved his family around to several different communities. By the time he was 8, Wilson had lived in Cheapside, Kohler, Decewsville, Dunnville, and Port Dover.

At a very young age, Wilson absorbed his parents' love of music, poetry, and nature. His childhood was very happy, but ended in 1887 when his mother Anna Maria died. Wilson’s father Alec remarried a year later. It was at this point that Wilson MacDonald went to live in Port Dover. He attended Port Dover Public School, and Woodstock Collegiate. After working for his Uncle John at the Pugsley and Dingman soap business for a year, he attended McMaster University. Wilson turned out to be a mediocre student in all subjects but literature and history, and left school before graduation.

At a very young age Wilson made up his mind that he was going to become a poet. Unfortunately, he could not earn a living as a poet, so he took various jobs to support himself. At one time, he sold advertisements to businesses, using his writing skills to prepare the ads. In 1899, his first poem was published in *The Globe* (Toronto). In 1918, his first book of poetry, *Song of the Prairie Land*, was released.

Wilson could be charming, and was most entertaining in his public presentations, but he was also egocentric and extremely resentful if anyone suggested his poetry was less than brilliant. He illustrated several of his manuscripts with exquisite drawings, while hand-writing many of his poems in elegant script. He wrote

‘WILSON MACDONALD SCHOOL MUSEUM’ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...

CEMETERY NEWS

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As a named party in the *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act*, the OHS must receive notice of intention to close a cemetery (in effect to disinter and move the burials) from the cemetery owner. In early January, the OHS received notice of intention to close the Johnson cemetery in Pefferlaw, Ontario, the burial location of some of the earliest settlers in the area. The application, submitted by property owner Sansiveria Investments Ltd., proposes to move all graves and markers to nearby Cook’s Cemetery, alleging the cemetery removal will allow the property to be better utilized as commercial development. Within the *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act* (2002 SO 2002 c.33), provision is made for the Registrar to order a cemetery to be closed if the closing is in the public interest [2002, c. 33, s. 88 (6)]. Unfortunately the legislation does not define public interest and as such the OHS must make a submission to the Registrar of Burials opposing this cemetery closure, arguing that it is not in the public interest.

Janie Cooper-Wilson and I, as co-chairs of the Preservation and Cemeteries Committee, assembled a group of members to study the situation, gather research and prepare a submission to the Registrar. The group, which has met several times since January, includes members Diane Clendenan and Marjorie Stuart, both previously recognized in Provincial Tribunals as experts in genealogy, cemeteries, and family histories, Fred Robbins (York Pioneers), Ruth Burkholder (genealogist), and Don Barton (Ontario Ancestors), along with OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty and Member Coordinator Heather Anderson. The Preservation and Cemeteries Committee prepared a written submission, which was sent to the Board of Directors for approval. I am happy to report the Board supported our submission with a motion passed on March 17, 2021. The submission, which you can read just below this article, was sent to Dr. Crystal Forrest, Registrar Burial Sites (Acting) on March 19, 2021. I would like to thank all members of the Preservation and Cemeteries Committee for their work in preparing this submission. It was truly a group effort and it is appreciated.

Fortunately, the Johnson cemetery was a registered cemetery, which provides a measure of protection because the OHS is informed when an application for closure is received by the Ministry. Unfortunately, cemeteries that are not registered can be closed and relocated with little notice or input from interested parties. The Johnson Cemetery situation is just another example of the importance of the work spearheaded by Marjorie Stuart, Diane Clendenan, and volunteers from the OHS and the OGS, to ensure all burial grounds are registered with the province. As a result of their efforts, a list of more than 1,500 unregistered burial grounds was submitted to the province in 2011. I will keep OHS members updated on this issue.



Photo – Frederick Robbins

The Johnson (Johnston) Cemetery is located in Georgina Township.

