

Oakville Historical
Society
since 1953



Historical Society News

www.oakvillehistory.org



Christena's Story

Volume 53 Number 2

June 2019

Speakers

21st November, Ray Peacock

Ray Peacock will be talking about "The Journeys of the Polar Explorers: Shackleton, Scott, Amundsen and Franklin." The endurance of all these men provides the background for Ray's presentation on the first successful crossing of the Arctic through the North West Passage.

Speakers Nights are held at St. John's Church, at the corner of Dunn and Randall Streets at 7:30 pm. Enter from Randall. All welcome, donations accepted and refreshments served.

Mayor's Picnic

9th June noon - 4:30, Lakeside Park, Front St.

This is a great day out for the whole family, with dancing, children's games with prizes and the Oakville Wind Orchestra. Formed in 1866, the OWO is Canada's oldest continuously-operating community concert band. We encourage you to wear attire that would have been appropriate 100 years ago.

OHS Summer Hours

In addition to our regular hours on Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 - 4:30 pm, our offices at 110 King Street are open during the months of July and August
Sundays 1:30 - 4 pm



Professor Mark Rector (above left) tries out a new-fangled smart phone (the one in his hand not the wooden-encased one at front) whilst signing copies of his book, *OH CANADA! Our Home and Inventive Land*. A very entertaining speaker, Mr. Rector showed the attentive audience at our May Speaker's Night a copy of a letter from Elisha Gray to Alexander Graham Bell wherein he stated the inventor of the telephone is Bell, not Gray. What else did Canadians invent besides peanut butter, Wonderbra, basketball, Pabulum and the goalie mask? Read the book to find out. Or better yet, sign up Mr. Rector to tell you himself.
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A note from the Society *President*

My sincere thanks to all those who made the annual yard sale such a huge success. Jim Young and Marianne Hawthorne were not available this year so a group led by Mary Davidson took it on. The weather co-operated and there was a great turnout. Our thanks as well to Julian Kingston and the Oakville Museum for allowing us to stage sale items in the Coach House. Special thanks to Walter Moran and his group of friends who moved everything from storage and to Jamie Macrae for delivering items sold. Some items were sold on kijiji.ca and some are still listed there. We made over \$4000 and still counting, for the Society. It's also great that there is very little left to store for next year.

We're very sorry to announce the passing of long-time volunteer and former board member Evelyn (Savage) Bullied at the age of 102.

Our thanks to the Estate of former Society Treasurer Walter Jennings for a donation in his memory.

I would like to welcome our two summer students, Allison Headrick and Macy Armstrong. We think it's a very appropriate time to get our written documents digitized as the younger generation can't read cursive writing.

I'd like to congratulate long-time Oakville Museum employee Susan Crane on her retirement. Susan started as a Society employee in the 1980s.

The Oakville Museum is pleased to announce that it has finally received funding to do some work at the Coach House and make it useable space. Work should start next spring.

The Annual Mayor's Picnic, run by our Events Committee led by Marianne Hawthorne, is set for the 9th of June. We're very pleased that Carol Gall will have some new activities available for children at the picnic and at the Thomas House through the season. Music, dancers, (your own) food, a view over the lake, etc etc. What could make a better day? Hope to see you there. George Chisholm, President



When Evelyn Bullied was a toddler, her younger brothers needed a child's seat at the table and Ev was left without a highchair. Her neighbour kindly gave her one that had been made by his family. At left is Ev aged 101, standing beside the highchair given to her by the James Wesley Hill family who grew strawberries on their farm by the Savage family home on Maple Grove Drive.

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Christena's Story

Story told to and written by Patricia Stephenson

My life began on a farm on Ninth Line at Snider's Corners, a farm we rented and the place where my siblings and I were born. I was the middle child of seven children born to Agnes and Joseph Forster.

When I was five years old, Mother gathered up us kids and we moved into a stucco house on Sixth Line, behind Munn's United Church. The year was 1931. With the help from Mothers' Allowance, my mother managed to feed us well and pay seven dollars a month rent for the house. The only source of heat was by wood stove and our source of lighting was by oil lamp. Our homework had to be done right after school while there was still daylight.

Although we lived next door to Munn's United Church, our family worshiped at Knox Sixteen Presbyterian Church on Dundas Street. It was a long walk for us from where we lived at Munn's Corners – we always hoped that someone would stop and give us a ride.

