

OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 217

AUGUST 2021

DIGITIZED OHS BULLETIN  
BACK ISSUES NOW ONLINE

SUCCESS AT OLD DURHAM ROAD  
BLACK PIONEER CEMETERY

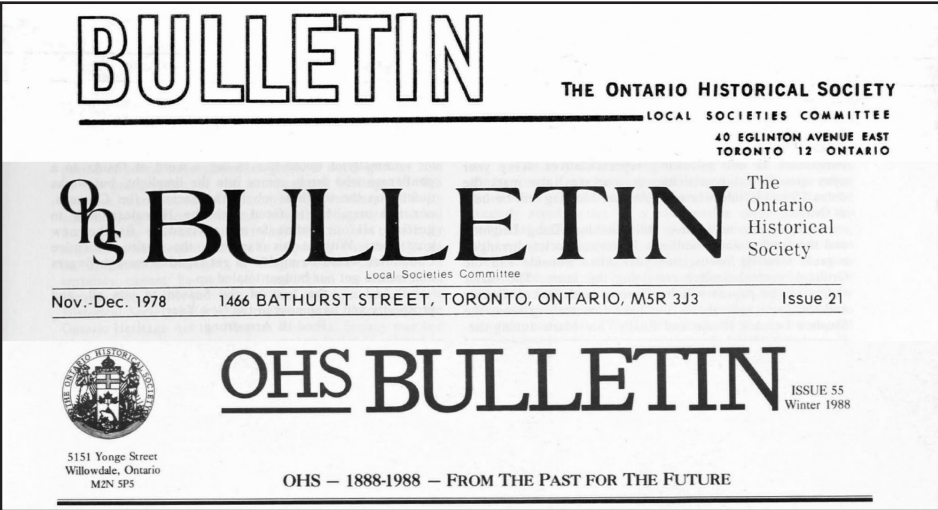


Photo – Greg Glista

**Sarah McCabe**, OHS Project Manager and Librarian  
smccabe@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

**Naomi Norquay**, Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemtery Com-  
mittee (ODRBPCC)

Continuing with our digitization projects, the OHS is pleased to announce that every issue of the *OHS Bulletin*, from the first edition launched in 1968 through 2018 is now available online for anyone to read.

Shortly before the May long weekend I received an email from a neighbour of mine who lives three lots down from the Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemetery, located in the Municipality of Grey Highlands, Grey County. (The cemetery belongs to the municipality but a volunteer community group looks after it – and advocates for it.) My neighbour was alerting me to the county’s plans to purchase the lot from which the cemetery had been severed back in 1990 (the adjacent lot is shown in the photo above). His son had noticed survey stakes and contacted the county to enquire. My neighbour thought I should know that the county had plans to build a transportation depot on the site. The depot would house snowploughs, graders, sanders, road salt, etc. and act as a major hub, with equipment coming and going. I also heard from Carolyn Wilson, who had caught wind of this as well. Carolyn is a descendent of the Old Durham Road Black settlement and was president of the ODRBPCC when the committee won the OHS Scadding Award of Excellence in 2013.

Initially published by the OHS Local Societies Committee, these 200+ issues of the *OHS Bulletin* are a valuable historical record, containing reports of the activities and projects of heritage groups around the province. The intent, as today, was to bring the grassroots work done by the OHS’s member groups to the attention of a wider audience. As noted in the Fall 1975 issue, “Every group, no matter how small, has its own particular achievements and, who knows, your success may be an inspiration for some other society.”

My neighbour also told me that the proposal to purchase was on the agenda for the county council’s May 27 meeting. I downloaded the agenda package and learned that the county had already made a down payment on the property. The property consists of the south end of two adjacent lots on the north side of Durham Road: Lot 21, where the cemetery is located) and Lot 22, which is currently being farmed.

As it developed, changing format from newsletter to newspaper, the *OHS Bulletin* became a popular vehicle for celebrating success stories, sharing controversies, publicizing events, announcing the OHS Honours & Awards winners, and much more. A notable feature is the many book reviews in the “From the Bookshelf” section, which started in 1979, advising readers about new publications about Ontario history.

Background:

For anyone interested in a contemporary record of the achievements and challenges of the Ontario heritage community in the last 50 years (including photos since the 1980s), a dip into the back issues of the *OHS Bulletin* should make for some interesting reading.

Larkin Alverson, a Black man who had spent several years in the Queen’s Bush Settlement (near Fergus), received the location ticket for Lot 21 in 1850. The southwest corner of his lot was pure sand, a boon in an area that is mostly glacial till. Alverson permitted his neighbours to bury their dead there and so it became the community’s burial ground, replete with headstones to mark the graves. It is believed that the burial ground was used until some time in the 1880s, when, like many rural burial grounds, as the descendants of those buried there moved away, it fell slowly into disrepair. The story of what happened in the 1930s when the farmer who owned the land removed all the headstones and ploughed it up is well documented in the NFB film,

Please visit [ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/ohs-bulletin/](http://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/ohs-bulletin/).

‘ODRBPC’ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2...

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The Ontario Historical Society  
34 Parkview Avenue  
Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2  
CANADA





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Michel Beaulieu, President  
michel.beaulieu@lakeheadu.ca

Hello. Bonjour. Boozhoo.

It is amazing what someone can find when cleaning out their basement. In my continual and never-ending quest to thin out the herd of books that multiply and seek out all possible nooks and crannies, I came across a run of *Historic Kingston* purchased years ago in one of the used bookstores in Kingston. As I began to read through them – much to the relief of the herd and the chagrin of my wife– I came across an old favourite: Donald Swainson's contribution to the 1980 volume.

Originally presented to the Workshop on Projects and Research in Local History, Swainson ruminates on the question "Why examine local history?" His response: "Why not? After all, what can be more natural or legitimate in desire than to understand one's locale in all of its dimensions, including the historical?" I think this reflection is no less important today than it was over 40 years ago.

As you will read in the rest of this issue of the *Bulletin*, despite (or perhaps in spite of) the challenges COVID-19 has presented, the work of the Society, its board directors, staff, affiliates, and members has pressed on. At the beginning of each day, our activities are shaped by facilitating dialogue and providing opportunities so that individuals and organizations across the province can pursue their interest in their local, and our collective, histories. As you will read, while these have taken many shapes and forms over the past number of months, their importance cannot be overstated.