OHS LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR RE: JOHNSON CEMETERY

The Ontario Historical Society’s letter to:

Dr. Crystal Forrest,
Registrar, Burial Sites (Acting)
Consumer Services Operations Division
Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
56 Wellesley Street West, 16th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1C1

To Dr. Crystal Forrest,

This letter is in response to the proposal under the *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002* (Ontario) O. Reg. 30/11, s. 172 (1) by Sansiveria Investments Limited (hereafter the “Applicant”), to close the historic Johnson (Johnston) Cemetery located in Pefferlaw, Ontario. The Ontario Historical Society is opposed to the closure of the Johnson Cemetery and argues that closure is not in the public interest. The original choice of the Johnson family to select this particular location for burial should be respected, and the historical integrity of the site maintained. Furthermore, the Applicant has not expressed any compelling reason to close the cemetery.

The Ontario Historical Society (hereafter the “OHS”), founded in 1888 is a not-for-profit corporation and registered charity bringing together people of all ages, all walks of life, and all cultural backgrounds interested in preserving and promoting Ontario’s history. The OHS has a provincial mandate and supports a vast membership network of individuals, organizations, and institutions. In January 2021, the OHS assembled a committee to consider the proposed closure of the Johnson Cemetery and removal of burials to Cooke’s Cemetery. The Committee’s members are well versed in provincial and local heritage matters and include two members previously recognized in Provincial Tribunals as experts in genealogy, cemeteries, and family histories.

To begin, the OHS would like to address the three arguments put forth by Sansiveria Investments Limited to support their request to close the Johnson (Johnston) Cemetery:

1. “The cemetery has been little used in the more than 100 years from the first burial in 1860 until the last one in 1969.”

Those interred in the Johnson cemetery include some of the earliest settlers in Pefferlaw. These include members of Robert Johnson’s family, on whose property the cemetery was once located. Robert Johnson was born c. 1791 in Chirnside Berwick, Scotland. He arrived in Canada in the early 1820s to help his brother William build mills in Pefferlaw, as well as operate a general store on what is today Pefferlaw’s main street. He received his land grant in 1834 (Lot 22, Con. 5) in Georgina Township. In 1860, Robert’s son William died, and Robert selected a small piece of land located on a corner of his farm property to bury his son. It was here, in the cemetery on his own land, where Robert was buried when he died in 1870. Other members of the family interred in this cemetery are: Ann Johnston Noble (1830-1925), Henry Harrison (1843-1929), Elizabeth Johnston Harrison (1840-1930), Jean Johnston Veale (1834-1917), John Johnston (1841-1930), Robert Harrison (1868-1868), William Harrison (1869-1940), George Harrison (1870-1870), Nelly Harrison (1875-1969), Harry Harrison (1872-1872). There is a strong possibility that additional family members are buried here, but markers have either sunk or no longer exist.

2. “A move to Cooke’s Cemetery will achieve a more respectful resting place for those of the Johnston family buried in the current location of the Johnston Cemetery.”

The Applicant cannot speak on behalf of those interred in the Johnson Cemetery by suggesting they would wish to be interred anywhere other than where they are located. The cemetery represents the choice of their family to have the deceased buried on their land. The Johnson family chose this spot, and it represented something meaningful to them. Retaining the original site of the burials is required to show respect for the original choice of the Johnson family in choosing this spot. There is also historical value in retaining the cemetery in its original location. As Dorothy Duncan, former Executive Director of the OHS and provincially-recognized expert in cemeteries, once testified at a previous Provincial Tribunal, “A relocated

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BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

CHANGES ARE BREWING ACROSS ONTARIO

Barry Penhale

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Somewhat unexpectedly, the topic of beer came up during a meeting and, to my great surprise, I found myself being labelled a “beer snob.” My immediate response was to assure one and all that first and foremost, I am committed to the practice of buying and supporting local products, be it weekend shopping—COVID-19 permitting—at the nearby Farmers Market, purchasing honey produced by local beekeepers, or patronizing the nearest independent bookseller. Whatever the need, supporting locally takes first priority.