The first school I attended was Munn's School, a one-room brick schoolhouse located on the south side of Dundas Street between Sixth and Seventh Lines. I recall Mrs. Mannell, a kind teacher who taught me and all six of my siblings (four brothers and two sisters). Yet my fondest memories of Munn's are of the friendships during those years. Mary Hoey and I became life-long friends.

As children, we used to enjoy swimming in King's Hole (a section of the Sixteen Mile Creek). In the winter, we skated along the creek.

In 1935 Mother bought a Ford automobile and learned to drive. By this time, all of us children were attending school and Mother began to work at Bradley's General Store on Seventh Line (now Trafalgar Road). She also helped Dr. Bremner,

assisting with home births. And later, she worked at Jacob's Jam Factory on Randall Street and at Beardmore's Factory, a dehydration plant.

At age eleven I began babysitting for the Jennings family on William Street. During this time, I lived with my employer, an army captain and his wife, a nurse at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, and their two young children. My new living arrangement made it necessary for me to bid farewell to Munn's School, and in the fall of 1937 I began attending Central School.

The Jennings family treated me well, and I became quite fond of them. I joined the family at meal times as if I were one of their own. I'd bathe the children, dress them in their jammies and put them to bed. Sunday was my day off. It was also the day when I could visit my mother. Sometimes the children would cry when it was time for me to leave for the day. Once my mother moved to Brant Street, and when the weather was good, I took the children with me on these visits to see her.

I handed my babysitting earnings over to my mother to help her out. It was my contribution to our family expenses. I think most of my siblings also contributed when they could.

When I was fifteen, I began to work as a cashier at Loblaws on Colborne Street. To be employed during school hours, the labour law required that I get a work permit. I was able to obtain one from Police Chief Kerr.

Mother purchased the two-story white clapboard house at 21 Brant Street from Nellie Hughes in 1941. She paid one thousand dollars in cash! It was necessary at that time for my brothers Bruce and Don to have title to the house. Six years later, to make things right, they sold the house to Mom for "love + \$1."

As a young woman during the war years and afterwards, I loved attending the dances held on weekends at Victoria Hall on Reynolds Street, the Royal Canadian Legion (then on Colborne Street), and at Ortona Barracks. Admittance into the Ortona Barracks dances depended on sponsorship by a community group. Entertainment was largely homegrown.

It wasn't proper in those days, according to my mother, to be chatting with war veterans on the street. Instead, my mother encouraged us to invite them into our home for a meal. On one occasion, a veteran from Saskatchewan stayed at our home for the entire weekend. Several months later, to our surprise, a turkey was delivered to our home for Christmas as a thank-you from the serviceman.

The year was 1948 when Bill, my husband-to-be and I had our first date – and what a spectacular date it was! Our friend, Flying Officer Ken Marlatt (a flying instructor with the Royal Canadian Air Force), asked us if we might be interested in taking a flight to Ohio in his five-seater plane. Well, of course we were! With friends Evelyn and Art Bullied as our chaperones, we flew from Hamilton Airport to Dayton, Ohio to watch the Dayton Air Show.

Bill and I married on July 1, 1950. A year later, we were the first buyers of a plot of land on Maurice Drive and began the ambitious project of building a house. We hired experienced builders to help us, and received an overwhelming amount of assistance from family and friends. We lived with my mother until our house was partially built.

Then we decided to move into the basement of our new home while it was still under construction. We lived in that basement for four years! It had been our dream to build the house, and once completed, we enjoyed living there together for many years.

Over the years I held a few jobs, including work at the Oakville Basket Company, yet I had a yearning to go back to school. So, at age thirty, I enrolled at a school for hairdressing in Hamilton and became a hair stylist. I continued to enjoy this work until retirement.

My husband Bill and I had sixty-seven wonderful years together, and I take comfort in the memories of the life that we shared. Family, nieces and nephews have always played an important role in my life, and today, they continue to take good care of me.

Cover photo: Christena and Bill c1950

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Bronte War Memorial Cairn

By Phyllis Smith, volunteer Historian, Bronte Historical Society

If you've ever driven through Bronte, a small stone cairn may have caught your eye at the northeast corner of Bronte and Lakeshore Roads. It's tucked away in a tiny green space, dwarfed and diminished by all the new construction underway.

The Bronte Gore Park began life in the late 1800s as a long narrow triangle that appears on the 1845 map of the village of Bronte. Adjustments to the angles of the roads over the years created the "gore" or leftover triangular bit of land. It was too small to build on but served as a small playground for the Fresh Air Home in the early 1900s. Then in the 1940s, the Bronte Horticultural Society took possession of the land, took measures to beautify it, and then deeded it back to Bronte Village.