I would like to also take the time to personally thank all of the staff at the Society for their dedication and hard work over the past year. It has not been

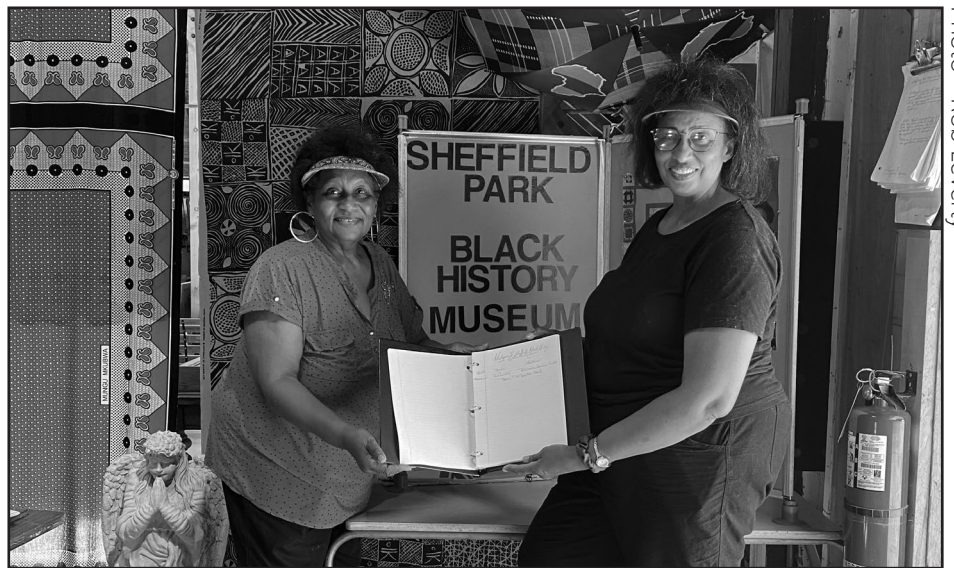


Photo - Rob Levery

On July 26th, the OHS had a site consultation with the Sheffield Park Black History and Cultural Museum (SPBH&CM) in Clarksburg. Because of the pandemic, Rob Levery was the first visitor in 2021 to sign the guestbook, which is enthusiastically held by the Co-Founders and Operators of SPBH&CM Carolyn Wilson (left) and Sylvia Wilson at the entrance of the former Tabernacle Church (circa 1900). The museum recently restored this majestic wooden Tabernacle building (60' X 80') through private donations for its new exhibit: African Beginnings. Carolyn and Sylvia have opened the museum to visitors and bus tours, dependent on pandemic restrictions. For further information, visit [sheffieldparkblackhistory.com](http://sheffieldparkblackhistory.com) or contact [sheffieldblackhistory@gmail.com](mailto:sheffieldblackhistory@gmail.com).

easy, but they have continued to provide professional and much-needed advice, support, and solutions to many across the province. If not for them, the work of the Society in preserving, promoting, and protecting our past could not occur.

All my best,  
Michel

## ...'OLD DURHAM ROAD' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

*Speakers for the Dead* (David Sutherland and Jennifer Holness, 2000, nfb.ca/film/speakers-for-the-dead/).

In 1989 a group of local people set out to reclaim the burial ground, register it as a cemetery, and, in so doing, put the historic Black settlement back into our historical narrative. Four headstones were retrieved from a stone pile and to this day stand in for everyone buried there. Since its inaugural dedication service in 1990 (Peter Meyler, editor, *Broken Shackles: Old Man Henson from Slavery to Freedom*, Natural Heritage Books: Toronto, 2001, "The Appendix", pp. 201–204), the cemetery has had an annual decoration service, the committee has hosted innumerable tours, and in 2015 a brand-new monument to house the 4 reclaimed headstones was unveiled and celebrated. (Kate Russell, "The Old Durham Road Pioneer Cemetery Committee's Dedication and Unveiling Ceremony: Sunday, September 20, 2015", *Northern Terminus: The African Canadian History Journal*, Volume 13, 2016, pp 75–79; Naomi Norquay, "The new monument at the Old Durham Road", *Northern Terminus: The African Canadian History Journal*, Volume 13, 2016, pp. 33–37, [greyroots.com/sites/default/files/14the\\_new\\_monument\\_at\\_the\\_old\\_durham\\_road\\_pioneer\\_cemetery.pdf](http://greyroots.com/sites/default/files/14the_new_monument_at_the_old_durham_road_pioneer_cemetery.pdf)).



At a dedication ceremony in 2015, Ontario Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell was on hand to celebrate a beautiful new pavilion designed to honour the resting place of Old Durham Road's 19th century Black pioneers. Seen here at the pavilion dedication ceremony, from left to right, are: Donna Atkinson (OTF volunteer); Brenda Miller (descendant and secretary of the ODRPCC); Helen Miller (descendant); the Honourable Jean Augustine (former Fairness Commissioner of Ontario); Lt. Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell; and Amber MacKinnon (daughter of Les MacKinnon, first president of the ODRPCC). On January 9, 1999, the ODRPCC was incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society and the two organizations have maintained a close relationship ever since.

The committee immediately determined that a transportation depot would make a poor neighbour. Our reasons were many. To this day we do not know the true boundaries of the cemetery. The legal entity was somewhat arbitrary,

being based on people's memory of how big the burial ground was back in the 1930s and on what the landowners were willing to donate. There is a chance that more of the removed headstones are buried in other stone piles, or in other places on Lot 21. The increased traffic and disruptive noise were also concerns. It was in our favour that the municipality had designated the cemetery a heritage site in 2016, under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. We drafted a very strong letter and sent it to various supporters, including the OHS. Thanks to the ubiquity and lightning speed of social media, we received signatures from a wide array of concerned groups and individuals: neighbours along the road, descendants of the Black settlement, former committee members, interested and concerned citizens from across the province, B.C., Alberta, Quebec, and Rochester (NY). We had 200 signatures by the time I sent the letter to Warden Selwyn Hicks and county councillors on Tuesday, May 25. The county's response was immediate: they pulled the item from the agenda, issued a public apology (for not consulting with us), and agreed to meet with the committee.

After an initial meeting via Zoom, the committee invited the county to come to the cemetery and, with the property owners' permission, walk the land the county wanted to purchase. I had a hunch that by walking the land, seeing firsthand the proximity of the cemetery to the proposed depot, and learning something of Larkin Alverson's struggles to farm a lot that was quite gnarly with drumlins full of gravel and rock– aside from the flat, sandy corner – would help the county see their intentions from our perspective – as protectors of a fragile past. At that Zoom meeting, Warden Hicks made a promise: if we did not want the transportation depot, they would look elsewhere for a suitable property. And so, on June 11, the cemetery committee, the warden, the head of the county's transportation department, two county planners, the county's lawyer, and the new manager of Grey Roots Museum and Archives met at the cemetery. When it was pointed out where they wished to locate the depot, it was clear that a very long gravel road would be needed and the gravel would most likely have been taken from Lot 21.

At the end of our walk, we stood on top of highest hill on Lot 21 and I said to the warden: "We hope you will make good your promise to us. We do not want a transportation depot as a neighbour."

Warden Hicks kept his word. On July 8, 2021, the county issued this statement: "In light of the objections raised to the suitability of the property for our intended use, council made a decision not to proceed with the property purchase."

One day that property will have a new owner and the cemetery committee will have to be vigilant to ensure that the land is not once again purposed for uses inappropriate to the cemetery and the history it protects. We certainly have the resources (experience and wide-spread support) to oppose such an event, should that become necessary. For many years there were horses grazing on Lot 21. The land would also be appropriate for sheep, walking trails, or a single family dwelling tucked into the side of one of the hills – and we will make good neighbours!