And, as one for whom craft beers are the beverage of choice, I tend to operate with two musts—namely “quaffing” in moderation and almost 100% avoidance of beers produced by the international conglomerate brewing giants. Truth be told, my delight in the continual discovery of new micro-breweries is guaranteed to put a smile on an aging face, which becomes a veritable grin upon adding local cideries and wineries, many of which are family or employee-owned and frequently support local community history. The Neustadt Springs Brewery, located in that most historic Grey County community, operates within a magnificent stone building that dates back to 1859. This, the oldest operating brewing



The exterior of Neustadt Springs Brewery.

building in Ontario, was purchased by Andy and Val Stimpson in 1997 and opened by Christmas of that year. Previously owners of three UK pubs, the Stimpsons are “hands-on brewers” with award-winning products that include the delightfully named “10W30.” Their impressive heritage building was originally constructed with the assistance of 40 stonemasons who came directly to Neustadt from Germany. The structure alone is worth a day trip to Mennonite country, and, as tastings confirm, the beer is superb!

Also close by is a highly recommended brewery headed up by MacLean’s Ales founder Charles MacLean, a brewmaster who has quickly added an important new chapter to our brewing history. His is an amazing out-of-the-barn-into-the-beer-store success story. Originally functioning as a little farmhouse brewery near Durham, Ontario, MacLean embarked upon a sizeable expansion in 2014 that led to new quarters in the Hanover Business Park. Within six months, he was brewing as much beer as he had in the entire six-and-a-half years on the farm! It was my delight to discover MacLean’s Farmhouse Blonde, an early beer of choice at the Barrhead Pub and Grill just up the road from my home.

Almost anywhere you travel in this province, you can easily locate new craft breweries, far more than can be explored in this article. Think of the exploration opportunities from Beau’s All Natural Brewery in Vankleek Hill to the Tobermory Brewing Company and beyond! Wherever they may be located, the emerging class of breweries are to be commended on marketing strategies and product design that frequently focus on different aspects of local history, often vividly borne out by stylishly decorated beer cans. One example that comes to mind is a “Country Kolsch” beer I quite enjoy, bearing the name “Absent Landlord.” Kudos to the imaginative folks at Cowbell Brewing! Founded in 2016 and located just south of Blyth, Ontario, this innovative facility is part of a 120-acre development known as Cowbell Farm. This is a “destination brewery” in the fullest sense, with a restaurant, patios, a retail store, two bars, and an entertainment space, all housed in the imposing 26,000-square-foot energy-efficient timber-frame Grand Old Barn. But there is more than beer driving this enterprise. Since May 2016, Cowbell has been donating five cents from the sale of every pint and can to Ontario’s four children’s hospitals. To date The Greener Pastures Community Fund has contributed upwards of \$450,000 to healthcare partners. Social entrepreneurship and environmental



Owen Sound’s historic Schwan’s Brewery building in the late 1800s.

responsibility, combined with excellent craft beer, are the hallmarks of this unique brewery. And there is more ahead. Marketing manager Craig Sinclair informs me that as part of future expansion, an organic garden adjacent to the brewery is envisioned. As one who has long appreciated both the beauty and history of Huron County, I now have an additional reason to visit. And just maybe by then the wonderful Blyth Theatre will again be welcoming live theatre devotees.

Thanks to my son-in-law, John Hopkins, I am delighted to have been introduced to 7/62 Craft Brewers in Madoc, Ontario. How appropriate that the brewery name pays homage to the two much-travelled historic highways linking Hastings County communities. The historic image of downtown Madoc on their products is circa the late 1800s and shows Durham Street looking north. A delightful array of similar vintage images capturing earlier times in Madoc and nearby Eldorado can be viewed on their website and in the brewery tap room. The brewery, which produces five core ales and a seasonal one, is the initiative of partners Scott Williams and brewer Al Shaw.