In 1956, the Bronte Legion commissioned a Dutch immigrant stone mason to construct the cairn of fieldstone gathered from a farm near Ospringe. Jan Breeman, and his brothers Johan and Henk, crafted a cairn that was similar to the HMCS Burlington Bell Cairn that is currently standing on Lakeshore Road at the foot of Elizabeth Street.

An Oakville Record-Star report from July 26th, 1956 describes the dedication of the stone cairn.

A plaque that read, "TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN HONOUR OF THOSE WHO SERVED KING AND COUNTRY 1914 — 1918 1939 — 1945" was unveiled. Silver Cross Mothers laid wreaths on behalf of all mothers who had lost children in the service of their country. Fully half the population of Bronte, or about two thousand people, came to the dedication, including Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts and Brownies. Several bands played and the firemen paraded to and from the tiny park.

As the years passed, the old stone cairn fell into disrepair, vandals damaged the stonework, and the plaque disappeared.

A new, much larger, pink cenotaph was dedicated in 1983 at Chris Volkes Park, which is on the south side of Lakeshore Road, near Bronte Harbour Yacht Club. The new memorial park has the space and the gravitas to handle contemporary Remembrance Day services. The once-proud memorial was almost forgotten.

The cairn in its tiny green space became less noticeable as the mall parking lot and the gas station pushed ever closer to it. However, a local businessman and member of the Bronte Legion, Bill Morgan, spearheaded a drive to restore the historic cairn to its original glory.

The Bronte Legion and the Town Parks and Recreation Department partnered on the project and found a budget of \$1500 to do the work.



Silver Cross Mother, Mrs. Nettie Wilkinson laid a wreath for mothers every year at the cairn until her death in 1975. Photo: Marsha Waldie

Summer in *Bronte*

The Bronte Historical Society has a summer line-up of events that is not to be missed! Our beautiful lakeside farmhouse is located at 7 West River Street in Bronte Village, Oakville, Ontario.

We are ready to welcome visitors from near and far when Sovereign House opens to the public on the 29th of May. Open 1 – 4 pm on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday.

The popular Art on the Bluffs series runs from May through October. Check the schedule online for exhibiting artists.

16th June – Mary Murray’s Tea on the Bluffs. Join us for a cuppa!

28th September – We are participating in Doors Open Halton Region.

9th October – Trafalgar Day.

And we end the season with a Christmas Sale on 16th November. We look forward to seeing you at Sovereign House in Bronte this year.



MORGAN'S GREEN free-standing stone

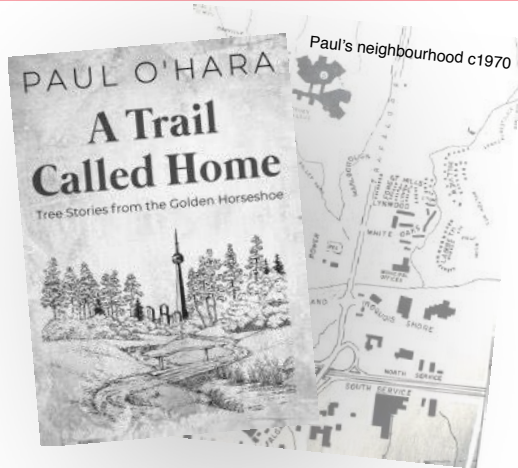
But who would restore the cairn with the same care as its original creator? Why, Jan Breeman, of course! Since retired and living north of Clappison’s Corners, Breeman and his brother Henk, who was still living in Bronte, returned to revitalize the cairn. The missing plaque was replaced. And the rejuvenated memorial was dedicated anew on 1st July, 1996.

The original plaque that had gone missing mysteriously found its way home several years after the rededication. The story is that a UPS driver found the plaque on MacDonald Road in Oakville. How it got there is anyone’s guess. The driver passed it on to someone who took it to the Bronte Legion for identification. The plaque is now living its second life in the Club Room at the Bronte Legion.

The next time you drive past Bronte and Lakeshore Roads, glance to the northeast corner and admire this historic cairn. And look for the free-standing stone near it. There’s a plaque on the stone that reads, “MORGAN’S GREEN” in recognition of Bill Morgan’s dedication to saving a sliver of Bronte history.



Bronte Harbour as depicted by artist Sabine Frisch



A Trail Called Home *Tree Stories from the Golden Horseshoe* by Paul O'Hara.