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**Rob Leverty**, Executive Director  
rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

I am very pleased to report to you that during this pandemic, the OHS has incorporated nine new historical organizations in the last nine months through affiliation with the Society. These new not-for-profit corporations are located in Essex, Hamilton, Toronto, Township of Selwyn, Grey County, Town of The Blue Mountains, Township of Leeds and Thousand Islands, and the Municipality of Central Manitoulin.

It has again been a great honour and privilege to work with all the volunteers who donate their time and expertise in partnership with the OHS to establish and incorporate these grassroots, community-based organizations. I am now going to let these nine historical organizations tell you in their own words about their new mandates to preserve and promote our history for the benefit of all Ontarians.

## **Blue Mountains Historical Society** Incorporated November 20, 2020

A group of citizens from the Municipality of the Town of The Blue Mountains and surrounding area, concerned over the ongoing loss of natural and built environments and the small town rural culture, came together to discuss these concerns and possibilities for mitigating further impacts. This group contacted the Ontario Historical Society and subsequently incorporated as the Blue Mountains Historical Society (BMHS). We are a new, volunteer-run, not-for-profit corporation within the County of Grey, resting primarily on the Niagara Escarpment. Georgian Bay's shoreline forms the eastern boundary, with agricultural lands – a significant portion being comprised of specialty agriculture – small towns, villages, hamlets, and new sub-divisions to the west and south across several watersheds.

Our history begins with the First Nations, followed by settlers from Europe and other parts of the globe. The Town of The Blue Mountains and the surrounding areas are rich in natural landscapes and flora and fauna – some of which are on the endangered list. While the story of human habitation here spans thousands of years, more and more people have been recently moving to this municipality, increasing the permanent population significantly and rapidly. It is for this very reason that the BMHS, acting in partnership with other local organizations, will need to inform and, when necessary, raise the awareness of the public and their elected officials about our ongoing responsibility to local history. For more information, contact: tbmhistorical@gmail.com.

## **Leaside Heritage Preservation Society** Incorporated November 20, 2020

The Leaside Heritage Preservation Society (LHPS) is dedicated to identifying, locating, and preserving historical material relating to Toronto's Leaside community. Our mission is to preserve and promote the vibrant history of Leaside for the enjoyment and education of the community today and for future generations.

Leaside has a rich and robust past, extending over 200 years. The first settler, John Lea, arrived in 1819. Nearly 100 years later in 1913, the town was incorporated and soon began its rapid rise as a major residential, commercial, and industrial hub. Since its creation in November 2020, LHPS has been actively recruiting members, building interest, sharing digital memorabilia through social media, and providing information about Leaside's past in local history publications, in virtual exhibits, and through our website and newsletter.

We are a community-based historical project. Longer term, our plan is to create a Leaside-based museum to store and display the many documents, photographs, artifacts, and other materials that illustrate and define Leaside's history. This summer we will be ready to accept our first donated items, which will be stored, preserved, and cared for according to Ontario museum standards and regulations.

As a Society relying solely on volunteers, we are proud of the progress we have made so far. But we are also very aware that we are just beginning to accomplish our ultimate goals. Going forward, we will continue to focus on building our membership, raising awareness, and establishing a secure foundation for our sustained and successful future. For more information, please contact leasideheritage@gmail.com and visit our website www.leasideheritage.ca.

## **Friends of the Mindemoya Old School** Incorporated January 29, 2021

In January 2021, after years of trying to persuade the Municipality to repurpose a century-old school instead of destroying it, concerned citizens of Central Manitoulin decided to form a legal entity. With the help of the Ontario Historical Society, we incorporated as Friends of the Mindemoya Old School (FOMOS), a not-for-profit corporation affiliated with the OHS. Our mission is to preserve this landmark and to promote an understanding of its cultural and heritage value. Our challenge as a new corporation is to develop a compelling, financially viable business plan to present to Council. We are simultaneously encouraging other private initiatives. We launched our website,



Seen here on August 5 is long-time OHS member and donor Helen Ann Juhola with OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty in a downtown Toronto hotel lobby. After 17 months of waiting, Helen was finally able to hand over her unique collection of natural heritage books as a donation to the OHS Library, including books Helen co-authored for the Toronto Field Naturalists. Thank you so much, Helen, for your decades of volunteer work "to increase the public knowledge and appreciation of Toronto's green areas" and your continued support of the OHS!

mindemoyaoldschool.ca, to publicize our activities, recruit members, and gain support. The first product we sold was a pandemic mask with the message "Save the Mindemoya Old School", followed by medallions commemorating the 100th anniversary of the building, postcards, prints, cloth bags, and mugs. In August we celebrated the building's 100th anniversary with a picnic. Our email address is: mindemoyaoldschool@gmail.com.

## **Friends of the Old Stone Mill House** Incorporated March 12, 2021

The Friends of the Old Stone Mill House is a not-for-profit organization incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society in March 2021. We are dedicated stewards, preserving the unique history and heritage structure of the Old Stone Mill House at 44 Bridge Street in Lakefield, Ontario (built in 1858 by Frank D'Archy), and other built heritage structures in the former village of Lakefield, now the Township of Selwyn, Ontario.

In the third week of January 2021 a for-sale sign appeared on the Mill House property. We were shocked to learn that a demolition permit had already been issued that would see the property demolished when the sale closed at the end of February 2021. We organized delegations to the Municipal Heritage Committee, the local council and had several public picketing demonstrations in front of the property. We were initially met with hostility and negative reactions from council but were ultimately successful in getting the property designated under the *Heritage Act*. Many more properties in this municipality remain undesignated and at risk, and we are continuing to press for more attention to be placed by local authorities in designating and protecting significant examples of our past. If you are interested in helping, we can be contacted by mail at Box 815, Lakefield Ontario K0L 2H0. Michael Chappell, President.

## **Friends of Century Manor** Incorporated March 12, 2021

The mission of the Friends is to bring together those persons committed to the history, preservation, conservation, and future adaptive re-use of the historic Century Manor. Built in 1884, this large High Victorian building is situated on the grounds of the former Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital, which was devoted to the care and treatment of the mentally ill.

Century Manor was designated as a "property of historic and architectural value and interest" in 1997 under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Currently owned by Infrastructure Ontario, a Crown Agency of the Government of Ontario, concerned citizens began organizing in 2020 when the Provincial Government unilaterally rezoned the former hospital lands for residential development, including 12.5 hectares of green space located on the Niagara Escarpment.

The Friends are presently researching and collecting any material, including photos, that may help to establish, illustrate, or define the rich legacy and history of Century Manor. The Friends are also broadening their public awareness initiatives. For further information, contact: jsb.kajaste@gmail.com.

## **Heritage Colchester** Incorporated March 12, 2021

In late 2020 the Town of Essex intended to declare a listed historical property known as the Colchester Schoolhouse, School Section #2, as surplus, with the intent of selling the property to a developer. The Schoolhouse was built in 1881 and was one of the first built in the area under the *Public Schools Act*. The Town of Essex has owned the property for about 15 years and had originally intended to use it as a community centre. However, the Town's focus had changed over the years in favour of other developments.

