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*Preserving Oakville's  
Historical Heritage  
Since 1953*  
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THE OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012



Volume 46: Number 3

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Saturday, September 29th, 2012 Doors Open
- Saturday, September 29th, 2012 Harvest Festival Bake Sale – Thomas House,
Lakeside Park 11AM – 4PM
- Friday, December 7th, 2012 Members Christmas Party, OHS office – 110
King Street 6:00pm to 9:00pm

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

2012

- Wednesday, October 17th, 2012 Women and the War of 1812: Speaker Cheryl
MacDonald
- Wednesday, November 21st, 2012 The Home Children (with focus on those who
came over from the Dr. Barnardo Institute).
Speaker Elaine Guther

All programs will be held at St. John's United Church and begin at 7:30pm.

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HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS AND GHOST WALKS

Planning your fall events – relatives/friends visiting?
Check our website at www.oakvillehistory.org for the 2012 Schedule.

COVER PICTURE: George Chisholm Jr.'s sword
Advertising insert artwork and compilation by Carolyn Naismith.



Atex Printing & Graphics -Proudly putting quality images on paper! - 2070 Speers
Road #1, Oakville, 905-465-3220 <http://atexdigitalprint.com/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Traditionally, fall tends to be a bit quieter for the Society but, while discussing this with some of the other Directors today, it seems that this may no longer be the case. Several events and initiatives are planned:

Wendy Belcher is gearing up for our very popular Ghost Walks. There are 28 of them scheduled for the month of October. Wendy has a very dedicated group of volunteers running these walks but there is always room for more help. Wendy and the Bronte Grandmothers for Africa are also running a special series of our Main Street Walk to raise funds for the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Doors Open is set for Saturday 29 September. This year the event is for one day only. For further information, visit www.oakville.ca/museum. Andrea Stewart is our representative on the Doors Open Committee and she could also use your volunteer help. A bake sale will be held at the Thomas House at the same time.

Two excellent speakers are booked for the fall. On 17 October Cheryl MacDonald will speak about Women and the War of 1812. On 21 November, Elaine Guther will speak about the Home Children with a focus on those who came to Canada from the Dr. Barnardo Institute. Both events will be held at St John's United Church starting at 7:30. As usual, there is no admission charge and the events are open to the public.

We are also very pleased to announce a revamp of our website. Mr. Yacoub Husseini has offered to update the website and will be presenting some suggestions to the Board in October.

I would also like to thank Susan Wells for agreeing to be our new Vice President. Jim Young remains our Secretary and *we are still looking for a new Treasurer*. Please contact me if you have any suggestions.

I hope to see you at one or more of our events.

Oakville Historical Society E-mail
info@oakvillehistory.org

Archive Hours * Tues & Thurs –
1PM to 4:30PM at 110 King Street.

George Chisholm
905-842-5385
georgechisholm@sympatico.ca

Chisholm Veterans of the War of 1812

George Chisholm Sr. was born 19 July 1752 in the Parish of Croy, Scotland, very near the Culloden Battlefield. He was the sixth child (fifth son) of John Chisholm and Janet MacGlashan. In August 1773 he set off for North America on the Pearl, leaving Fort William and arriving at the Port of New York six weeks later.



George Chisholm Sr.
1752-1842

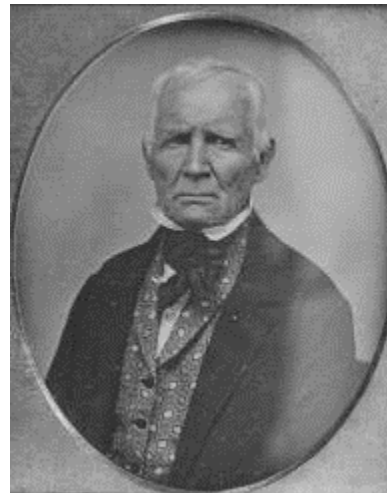
He had not long been settled in Kortright Township near the Head of the East Branch of the Delaware River in the Province of New York when the American Revolutionary War started. He joined Brigadier Barry St Leger and participated in the battle at Oriskany, New York, on 6 August 1777, following which he joined General “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne. He was captured at Sugar Loaf near Fort Ticonderoga, escaped and made his way to New York City where he married Barbara McKenzie. Their first two children, Janet and Mary, were born there. When New York was evacuated in 1783, he was a Port Roseway Associate and

helped settle what is now Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The next four children, John, James, William and Barbara, were born there. Conditions were not good in Shelburne and in 1791 the family headed west to the Niagara Peninsula in Upper Canada where his older brother, John, had already settled. They were among those who signed the Address of Welcome to Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe dated at Niagara 24 February 1792. By 1793 the family had moved to property in East Flamborough (now Burlington, Ontario) George Sr. and his partner Charles King had purchased. The last two children, Christy and Nancy, were born there.