Available at Indigo, Amazon and Costco

Paul O'Hara is a field botanist, landscape designer and native plant gardening expert. His childhood home was near Oakville's Morrison Valley Trail South. His explorations of the many valleys and trails of the Golden Horseshoe grew into a love of natural landscapes and all that they hold. Many readers will recognize the creeks and forests he describes.

This newly-released book is a study of not only trees, but the people who lived with and changed the plants and land they live on.

"O'Hara's gonzo natural history is part memoir, part elegy, part guide. The result is informative, inspiring, entertaining and often surprising." Gerry Waldron, biologist and author of *Trees of the Carolinian Forest*.



The Oakville Historical Society recently partnered with the Oakville Museum on a tour of Oakville/St. Mary's Cemetery at Lyon's Lane.

The headstone shown here (front and back) is unique because it is not stone at all but zinc, a substance, as you can see, is much more resistant to the

abrasive effects of weather. This marker placed about 135 years ago is still entirely readable, unlike soft sandstone which does not stand up well.

We also study the symbols carved in stone, such as the weeping willow tree for grief and lambs for children. The deceased here had a connection, perhaps through her husband, to the Masonic Lodge. The banner indicates victory or triumph.

For future cemetery walks check out — www.oakvillehistory.org or www.oakville.ca/museum



Ghost Walks

16th - 30th October 2019
OHS Offices, 110 King St.
Book and pay on line at
www.oakvillehistory.org



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For what Ails you

Helps for Housekeepers

For Fainting.

Loosen the clothing, bathe the temples with cold water, admit plenty of fresh air, and apply a hot water bag to the feet.

Nose Bleed.

Roll a piece of soft paper hard and place between the upper lip and gums and in a few minutes the bleeding will stop.

For Weak Women.

Vinol, the great cod liver and iron tonic, without the oily, fishy grease of cod liver oil and emulsions will make them healthy and strong. In hundreds of cases where cod liver oil and emulsions have failed, Vinol has succeeded.

Hoarseness.

Beat the white of an egg, add the juice of a lemon and sweeten with white sugar. Take a teaspoonful at a time.

For Sea and Car Sickness.

It is said that eating salted pop corn as soon as one begins to feel sick will immediately relieve sea or car sickness. It is a simple remedy and well worth trying.

For Dyspeptics.

Diet, bathing and exercise should be well considered by the dyspeptic. No hard and fast rules can be laid down, as what will suit one, will aggravate another, but in any case, Vinol will prove the greatest aid in building up and strengthening the tired, worn-out digestive organs, and restoring them to a normal condition.

For Skin Eruptions.

Put two tablespoonfuls of Epsom salts into a cup of boiling water, let stand until dissolved, then apply to the face, letting it dry in, doing it as often as possible until the eruptions disappear.

Cure for Rheumatism.

A year or so ago, Lord Anson, of London, is said to have paid a physician \$1500 for a recipe for a cure for rheumatism, for the sole purpose of making it public. It is as follows:

Sulphur, one ounce; cream of tartar one ounce; rhubarb one-half ounce; gum guaiacum one dram; honey sixteen ounces.

A tablespoonful of this is taken night and morning in a tumblerful of white wine and water, or lemonade.

Neuralgia

will often yield to a good dose of castor oil which thoroughly cleanses the system, after local applications fail.

For Pulmonary Troubles—

Weak Lungs

take Vinol. Vinol contains all the soothing, healing, curative elements of cod liver oil (without oil), aided by the blood-making and strengthening properties of tonic iron.

Decay of the Teeth.

Decay in the teeth is caused by a minute germ that attacks the tooth structure wherever it finds lodgment.

Antiseptic cleanliness of the mouth and teeth is the great remedy. The germicidal power of Paxtine is sufficient to destroy these germs of decay, and keep the teeth and mouth in a clean and healthy condition. Paxtine Toilet Antiseptic may be obtained at any drug store, or sent post-paid, large box, 50 cents, by The Paxton Toilet Co., 221 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.

Vinol Cod Liver and Iron Tonic, was available in the first half of the last century.

The preparation claimed to cure colds, coughs, delicate ailing children, bronchitis, grippe, catarrh, anaemia, constipation and etc.

What isn't mentioned is that the tonic contained 14% alcohol.

Excerpts from Vinol booklet are shown at left and below.

To Run Ribbon in Corset Covers.