Initial efforts by individuals were successful in delaying the declaration as surplus but required focused action and a plan for the restoration of the building. The first step was to incorporate Heritage Colchester as an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society. Since incorporating, Heritage Colchester has started

**'ED REPORT' CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...**



## 133<sup>RD</sup> OHS AGM SET FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 AT 7:00 PM

**Daniel Dishaw**, Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

The OHS Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the 133rd Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Historical Society will be hosted virtually, on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

The meeting will be conducted by webinar through the video/telephone service, Zoom. Instructions for how to participate by computer, smart device, or telephone will be provided after registration, along with the AGM information package.

I am pleased to let you know that Dr. Robin Nelson of MacEwan University in Alberta will be presenting on "The Democratization of Culture: Reflecting on Similarities and Differences in Community Museums' Development in Ontario and Yukon" directly following the business portion of the meeting.

The Honours and Awards Ceremony will take place on a separate occasion later this year.

We hope that you can join us at the AGM. Please RSVP by Friday, October 1, if you wish to attend the meeting to ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca or leave a voicemail at 416-226-9011.

## 2021 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

DR. ROBIN NELSON OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

"THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF CULTURE: REFLECTING ON  
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNITY MUSEUMS'  
DEVELOPMENT IN ONTARIO AND YUKON"



Dr. Robin Nelson (they/them) is an assistant professor in arts and cultural management at MacEwan University on Treaty Six territory.

Their research considers subnational community museum policy, service organizations, and heritage commemoration policy. In 2021, Robin completed their PhD on Ontario Community Museum Policy, which included research on the Ontario Historical Society and its members. They are currently working on Museoception and the Dawson City Museum Project.

## CEMETERY NEWS

**Laura Suchan**, Board Director, Ontario Historical Society  
lsuchan@sympatico.ca

On May 17, 2021, a monument recognizing the more than 1200 people buried in Potter's Field in Greenwood Cemetery, Owen Sound, was unveiled. Funded by private donors, the monument is made of granite and cast iron and was initially installed in December 2020 but remained covered until spring, when it was hoped an official unveiling could be scheduled. With Covid restrictions in place, it is anticipated a dedication event will be held in the fall. Potter's Field was also known as the indigent lot and was used since 1858. Buried there are some of the most vulnerable in society, including children, seniors, Indigenous persons, and members of the Black community. Professor Naomi Norquay of York University is leading a complementary project, researching between 800–900 names of those buried in Potter's Field with the hopes of completing a short narrative about each person. Although none of the graves are marked, the narratives will recover the names and stories of those buried there. With the narratives already complete for more than 500 names, Professor Norquay says the team's research shows all types of hardworking families are represented and that burial in Potter's Field "does not need to be a point of shame for the families." The results of the project will be available online in the coming months.

OHS President Michel Beaulieu wrote a letter in support of the Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemetery Committee (ODRBPC) and their opposition of the proposed depot site on Grey Road 14 adjacent to this nationally significant Black heritage site. Located in Priceville (Grey County), Ontario, the cemetery was first used in the 1840s by residents of a nearby Black community and subsequently plowed over by a farmer in the 1930s. Recently Grey County announced plans to purchase 40 acres of land near the cemetery to construct a transportation depot. However after public outcry from ODRBPC, the OHS, and others, Grey County announced they are no longer acquiring the land and county CAO Kim Wingrove offered a public apology citing the county's lack of awareness and consideration for the history of the cemetery. Please see Naomi Norquay's article on page 1 of this *Bulletin* for further details on this important story.

### A Statment from OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty

As a defining moment in our history, the OHS Indigenous Affairs Committee and the OHS Cemeteries Committee and the Society's cemetery experts continue to closely monitor the fundamental issue of unmarked graves and unknown burials at former residential schools in Ontario.

Regular readers of the *OHS Bulletin* will know that since 2011, the OHS Unregistered Cemeteries Committee has researched and submitted to various Governments of Ontario lists of over 1,535 unregistered cemeteries that may contain unmarked and unknown burials of Indigenous peoples. The Society's Unregistered Cemetery Committee has begun research on any links between their unregistered cemeteries lists and residential schools. The OHS has always wanted all unregistered cemeteries to be registered by the Government of Ontario, since the Society has no notification or appeal rights with regards to the relocation of unregistered cemeteries. The OHS has always maintained that it is in the public interest that unregistered cemeteries be given the same legal protection and status as registered cemeteries.

## HONOURING DR. ALISON PRENTICE

**Jan Haskings-Winner**, Board Director, Ontario Historical Society  
jhaskings-winner@sympatico.ca



Dr. Alison Prentice (1934–2021) was a pioneer in women's history in Canada. A renowned scholar and beloved teacher, Prentice specialized in the history of education in Canada as well as Canadian women's history. Her work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto paved the way for future generations of scholars to focus on Canadian women's history.

In 1990, the OHS incorporated the Ontario Women's History Network (OWHN) as a not-for-profit corporation under our special Act, 1899 and Alison Prentice was elected its Founding President. She was a founder of OWHN, which included both academics and classroom teachers as its members. She co-authored the first textbook in Canadian women's history: Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson, and Naomi Black, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988). Alison was a Fellow at the Royal Society of Canada and was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2013.

The OHS named one of its most popular award categories after Alison Prentice in 1998, the year she retired from her exceptional career in academia. Every year the OHS Alison Prentice Award recognizes the best book on Canadian women's history, recognizing outstanding work being done to further our collective understanding of women's history in Canada, just as Alison did for so many years.

I am thrilled to announce that the OHS has established a new Alison Prentice Award Trust Fund. The annual investment income from this trust fund will be entirely dedicated to granting a cash prize to the winner of the OHS Alison Prentice Award.

If you would like to make a charitable donation to the new Alison Prentice Award Trust Fund, you can send an e-transfer to payment@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca; pay by credit card (by calling 416-226-9011) or send a cheque payable to: Ontario Historical Society, 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario M2N 3Y2. Please note: "Alison Prentice Award Trust Fund" for any payment method.

All donations over \$10 will receive a tax receipt. The OHS is a registered charity annually submitting audited financial statements to the Canada Revenue Agency and a non-government, not-for-profit organization. If you have any questions, please contact the OHS at ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca.



# MUSEUM MILESTONES

**Dr. John Carter**  
drjohncarter@bell.net

The lead article by Mary-Katherine Whelan, curator of the Amherstburg Freedom Museum, takes us back to Ontario's great southwest. For me it brings back fond memories of working with Mac and Betty Simpson, the founders of what was originally called the North American Black Historical Museum. At the time, my local MP was the Honorable Eugene Whelan, then the federal Minister of Agriculture. Gene was a great supporter of the John R. Park Homestead, the site I was curator of, and came to many of the special events held there. He often regaled audiences with stories about the area and tales about growing up in Essex County. He was also Mary-Katherine's grandfather! Read her article below to find out how things have changed and evolved at this interesting community museum.