In 2013, a professional forester with a keen interest in genealogy, Guelph-based Terry Schwan, published a well-documented account of the history of two early Ontario breweries and the families involved, bearing the title *The Historic Schwan Breweries** and complete with an abridged family genealogy. His book provides glimpses of early Owen Sound. How times have changed! Once considered the busiest port on the Upper Great Lakes, the harbour town of old was long saddled with a less than complimentary reputation for its assorted around-the-clock temptations. With thirsty dockworkers and sailors making up a sizeable and appreciative audience for local beer, “Give me a Schwan’s” was the beer-drinkers slogan at the time, apparently for all occasions. When the annual Orangemen’s Parade in July ended their marches with a cold lager at Schwan’s, the fact that Protestant men were enjoying a beer at a Catholic-owned brewery didn’t seem to matter! Schwan’s made lager, porter, ale, and bock beer at 8 or 9% alcohol content, as well as a special Christmas beer.** In 1899, a dozen bottles sold for a dollar. *The Owen Sound Sun Times* of January 7, 1905, reported on capital spendings on new factories for the period 1897 to 1904. The capital value of the addition to the Schwan Brewery was put at \$40,000, which, as it turned out, was probably the height of its value when “the Owen Sound Spring Brewery operated with eight to ten men working in all aspects of the business from brewing to advertising, including at least two wagon teams delivering beer throughout the Georgian Bay area.”

As an inveterate reader of newspapers, I was reminded that once we are face-to-face with surviving historical objects, another field of collectors emerges. In this case, the interest is coined “Breweriana” and introduces us to a unique way of looking at industrial history. A *Toronto Star* article by beer columnist Josh Rubin introduced me to collector Tony Burtch, whose oldest treasure is a Toronto Dominion Brewery wooden barrel whose contents would have been popular prior to Prohibition. The same article included renowned beer souvenir collector Larry Sherk who, since the 1960s, has put together what is likely the largest Canadian collection of its kind, including treasured rare brewery lithographs. In my view, the historical importance of such unique items should not be under-estimated, and so I suggest that, when next raising a glass, it would be most appropriate to toast those authors, collectors, and certainly the dedicated brewmasters whose efforts have enriched our understanding and appreciation of an age-old industry with a history worth treasuring. Cheers! Proost! Salute!

*Information from *The Historic Schwan Breweries* with abridged family history used with permission from author Terry Schwan. For more information, email: schwel11@rogers.com.

**Brewer William Schwan carefully made and stored for an entire year an annual batch that his son dubbed “The Special Christmas Beer.” This very strong brew was bottled with a cork instead of the customary crown cap.

cemetery becomes an artifact rather than an original historical resource.” The Johnson Cemetery is physically and historically linked to its location as it was once part of Robert Johnson’s property. Closing the cemetery would destroy both the historical context and associated historical characteristics of the site. There is historical integrity in the monuments as a group, which could not be duplicated by moving the monuments to a larger cemetery where they would be lost amongst other monuments in a much larger space. It is always in the public interest to leave a heritage resource in situ. The historical authenticity of the cemetery would be destroyed if it were closed and the burials removed to Cooke’s Cemetery. The Johnson Cemetery has survived for over 160 years on this location and should be allowed to remain where it is.

3. “A move will enable the Property to be better and more fully used as part of the normal commercial development of the Town.”

The Johnson Cemetery was not an unknown cemetery and it is registered with the province of Ontario (License # CM-04761). It has clearly marked graves with prominent, well maintained markers, and the property is enclosed with an ornate iron fence, also of historical significance (believed to be the work of William R. Griffith, a famous local blacksmith). The owner purchased this property with the knowledge that there was a cemetery located on it and accepted a business risk in doing so. The total size of the cemetery is small, measuring 6.33 meters wide by 14.83 meters long for a total of 93.82 m². The cemetery has little impact on its neighbours, and any planning for the development of the property could easily incorporate the cemetery. The private commercial interests of the property owner to develop the property is not a compelling enough reason to close the cemetery and disturb the burials.