For several years George Sr. had held a commission as captain in the 2nd Regiment of York Militia. The area around the head of Lake Ontario was part of the District of York at the time. At the outbreak of war in 1812, George Sr. marched off to Niagara with his sons but was not permitted to remain as he was too old (he was 60). At the threat of another invasion the next year, George Sr. stood ready again. “In the month of July 1813” wrote the major commanding the 2nd Regiment of York Militia, “when the Enemy’s fleet appeared off Burlington Heights – he again shouldered his musket, headed

a number of Volunteers and marched them to Burlington where he remained until the fleet disappeared.” He died on his farm on the north shore of Burlington Bay on 5 December 1842 at the age of 90. His wife had died in 1824.

His three remaining sons also held commissions in the same regiment. John, the eldest, was commissioned Captain of the 1st Flank Company on 10 May 1811. William was commissioned Ensign on 8 May 1811. George Jr. was a sergeant in the fall of 1812 and was gazetted Ensign on Christmas Day 1812. All three served extensively in the conflict. Their first action was at the capture of the fort at Detroit in August 1812 under General Brock. Some 3500 Americans were taken prisoner by a force of about 300 regular soldiers, 400 militiamen and, about 600 natives. William was chosen to replace the American flag with the Union Jack over the captured fort.



John Chisholm
1784-1861



William Chisholm
1788-1842

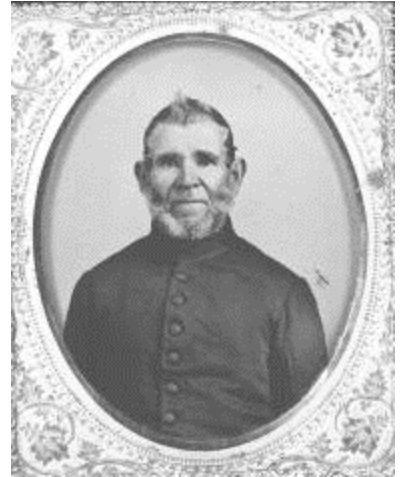
On the morning of the Battle of Queenston Heights (13 October 1812) the 1st Flank Company was stationed on the brow of the escarpment firing down on the invaders when General Brock was mortally wounded. Debatable legend has it that Brock’s last words were “Push on, brave York Volunteers”. The battle was fought over the property of George Sr.’s brother, John, who had been granted Lot 2 Niagara Township as a Loyalist. All three sons went on to become Lieutenant Colonels and commanded regiments of the Gore Militia which replaced the York Militia in 1818.

John had various businesses in Burlington and was Collector of Customs at Burlington Bay. He married Sarah Davis, daughter of William Davis and Hannah Philipse, and had seven children. They are both buried at St Luke’s Cemetery in Burlington.

William also had various businesses and founded what is now the Town of Oakville, Ontario, in 1827. In 1812 he married Rebecca Silverthorn, daughter of John Silverthorn and Esther Corwin. They had eleven children. Both are buried at Oakville Cemetery.

George Jr. took over the family farm on the north shore of Burlington Bay but lost it soon after his father's death in 1842. He had pledged it as security for bank loans obtained by his brother William for a power project. When the Oakville Hydraulic Company failed, the banks foreclosed on the property.

I am very proud to own my great-great grandfather's sword and musket. Family legend has it that he carried the sword at Queenston Heights. The musket was presented to him by Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, for his services during the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. While carrying the musket at the Battle of Montgomery's Tavern a rebel shot at him. The musket ball is still embedded in the stock.



George Chisholm Jr.
1792 - 1872

George Jr. married Eliza McCarter, daughter of Oziah McCarter and Abigail Land. George Jr. and Eliza had seven children and are buried at St Paul's Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Burlington.



Chisholm Family Sword

George Chisholm

Ed. Note: To differentiate the two Georges, Sr. & Jr. are used in the article, although not necessarily used by family.

AROUND THE SOCIETY



Membership Report – August 2012

Our total membership year-to-date numbers 212, including twenty-three new members so far this year. Welcome to our new members - we look forward to your participation.