Darrell Keenie recently retired as the Manager at the Museum of Dufferin (MOD). He had worked for the County of Dufferin since 1999. The new manager is Terrilyn Kunopaski. At the Collingwood Museum, long-time Museum Supervisor Susan Warner retired. Melissa Shaw was appointed to fill that position, and Lindsay

Cook is now the Museum Assistant. Unfortunately soon after her retirement, Susan Warner passed away.

Other significant losses in the Ontario Museum community have also recently occurred. In Thunder Bay, Roy Piovesana, who for over 50 years was a consummate booster of the Thunder Bay Museum, has died. Roy was a director for the Museum Board and editor of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society's *Papers & Records* journal beginning in 1977. In 1978, he was vice-president, and from 1979–82, the president. He was also one of the founders of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and a trustee for the Canadian Museum of Nature. I enjoyed working with Roy during the planning for and move of the Thunder Bay Museum to its present location. Certainly a great loss to the museum as well as to the City of Thunder Bay.

It was with great regret that I learned of the recent passing of Carol Johnston. Carol was the founder and a tireless supporter of the London Regional Children's Museum, and was its director until 1991 when she left to tour the world with her husband Bud. On her return, Carol continued to contribute by sitting on the museum board. For her efforts, she was awarded the City of London's Citizen of the Year in 1982, the Ontario Jubilee Award in 1983, and the Order of Canada in 1985. Carol was also very active as a councillor and the secretary of the Ontario Museum Association (OMA).

Condolences are sent to the families of Susan, Roy, and Carol. With their passing, the Ontario Museum Community has suffered great loss.

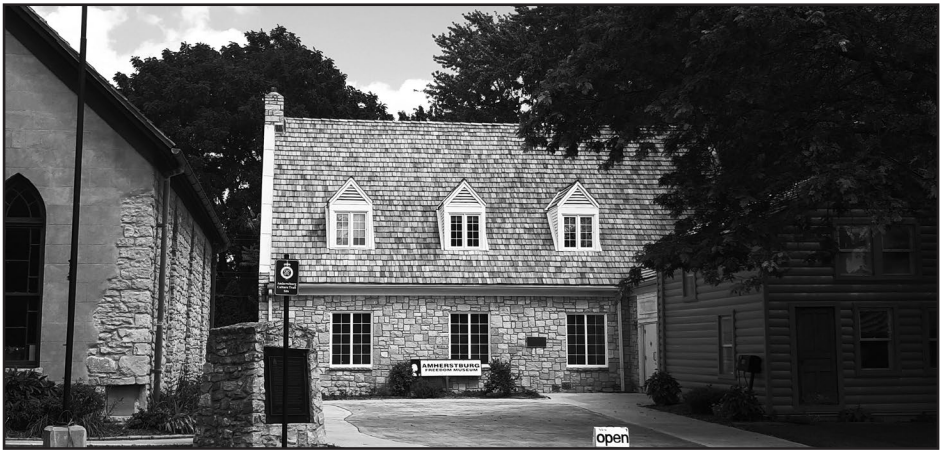
## BLACK HISTORY AT AMHERSTBURG: A UNIVERSAL INSPIRATION

**Mary-Katherine Whelan**, Curator/Administrator, Amherstburg Freedom Museum  
mk.whelan@amherstburgfreedom.org

The Amherstburg Freedom Museum, previously known as the North American Black Historical Museum, is located in Amherstburg, Ontario. Founded in 1975 by residents, the Amherstburg Freedom Museum is a community-based, not-for-profit museum that tells the story of African Canadians' history and contributions by preserving and presenting artifacts that share African Canadians' journey.

The location of the Museum is key – Amherstburg meant freedom, as the Canadian destination for many freedom seekers escaping enslavement in the United States. After crossing the Detroit River into Amherstburg, freedom seekers became citizens of a nation, that recognized them as free persons.

It was the vision of Museum founders Betty and Melvin “Mac” Simpson to promote the rich heritage of African Canadians, many of whose ancestors had come as refugees from enslavement in the United States. In 2015, the North American Black Historical Museum celebrated its 40th anniversary, and changed its name to the Amherstburg Freedom Museum, to emphasize its connection to people seeking freedom.



The museum campus is located at 277 King Street in Amherstburg, ON.

In addition to sharing Amherstburg's stories of the Underground Railroad, and the compassion and solidarity it took to make this network possible, the Amherstburg Freedom Museum collects, protects, interprets, researches, educates, and exhibits a collection of artifacts of historical and cultural value.

The Museum consists of two historical buildings, both from the time of the Underground Railroad: the Taylor Log Cabin, which was the home of a formerly enslaved Civil War Veteran, and the Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, National Historic Site of Canada. The site also contains a Museum structure which houses the permanent exhibit and the Cultural Centre used for the purpose of temporary exhibits, meetings, and rentals.

Built in 1848 and named after the Bishop Willis Nazrey, the Nazrey AME Church was a terminus of the Underground Railroad, built by hand to serve Amherstburg's growing Black community. Many people escaping enslavement and the oppressive laws enforced in the US first felt true freedom within the walls of this church.

Upon arrival in Amherstburg, many freedom seekers found that the Nazrey AME Church played a significant role in their new lives, offering itself as an

interim resting place until permanent housing could be found. The Church also served as a school to educate those who had been denied that privilege, and a social centre where numerous everyday skills were taught and where residents organized.

This evocative stone chapel speaks to the faith of the Underground Railroad Freedom Seekers and to their commitment to build lives as free Canadians. After its last service in 1988, the church was no longer active and became part of the Museum complex when it was built in 1981. As time progressed, the Church began to seriously deteriorate, becoming uninhabitable and facing demolition. After outcry from the community and considerable effort to secure the necessary funds and resources, the Church was given a new life in 1999. Major renovations to the interior, exterior, and roof were completed, and the Church became one of the first Black National Historic Sites in Canada. The Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal Church is a testament to the Underground Railroad, a symbol of freedom, and a treasured National Historic Site.

The second historical building on the Museum Site is the Taylor Log Cabin which is attached to the main Museum building. The Taylor Log Cabin is an example of the early log construction that existed in the Amherstburg area prior to 1865. The cabin is thought to have been one of two buildings previously located on the property of Fort Malden (which is the historic military fort located in Amherstburg on the banks of the Detroit River).

Although we do not know exactly when the building was first moved to the property next to the Nazrey AME Church, we do know that it did not originally have a livable second storey, only a small loft space. Nasa McCurdy, who was instrumental in building the Nazrey AME Church in 1848, raised the roof of the home to make a livable second floor.

George Taylor, who escaped enslavement in Kentucky and served in the Union Army, lived in the Cabin with his family circa 1880. The Taylor Log Cabin and its furnishings represent the type of housing available to some residents in Amherstburg during this time period. The home was passed down several generations through George's daughter Azalia and was later sold to Melvin Simpson in the 1970s to use as a feature for the Museum.

While the Museum is currently closed to the public due to the pandemic, the core programming it provides includes both self-guided and guided tours of these buildings, educational programming for schools and other groups, and the showcasing of artifacts and exhibits that tell the story of African Canadians' journey.