Additionally, as one of the oldest cemeteries in Georgina Township, the importance of the Johnson Cemetery to the historical landscape of the community cannot be discounted. On March 3, 2021, Georgina Town Council unanimously agreed to

...‘WILSON MACDONALD SCHOOL MUSEUM’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

music and plays and did magic tricks. Throughout his life, he often fell back on his musical ability to support himself. Around the time of the First World War, Wilson wrote a musical, *In Sunny France*, in which he starred. He took the play across Canada, using local amateurs and children in his cast.

In 1935, Wilson met and then eloped with Dorothy Colomy, a student he had met on his tour. Four years later, they had a daughter who they named Ann Meridian. Wilson MacDonald produced several poetry books in his lifetime, including *The Song of the Prairie Land* and *A Flagon of Beauty*. He died in Toronto on April 8, 1967, and was buried in St. Luke’s Cemetery in Vienna, Ontario.

Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum offers visitors a chance to experience the unique history of Haldimand County in our classroom setting, through exhibits, workshops, talks, and other diverse programs. The museum is located at 3513 Haldimand Road 3, Selkirk. You can visit our website at: haldimandmuseums.ca.

move forward with the heritage designation of the Johnson Cemetery, as it meets the criteria for heritage designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, specifically items 2i, ii, and iii and 3i, ii, and iii as outlined in the Disposition; Georgina Heritage Advisory Committee (GHAC) Johnston (Johnson) Cemetery Designation Report (Re: Resolution No. GHAC 2021-0005). The Johnson Cemetery is important because as a landmark it has contextual value by being physically, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings, and it has historical value because of its direct association with a person that is significant to the community. The cemetery yields information that contributes to an understanding of the community it exists in.

Within the *Funeral, Burials and Cremation Services Act* (2002 SO 2002 c.33) provision is made for the registrar to order a cemetery to be closed if the closing is in the public interest (2002, c. 33, s. 88 (6)). Previous Provincial Tribunals examining public interest and cemeteries have considered safety to the public as an element of public interest. In the case of the Johnson Cemetery there is no obvious risk to public safety. The entire cemetery is also enclosed with a wrought iron fence that offers protection not only to the cemetery, but to the general public as well.

Our society places intrinsic value on cemeteries both culturally and symbolically. As places of collective memory, cemeteries reinforce community identity, strengthen feelings of attachment and belonging, and encourage the sharing of knowledge of the past. They are places people engage in public activity in and learn about the past. The Johnson family’s decision to choose this spot for their burials should be respected by leaving the cemetery in place. The private interests of the property owner should not be considered more important than the public interest. In the opinion of the OHS, the Applicant has not provided a compelling reason to legally close and relocate the historic Johnson (Johnston) Cemetery, and the application to close the cemetery should be denied.

**Laura Suchan, Co-Chair
Preservation and Cemeteries Committee, the Ontario Historical Society**

...‘BEAVERDAMS CHURCH’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

complete an archaeological study; replace the rubble foundation; replace all 26 windows with exact replicas of the originals; and finally, replace the original clapboards with similarly-milled wood. The cost was \$250,000, acquired through private and corporate donations as well as a series of fundraisers that take place each year.

The project now is to restore the interior in a similar fashion. The estimated cost will be another \$200,000 and will include the removal of the false ceiling that was added in 1879 to close off the second-floor balcony, the removal of various partitions that were added over the years, and new wiring and lighting that will emulate the original work and also meet contemporary needs. We have made a great deal of progress already, and the simple elegance of the finished product can already be visualized. We look forward to future uses such as weddings, art shows, musical concerts, and educational events.

The church was recognized by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario in 1965 and designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1994. Our website is www.friendsofbeaverdamschurch.com and our Facebook handle is Beaverdams Church 1832.

Donations are most welcome and can be made via PayPal on Facebook or to Friends of Beaverdams Church, 0 Marlatt's Road, P.O. Box 70, Thorold, ON L2V 3Y7.

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