Jackie Bennett, Lorraine Bird, Kathy Cunningham, Don Decoursey and Lena Ruehle, Sara Douglas-Murray, Ross Erdis, Dave Gittings, Scott Hannah, Reiner Jaakson, Wendy Janisse, Averil and Joe Jany, Andrew and Carol Kennedy, Doug Mabee, Evelyn Ortwein, Alyssa Reynolds, Irene and Bruce Richards, Linda Rothnay, Karen and Bruce Slayer, Yvonne Verlinden, Ann Weeks, Stanley and Betty Yeo, Eileen Za, Steve Zazulyk.

However, there remain some forty-four existing members who have not renewed so far this year. If you have overlooked your renewal, please let us know that you intend to remain on our membership list.

Andrea Stewart

If you wish to submit photos for the Print newsletter, please ensure they are **high resolution** – not email quality. Otherwise they will not reproduce well. Editor.

Solution to “The Way Things Were” – December 2011

The picture was taken on the west side of the “Sixteen Mile Creek” and shows the ceremony for the opening of the Aberdeen Bridge in 1895. This was a swing bridge, unlike the solid structure that now overlooks the “16” on Lakeshore Road. The stone building to the right is the “Granary”, built in 1855 by Peter McDougald and William Romain and, the only stone warehouse of its type surviving on its original site in Ontario.

Books For Sale

Available for gift giving, for the history buff in the family or, just yourself!

Oakville & the Sixteen	<i>Members - \$35.00</i> <i>Non-Members - \$50.00</i>
Oakville: A Small Town	<i>Members - \$10.00</i> <i>Non-Members - \$12.00</i>
Oakville Harbour & Bronte Harbour	<i>Members - \$10.00</i> <i>Non-Members - \$12.00</i>
Oakville: Street Names and Landscapes	<i>Members - \$35.00</i> <i>Non-Members - \$42.00</i>
Halton’s Heritage: Wm. Halton & Halton County (New this year)	<i>Hard Cover - \$55.00</i> <i>Soft Cover - \$42.00</i>
Ever Faithful	<i>\$25.00</i>
A History of the Lorne Scots	<i>Members - \$10.00</i> <i>Non-Members - \$12.00</i>
Old Oakville	<i>\$25.00</i>

All prices quoted include taxes.

Just a phone call away – we will happily meet with you at our offices when convenient to you. Cash or cheque only. No credit cards please.

Mary Davidson

Doors Open Celebrates Five Years in Oakville

Doors Open Days provides free access to buildings not normally open to the public. The first Doors Open Day took place in France in 1984, and the concept has spread to other places in Europe, North America, Australia and elsewhere. Doors Open Days promotes architecture and built heritage to as wide an audience as possible within and beyond the country's borders. It is an opportunity to discover hidden architectural gems and to see behind doors that are rarely open to the public for free.

In 2011 Oakville sites experienced 7,000 visits, thirty-five percent coming from out-of-town; the remaining sixty-five percent from Oakville. The event is managed by a committee comprised of non-profit partners from across the community and supported by over one hundred volunteers. The small budget for the event is financed by The Town of Oakville and generous sponsors from the community. This year we are pleased to thank the following sponsors: Revera Retirement Living (representing Churchill Place, Trafalgar Lodge and The Kensington), Strickland Mateljan Design Associates, Accountant Charles Havill, Olsen Europe, L'Occitane, Flower Duo and Fortino's.

Our fifth annual Doors Open Oakville will take place **Saturday, September 29**. Details of the event will be found in our brochure or in our ads in the Oakville Beaver.

If you think you would like to be involved in hosting this exciting event, or if you would like further details of our participating sites, please contact **Andrea Stewart** at the Oakville Historical Society (905) 844-2695.

Andrea Stewart

Thomas House

An incredibly hot and humid summer seemed to affect the turnout of visitors to the Thomas House this year. So far (mid way through August) - 2249 .

On the bright side however, we have some excellent new interpreters who gave of their time – Yvonne Verlinden, Hilary Scott, Shona Rochefort, Eileen Za, and Elizabeth Pereira – thank you ladies!

Of course, we also thank our regular interpreters and I want to name you because you are the back-bone of our organization –Wendy Belcher, Phillip Brimacombe,

Heather Davis, Carol Gall, Dave Hutchison, Madlyn Kayer, Pat Mack, Linda North, Margaret Simmonds, and Lindsay Thompson.