The Museum also presents cultural events including Ribs & Ragtime, Emancipation Dinner & Dance and Golf Classic, and Christmas at the Museum. To support the Amherstburg Freedom Museum, please visit [amherstburgfreedom.org/donate](http://amherstburgfreedom.org/donate).



The interior of the Taylor Log Cabin.



## BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

### RECALLING THE BIRDMAN OF ERINDALE, ONTARIO

Barry Penhale

barry@naturalheritagebooks.com

As someone who sees the glass of life as being half full, I look for the positive outcomes of this pandemic. It delights me that there is a renewed public interest in nature and particularly in birdwatching. With this in mind and the return of birdsong to our property (our little woodlot we planted some twenty-five years ago is said to harbour about fifty different bird species), I was reminded of an exceptional person who made birds the focus of his life.

Hance Roy Ivor was well into his eighties when I made my way to his secluded Windinglane Bird Sanctuary to meet one of the gentlest human beings one could possibly ever know. A self-taught conservationist/naturalist, Ivor, by choice, had given almost 40 years to tending to birds of every description. Memories now come flooding back and remind me of the “unwinding” that visits with the “Birdman of Erindale” always yielded. By the time of our first meeting his holdings had dwindled from the original forty-acre parcel to a three-acre mix of woodland and meadow. First-time visitors, unfamiliar with the route ahead, would cautiously inch their vehicles along a meandering lane leading to the modest dwelling known as Windinglane Cottage, built by his own hands. Ivor lived alone



Winding Lane Bird Sanctuary property showing the cottage-style house, destroyed by a devastating fire in 1970.

in the home he had shared with his mother until her passing at the age of 105, having kept house for him until she was 99.

Ivor's life began in 1880 in Strathroy, Ontario, but it was while living on a family farm in Saskatchewan that his interest in birds began. At age ten, he discovered the first nest and eggs of the Richardson's Merlin ever found locally – an auspicious beginning to a hobby that eventually morphed into a lifelong study of birds. Back in Ontario and living in Toronto, a 17-year-old Roy Ivor took up employment with the family-owned stone and marble business. But, as destiny would have it, following his father's passing he divested himself of the business and with his mother said goodbye to big-city life. Together they would embrace a rural lifestyle, one that suited Roy to the care and study of birds of almost every kind, big and small. By the time we met, it was well-known that the man truly lived with birds.

Throughout his lifetime, he cared for some 300 injured birds annually. None was ever turned away. In many cases the birds moved into a spacious observatory-style building, an extension of his living room. This heated space, complete with removeable windows, enabled them to enter a flight cage where they could fly and exercise. Operating with approved federal and provincial permits allowing him to keep native birds on site, Ivor established an astonishingly close relationship with many of his wards. In his book, *I Live with Birds*, published when the author was a mere 88 years young, Ivor wrote: “Blue jays, among the most intelligent of birds, become perhaps the most trustful of all when reared by hand. They endear themselves to us to an extent that would not be thought possible to anyone who knows them only as among the shyest and most cautious birds of our woodlands.”

Roy Ivor was not a trained ornithologist and never passed himself off as one. He was, in fact, belittled in some scientific circles for his sentimental attachment and his habit of naming certain feathered favourites. Fortunately, his extensive knowledge of birds was not totally debunked, and in his lifetime Ivor's observations and conclusions received the stamp of approval from some of the foremost birding experts of the day. Articles either by or about the man were published widely, including several in *National Geographic*. But one needs to turn to Ivor's one and only published book for the most all-encompassing account of his total commitment to the daily

work in the shelter. I shall always treasure the role I played in securing a publisher for his long-unpublished manuscript, which ultimately led to a generously illustrated volume. The much-anticipated publication of *I Live with Birds* was launched at a delightfully catered lawn party on the grounds of the sanctuary with Ivor and birds on hand. But I am getting ahead of myself!

Soon after our meeting, Ivor modestly made mention of having written about his life with birds. “But it's no good, you know,” he promptly informed me. A rather startling statement, resulting as it turned out, from some unidentified reader's blunt assessment. Further mention of the manuscript came up again during my next visit and this time he retrieved a well-spattered shoebox from under a sofa that held his writings. I left with only a single chapter to read, but at least it was obvious that I was now to be trusted. When next I returned, the anxious author was delighted upon hearing of my pleasure with the pages entrusted to me. Thus encouraged, he promptly put the entire precious box in my hands. Trembling with excitement, Roy was visibly buoyed by the possibility that his manuscript might reach a public audience, perhaps even a large one.

Upon securing publishing interest with Ryerson Press, I next reached out to several prominent individuals whose backgrounds, both personally and professionally, had resulted in interesting links to Ivor's sanctuary. Among them were the noted veterinarian Dr. Alan Secord and the highly regarded writer/naturalist, Hugh M. Halliday, both greatly admired. Internationally known in veterinary circles, Secord had always been available when one of Ivor's birds needed surgery. Without hesitation, he accepted my invitation to contribute an endorsement for the back cover. Hugh Halliday was the ideal choice to write the foreword. His introduction to *I Live with Birds* reinforced his high regard for Ivor, born out of a friendship that by then spanned decades.

The untidy and cluttered interior of Roy Ivor's cottage-style home would never have received a housekeeping seal of approval. It was always the same whenever I visited, but the birds were what mattered and one took both the man and his home as found. The presence of birds, some flying about and some unfortunately dead and still in their nests were a common sight. Other than making the occasional cup of tea, I am certain that Ivor had done very little cooking for himself since his mother's passing. But, as I discovered, a number of neighbours kept a kindly eye on him, dropping in when least expected and delivering homemade meals. Thinking back, I am especially reminded of the first time at Roy's suggestion that I opened his refrigerator in search of something edible. Yup – more nests with tiny dead occupants! I believe Roy planned to inspect them to determine their cause of death when he had time. I shall never know for sure, but the sight of the interior of that fridge remains crystal clear in my mind to this day.

Ivor, I realized, was having an increasingly tougher time keeping up with the demanding around-the-clock routine. As his physical limitations became more apparent, I suggested my willingness to seek support for his work through a working relationship with some of the most prominent Canadian conservationists of that time. Roy initially favoured the approach but sadly it was not to come about. Regrettably, that most naïve of men had been influenced and swayed by someone who had his ear. This, at the very same time that various individuals were already known to be eyeing the site for their own purposes. But the sanctuary was to carry on largely as it had in the past, with Bernice Inman as Ivor's assistant.

In 1970, when Ivor was 90 years of age, a devastating fire not only destroyed his home but also resulted in the loss of countless birds. At such an advanced age it is unlikely that he could have rebuilt and continued to care for birds if it were not for a huge outpouring of community financial assistance. Fittingly, the gentle and modest Hance Roy Ivor was to receive the coveted Order of Canada, as well as an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Windsor. He deserved to be so recognized. Among the most unforgettable characters I have known, Roy Ivor ran his unique bird sanctuary for 50 years – truly a legend in his time. His personal story represents a unique chapter in Ontario's past, one worth knowing.