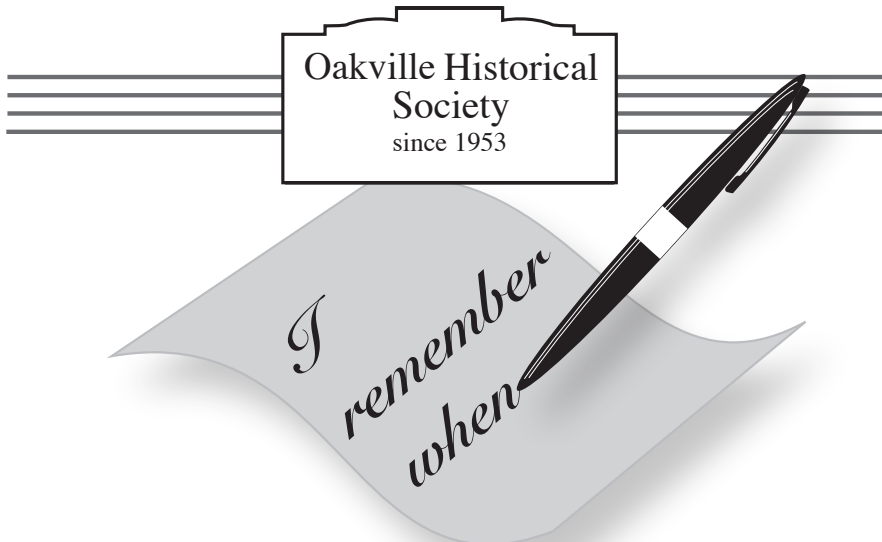
When removing ribbon from soiled corset covers, fasten a piece of twine on one end and pull through. Take off the ribbon, leaving the string in the corset cover while it is being laundered, then by tying the ribbon on the end again it is easily pulled back into place.



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Do You Have a Story to Tell?

If you would like to share your Oakville story, we'd love to hear from you.

The Oakville Historical Society (OHS) is collecting "Oakville Memories." These stories will be posted on the OHS website, and may appear on displays and in OHS publications (such as the newsletter).

Your stories of the past keep our town's history alive for future generations.

Your story may be submitted in writing. Or if you prefer to tell your story orally, an OHS volunteer can interview you. To arrange an interview, please email information@oakvillehistory.org.

Please indicate "Story to Tell" in the subject line.

Interviews may be conducted at the OHS office or if you prefer, we can come to you.

Summer Students



I am an Archive Intern working at the OHS from May to August with the help of the Youth Canada Works grant. I have just finished my first year at Queen's University in the Concurrent Education program. I am a History major, studying to become a high school teacher in the subjects of History and English. I especially love ancient and Canadian history and I am excited to gain experience working with primary and secondary historical sources while learning more about my hometown, Oakville! Allison Headrick (I)

I'm a summer student-archivist, currently majoring in History, minoring in Cinema Studies and English, at the University of Toronto. Naturally, as a history buff, I have spent a considerable amount of energy visiting historical sites; my favourite thus far has been Eggenberg Palace in Graz, Austria. However, my favourite historical period is 18th century France. I'm also a cinephile through and through. If I could live in one film's historical period, it'd be the Coen Brothers' Inside Llewyn Davis (1960's Greenwich Village!). As a long-time resident of Oakville, I'm thrilled to be here to sink my teeth into our history!

Macy Armstrong (r)

Membership

We are pleased to welcome the following new members since our last report: Ms. Liz Lloyd, Mr. Pierre Poussin, Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Diane Evans, Halton Regional Heritage Services, Mr. and Mrs. Ray and Karen Spence. We hope to see our new members at our upcoming events.

Andrea Stewart, Memberships.

Thomas House

The Thomas House opened its doors on the May 18th long weekend, welcoming more than 250 visitors. People from different parts of the world dropped by to learn some of Oakville's history. To some visitors, the 190-year-old home was a reminder of the stark differences between our modern-day living and that of our ancestors. A few adults commented on the similarity between the Thomas House and their grandparents' house in the country. Children seemed drawn to the sleeping baby in the bedside cradle. Everyone enjoyed the warmth and smell of the log fire.

Perhaps you too would enjoy an afternoon this summer at the Thomas family home. Call 905 844-2695 if you would like to volunteer at the Thomas House.

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The *way* things were...



Do you know?

The name of this shop?

Where it was located?

What object in the photo is significant to OHS today?

Look for the answer in our next issue!



From March 2019 The *way* things were...

Lower Middle Road ran east-west, north of the village of Oakville. A stretch of the QEW was built over it (and officially opened in 1939 by Queen Elizabeth, the mother of the current Queen Elizabeth II). There is a short piece of it remaining just west of Ford and Royal Windsor Drives.

Archive Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 pm
Third Sunday of the month 12:30 to 4:00 pm

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