We still have the **Harvest Bake Sale** to come on Saturday September 29th, with the Thomas House open for that one day only, to coincide with Doors Open, this year in Oakville. The call goes out to all who bake, preserve - send us your cakes, pies, cookies, scones, breads, jams, jellies as these are greatly appreciated by our customers on the day – we sold out by 2pm last year! We will accept your goodies either on the Friday 28th, or early Saturday morning. The sale is from 10am to 4pm.

Investigation #1

“Things that go bump in the night” department. Well, actually 3 pm or thereabouts on a scorching hot day in July! Three women came into the Thomas House and were standing in the centre of the room. Suddenly one of the women moved quickly to the door and asked if there was a “presence” in the house. I had never heard that mentioned. She said it was a male and not too happy that people were in the house. Also that he had died in the house and was connected with the number 12. The second woman said that she had heard something loud as well, as did the first woman. They said that they weren’t frightened but were more comfortable by the door. I told them I would pass on the information as it’s the first I’d heard of anyone here!

Investigation #2

Another day in July brought us a phone message from a resident on Chisholm Street. Their neighbour was having his driveway done. He had removed the surface of the drive and underneath, he found two hidden secret rooms. Question was, could these rooms have something to do with the Underground Railroad or rum running in Oakville’s past?”

Society members Susan Wells, Mary Davidson and, Margaret Godefroy, jumped into the car and drove across the bridge to Chisholm St. and, at that moment the owner of the driveway was at his front door. When we questioned about the rooms, he gave us a small smile and said, “coal bunker”. The concrete-lined hole right up against the foundation of the house, built in about 1960 (although it is an old street so might have had another structure on it previously), had a blocked-up hole that gave access to the basement furnace. We all had a good laugh!

Mary Davidson

We've been **Tweeted**: "Entripy, Shelli Brar: "Just took a tour of Thomas House in downtown Oakville. Loved seeing how people lived in the 1800's." <http://t.co/6HdXKezA>

Society Offices

We are continuing to open the offices and museum of the Oakville Historical Society on King Street, from 1:30 to 4:00pm every third Sunday in the month. We would be delighted to welcome you to our beautiful headquarters by the Volunteers' Fountain if you are taking a stroll in the vicinity.

Phil Brimacombe, Stewart Sherriff

Please take time to look at our advertiser's insert.

Their sponsorship has been the reason we have our COLOUR December edition. It would be appreciated if you were to stop by and thank them.

Oakville Historical Society

Have you ever wondered about the history of the OHS building? For the long term members, you lived it but, for those just starting out, here is a brief history of "the Cottages".

In 1953, sisters Dr. Juliet Chisholm and Hazel Mathews left the Customs House at Erchless to move into cottages they designed themselves on the same property. Each lady had definite ideas of structure - e.g. Juliet wished hers to have 'Normandy' floors, hence the stone tile flooring (she had served overseas with the Canadian Army in WWII.) There were two heating systems: forced air and hot water.

In 1992 the Oakville Historical Society signed an agreement with the Town of Oakville and took over these properties. Changes were made using wreckers' materials to keep a 'vintage' look and the two cottages were incorporated into one building.

Fifteen members of the Society were involved in the renovation over a period of three years.

Garden Guerillas

Averil and Joe Jany – and their daughter Susan, along with Margaret Godefroy have been doing great work on our jungle of a yard at the Offices. Things are being cut back, plants thinned out and moved, weeds sent packing, order is returning – now we are just waiting for the temperature to go down so we can introduce some new plants. The hot and humid weather has been a bit of a drawback this summer, so we are hoping come September we will see more of you out on Friday mornings at 9am. We will be calling for a crew to help clear leaves in the fall (yes, it IS coming).

Also, a big Thank You to Jamie Macrae who fixed the broken seat on the picnic table at the side of the Offices – it is a lovely spot now for a coffee or lunch.



Susan, Averil and Joe Jany
Working the “Secret Garden”

Mary Davidson

THE WAY THINGS WERE



1. Who is this public figure?
2. What office did he hold?
3. What were the circumstances regarding this photograph?

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**The Oakville Historical Society: 110 King Street, Oakville**

**Archive Hours: Tuesday & Thursday \* 1:00 to 4:30PM**

**Tel: (905) 844-2695 Fax: (905) 844-7380 Website: [www.oakvillehistory.org](http://www.oakvillehistory.org)**

**Postal Address: P.O. Box 69501, 109 Thomas Street, Oakville, Ontario L6J 7R4**