I LIVE WITH BIRDS/ROY IVOR



*I Live with Birds* was published when the author was in his 89th year.



Roy Ivor with feathered friends.



# FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Dr. Cynthia Comacchio  
ccomac5702@rogers.com

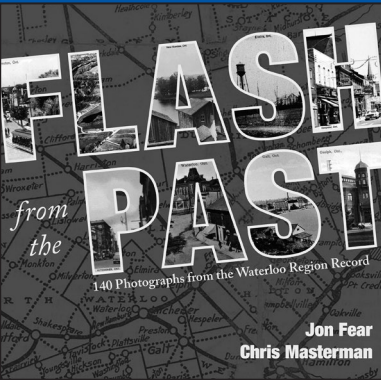
My last review column appeared in December 2020; I opened it by remarking on the state of events in Ontario at the time. In case anyone actually needs reminding, we were in the throes of a vicious second wave of Covid as the year ended. We started 2021 still very much locked down, masked up, and, for the most part, putting what remained of our collective faith in the pending vaccines that seemed our only chance of seeing a post-Covid era. After the briefest respite, a matter of days in some areas, the third wave locked us down once again in early April, the sorriest of April Fool jokes. As I write in early August, Ontario and Canada lead the world in vaccination numbers. But we also seem to be verging on, why not, Wave No. 4. Nonetheless, I tell myself, using – that old professorial line “history shows that” vaccines do work. This may be funny one day. It is nothing if not historic, on a world level, in the extent, in the duration, in the remarkable speed with which vaccines were devised and disseminated.

Many awful things other than Covid have happened since the end of awful 2020, reminding us of William Faulkner’s scary warning that “the past isn’t over. It isn’t even past.” We can never again put out of mind what our Indigenous peoples have been made to suffer. Historians have long believed that the number of deaths recorded for residential school children is far smaller than that of their actual deaths, making hidden interments a very real possibility. Technology has literally uncovered that unconscionable attempt at erasure. Historians have also studied the incidence of extreme weather cycles and the impacts of environmental devastation wrought by humans, especially in this country of such varied geography and diverse weather patterns. Now we have increasingly close-to-home weather extremes, as the heat wave and the fires on the Pacific Coast, in the prairies, and in the North have demonstrated.

As is the case with pandemics and vaccines, clearly we have to follow the science. But it would also be helpful to follow the history. There are recorded facts based on empirical evidence. If those who dispute the science, because we don’t understand it, looked to history, I’m betting understanding would improve all round.

My own history in this past year has left me very much behind, which explains why the last *Bulletin* contained no Bookshelf. Here’s to getting back on track, with books and book reviews and vaccines and reconciliation and real measures to save our planet. There is no going back, but reading about our history, as these good books suggest, will surely help us go forward.

I’m going to discuss these books thematically, seeing as, by happy coincidence, we have two titles that deal with local social history...



*Flash from the Past: 140 Photographs from the Waterloo Region Record*

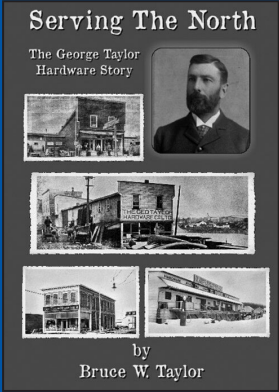
**JON FEAR AND CHRIS MASTERMAN**

Windsor: Biblioasis, 2018.  
Paperback; 299 pp.  
[www.biblioasis.com](http://www.biblioasis.com)

Once upon a time, as the best stories begin, newspapers were a community’s faithful watch dog, telling their readers everything they needed to know about their own world, however small, as well as the larger one out there. The press was a respected local institution, and even sparsely populated villages in the early years of settlement hastened to establish newspapers. The *Berlin Daily News* began publication to serve its rural community of predominantly German settlers in 1878. Long known as the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, it is now the *Waterloo Region Record* to acknowledge the rapidly expanding population that surrounds the twin cities. This intriguing compilation was put together by two of the Region’s best qualified local historians. The newspaper’s librarian and archivist, Chris Masterson, launched the popular weekly column, “Flash from the Past,” some 15 years ago in 2006. When she retired two years later, it was left in the expert hands of veteran journalist Jon Fear. As Masterson explains, she started by simply selecting a photograph from the official files, printing it without a caption or any identifying information, and asking readers to write in with any information, ideas, or even guesses about who was portrayed, the location, the date, the event. Her project quickly captured a devoted readership (including me). The subsequent column featured her explanation but also drew on many of the readers’ contributions, some of which pulled up fascinating details about who-what-why-where that might otherwise have remained individual or family memories. The column, she notes, “quickly became a collaborative effort” as stories were shared and built upon each week. Jon Fear continued this successful approach to reactivating the community’s collective memory by encouraging individual memories. After his retirement, the torch was passed to Rych Mills, who is well-known to OHS members for his own dedication to the Waterloo

Historical Society and a great many local history projects; a few of his columns are also included here.

This lovely and lively book is a sampler of some of their most intriguing columns, with full-page photographs ranging through the twentieth century, the region’s rural towns, and even Guelph. The photographs stand alone as historical testimony, but only those who were there, or absorbed these stories as children and community members, can really fill in the details. I only wish there were more such imaginative and worthwhile media initiatives to capture the invaluable little things we really want to know – and that this were a bigger book!



*Serving the North: The George Taylor Hardware Story*

**BRUCE W. TAYLOR**

Cobalt: White Mountain., 2020  
Paperback; 241 pp.  
[www.wmpub.ca](http://www.wmpub.ca)

Alongside the purveyor of groceries and staple goods fundamental to every rural village and resource outpost in late nineteenth century Canada, and well into the twentieth despite the onslaught of chain stores, the hardware store was inarguably an equally vital institution. We joke about how today’s homeowner is forever perusing hardware store aisles, searching bits and pieces in all sizes and price ranges, for the latest quick fix or DIY. But few of us are tackling the critical fixes that keep our homes, farms, businesses, and offices functional and productive. The story was different in the not so distant past, when repair work, for all but the affluent, was integral to male socialization and a significant part of the successful man’s knowledge base. Local business and industry also relied on being able to quickly source supplies, services, and expertise in their own communities. Author Bruce W. Taylor is a well-published local historian and descendant of the store’s founder, George Taylor. The book’s title, *Serving the North*, indicates the company’s objective and it thrived as a family business for more than sixty years (1901–1968). In an effective case study, Taylor traces the company’s relations with the community and how its growth reflected the development of Northeastern Ontario and Northwestern Quebec. Moreover, the little store that grew contributed significantly to this larger development, not only in supplies and services but also in employment. At its peak in the boom years of the late 1950s, it employed about 250 people. Taylor’s approach follows its chronological development as it grew, each chapter discussing one of the eleven eventual branches. Biographical sketches, as well as photographs, advertisements, and maps, bring to life the people behind the business. George Taylor and his successors encouraged a sense of family among their workers, and there are anecdotes, memories, and photographs about the annual picnics, parties, and sports events that they enjoyed. But if the George Taylor Hardware success story in many ways exemplifies the trajectory of other small family concerns coming out of the Victorian era, its demise does so as well. By the end of the 1960s, in a wave of acquisitions that was becoming ever stronger, they sold to a large western wholesaler eager to move eastward. And that was just another step on the way to the big boxes where we spend so much of our money and leisure time today.

## OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLAQUE PROGRAM

George Chisholm, President, Oakville Historical Society  
[gchisholm235@gmail.com](mailto:gchisholm235@gmail.com)

If you’ve visited one of the older areas of Oakville, you’ve probably seen one of the Oakville Historical Society’s black-and-white plaques. The Society was founded in 1953. Our early initiatives included the acquisition and restoration of the 1829 Thomas House and the 1835 Old Post Office. After these properties were moved, restored, and transformed into museums, the Society set out to establish its plaque program.

The first plaques were up by the late 1950s. Owners did their own research and the plaques were hand-painted on plywood. Research involved a trip to the local Registry Office and a search through the ledgers, which date back to 1806.

These days, our plaque business is booming. There are now over 250 buildings that have donned one of our plaques. The dates of construction of buildings with plaques range from 1828, a year after Oakville was founded, to 1951. Plaques are now engraved on exterior-grade fibreboard using a Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) router but are still painted by hand. We’re now making about 30 per year.

Research is now done over the internet, making the process much easier. Registry documents are available online through [onland.ca](http://onland.ca). Many resources have become available, including tax assessment and collector rolls, censuses,

‘OAKVILLE H.S. PLAQUE PROGRAM’ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...



developing plans and building relationships with other organizations to work toward the restoration goal. The purpose of Heritage Colchester is to advance public education through greater awareness and understanding of the history and the cultural, historical, and natural heritage of the area originally settled in by United Empire Loyalists and escaped slaves from the United States. For further information, please contact [Heritage.Colchester@outlook.com](mailto:Heritage.Colchester@outlook.com) or visit our web page: [heritagecolchester.ca](http://heritagecolchester.ca).

**Grey County Black Heritage Society**  
Incorporated March 30, 2021

A group of people with significant ties to Black history in Grey County approached the OHS regarding the formation of an incorporated society to embrace the broader richness of this history and move well beyond a single event designation. The intent is to create greater public awareness and understanding of the county’s extensive Black cultural heritage through a range of activities. These may include, but are not limited to, organizing cultural events, participating in and supporting cross-cultural community events, fostering relationships with new and existing cultural groups, profiling promoters of Black cultural occasions, engaging in school visits during Black History Month and beyond, providing readily accessible historical background information for Black history sites across the county, and generally supporting ongoing research into the evolving cultural history of the early Black pioneers who made their way to Grey County. Their stories represent important chapters in Canadian history. The founding members of this new society are in the process of building functional structures to enable the promotion of membership and the initiation of specific activities. For more information, please contact [greycountyblackheritagesoc@gcbhs.info](mailto:greycountyblackheritagesoc@gcbhs.info).

**Friends of Springfield House Complex**  
Incorporated April 9, 2021

A group of engaged citizens from the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands formed an organization in 2020 called the Friends of Springfield House Complex with the goal to conserve and support the public use of two municipally owned and designated historic structures. This spring, we decided to incorporate through the Ontario Historical Society. The complex is comprised of two properties, both constructed in 1871: a stone, Georgian-inspired wayside inn called Springfield House and the Old Town Hall of the former Township of Front of Escott. This rural hamlet grew up along the busy Queen’s Highway between Toronto and Montreal and was connected to routes along the St. Lawrence River. These two buildings, both celebrating their 150th birthdays this year, have been closed to the public and are in need of upgrades and renovations in order for them to be actively used again. Our group will work to make sure these heritage/cultural assets will serve the education and recreation needs of our community. We are currently in the process of developing a framework for an agreement with the municipality to set up clear roles and responsibilities in a shared partnership. Our municipality is one of the few in our region that does not have a museum/heritage centre at the present. We will be working with other agencies such as the Leeds and Thousand Islands Historical Society to advocate for the renewed use of this site as a museum and cultural centre, archives, genealogical research centre and park. For more information, follow us on Facebook at Friends of Springfield House or email us at [friendsofspringfieldhouse@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofspringfieldhouse@gmail.com).

**Flamborough Museum**  
Incorporated May 6, 2021

Our museum began with a group of people who are passionate about local history wishing to bring a permanent museum to the former Town of Flamborough, now a part of the City of Hamilton. We envision the museum as a vibrant, cultural space that will use local stories and artifacts to present an authentic view of the rich history of Flamborough and its people to diverse

audiences. Our ultimate goal is a physical space to connect with the communities of Flamborough, and we are currently exploring our options for a home that is accessible and appropriate. Within this space we plan to encourage conversation, expand understanding, and ultimately inspire future generations, inviting students from the area to connect the present day with the past. For further information, please visit [flamboroughmuseum.ca](http://flamboroughmuseum.ca) or contact [info@flamboroughmuseum.ca](mailto:info@flamboroughmuseum.ca).

The OHS remains dedicated to the Society’s core mandate and unique legal responsibilities granted by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1899. As the only non-government entity in North America with the legal authority to incorporate historical organizations, we know that our special *Act to Incorporate the Ontario Historical Society, 1899*, is a vital tool that is more relevant than ever in the fight to preserve and promote our diverse and rich history in communities across Ontario.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report to our membership and the general public that since January 2016, in service to our fellow citizens, the OHS has incorporated 40 new not-for-profit historical organizations: five in northern Ontario, six in eastern Ontario, six in central Ontario, eleven in southwestern Ontario, eleven in the GTHA, and one provincial not-for-profit corporation.

...‘OAKVILLE H.S. PLAQUE PROGRAM’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

genealogical research websites, architectural digests, photos, maps, fire insurance plans, and books.

Once a plaque is installed, clients who are not already members of our Society are given a free one-year membership, and many renew. We publish photos of the plaque, house, and the early inhabitants. We use PastPerfect to manage our collection and are creating an online exhibit of our plaques and associated information. We charge \$150 for a new or replacement plaque, though several have been provided to charitable organizations free of cost.

Some homeowners are concerned that having one of our plaques will prevent them from making changes to their property. We’re usually able to convince them that our plaques are not the same as a designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. In many cases the house is already designated under Part IV or is in a Part V Heritage District.

Our plaques have become a signature program of the Society. A few years ago we replaced our aging logo with one that has the same shape and style as our plaques. For further information, visit our website: [oakvillehistory.org](http://oakvillehistory.org).



Photo – George Chisholm

The Melancthon Simpson House is a Regency Cottage on Trafalgar Road in Oakville and has had a plaque since the 1950s.

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Next issue copy deadline: <b>Friday, October 22 2021.</b>	Inquiries about submissions and advertising: Daniel Dishaw, Editor, <i>OHS Bulletin</i> , 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2 416-226-9011 <a href="mailto:ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca">ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca</a> <a href="http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca">www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca</a>
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