

# Trafalgar Township Historical Society

"Documenting, celebrating and preserving the agricultural heritage of North Oakville"

## Summer 2015 Newsletter

### Breaking: New TTHS Acquisition!

The World War II Honour Roll of Palermo Volunteers that originally held a place of honour in the Palermo Hall has been returned to the Palermo community by Halton Region Museum in 2015. It will hang in the stairwell of the old Palermo Schoolhouse under the care of the Trafalgar Township Historical Society. It names the volunteers of the Palermo community who fought "For King and Country", 1939-1949. The document is illuminated, beautifully decorated with the symbols of Canada and pays great honour to those Palermo men. [See the digital record for this artifact on OurOntario for more information.](#)



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#### Stay in Touch with the TTHS Board of Directors

- President [Michael Reid](#) at 905-257-3558
- Secretary [Michelle Knoll](#) at 905-617-0068
- Membership [Jane Watt](#) at 905-281-1701
- Treasurer [Mario Testa](#) at 905-334-4322
- Archivist [Ross Wark](#) at 905-844-1677



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### Built Heritage Property Research and Updates

#### ❖ 1187 Burnhamthorpe Road East

The TTHS recently received a request from the Town of Oakville and ATA Architects Inc. for information on the former owners of 1187 Burnhamthorpe Road. A little digging through the Society's records has revealed much about the property at Con 2 NDS, pt. Lot 9, and its former owners:

According to land registry records, in 1810 **Solomon Day** received 200 acres from the Crown. Day is not listed in the 1816 and 1823 assessment records, so he may have been only the landowner rather than an occupant.

In 1828, **William Bowman Secord** owned 100 acres of the property; Secord was born on February 4, 1799, in Port Dalhousie, Grantham Township, the son of Loyalist **Solomon Secord**. William married **Sarah Shain** (b. November 6, 1803, in Bertie Township, d. August 4, 1885, in Toronto) on February 14, 1842, in Toronto Township. The 1851 Trafalgar census shows William B. Secord and Sarah living in a 1-and-a-half storey frame home on property with several children. Upon his death in 1868, Secord's land was divided between two of his sons.

**William Secord, Jr.** (son of Secord and **Mary Phoenix**) received the western 50 acres of the property, while **Edwin H. Secord** (b. July 22, 1845, in Trafalgar, d. 1921 in Waterloo, son of Secord and Shain) held the eastern 50 acres, with the agreement that Edwin would give William, Jr. one quarter of the fruit produced on the property for the first 5 years.

In 1879, Edwin and his wife sold his property at 1187 Burnhamthorpe Road to **Alvin Griffin**, who in turn sold it to **Edward Fish** in 1883. Fish owned the property until 1919. Records show that **Wallace Joseph Whistance-Smith** received the property under the Veterans Land Act, and owned the property from 1946 to 1969.



#### ❖ 2347 Royal Windsor Drive

Though the house at 2347 Royal Windsor Drive, formerly home to the **Winter**, **Ross**, and **Neilsen** families, was demolished last year, research and writing still continues on the historical plaque to be erected onsite by the Town of Oakville. TTHS has provided research and editing input throughout the development of the plaque text, ensuring that this commemoration will accurately reflect the story of each family and the Village of Sheridan. [At left: House at 2347 Royal Windsor Drive in 2014, now demolished. Photo courtesy of Oakville City Planning Services].



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### Newly Added to OurOntario by TTHS



This photograph, showing the Palermo Public School A.M. Kindergarten Class of 1967-68, has been added to OurOntario by the TTHS. [View the full record here.](#)

The description reads: "After S.S. No. 2, Palermo was closed, Palermo Public School opened on the east side of Bronte Road, south of Hwy. 5 (now Dundas Street). The school was closed and sold in 1978 by the Halton Board of Education. The Kindergarten teacher is Mrs. (Katherine?) Kellett. She left Palermo Public School in June of 1968. Cheryl (Biggart) Steffler is 2nd from the right, kneeling in the centre row."

### TTHS Updates and Society News

The Town of Oakville will undertake road widening and other landscape changes along Dundas Street West during the summer months. This work will involve changes which directly impact the Old Palermo Schoolhouse, including:

- Parking lot: the Schoolhouse parking lot will be extended behind building to increase parking.
- Flag pole: the Schoolhouse flag pole will be moved to front of building.
- Security: protective fencing will be installed during construction.
- Streetscape: the Town of Oakville will be repairing the front wall begun several years ago.

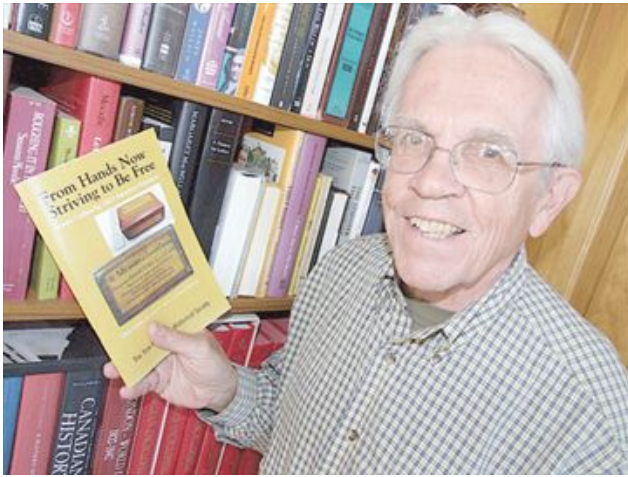


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### Author Chris Raible to Speak at Upcoming TTHS Meeting



Chris Raible is well-known in Ontario historical circles as a writer and researcher of Upper Canada history. A retired minister, museum historic interpreter and bookseller, Raible continues as a writer and historical researcher of Upper Canadian history. His especial historical focus is the life and times of the controversial Scottish-Canadian, William Lyon Mackenzie and the 1837 Rebellion.

His current study is a careful tracking of Mackenzie's flight for his life in the days immediately following the failure of the Rebellion just north of Toronto in early December, 1837.

Travelling mostly by night, the rebel leader made his way successfully from Montgomery's Tavern to the Niagara River and across to the safety of the United States. The journey of more than 150 miles took five days (four nights) on foot, on horseback, occasionally on wagon or sleigh, mostly in the dark. In the course of his journey he was aided by more than thirty different persons and families who fed him, hid him, advised him, accompanied him – often at very real risk to their their own lives.

Chris Raible has authored four books and has published numerous articles and reviews for *Canada's History* (formerly *The Beaver*), *The Globe and Mail*, *the Toronto Star*, *Ontario History*, *The York Pioneer*, and various other periodicals. He has spoken and led seminars at many Ontario museums and historical societies, and serves as historical consultant to the Mackenzie Printery & Newspaper Museum in Queenston.

In 1994 he and his wife, Pat, launched Curiosity House, an independent bookstore in Creemore - Ontario, Since fully retiring, they continue in Creemore as active community volunteers and in 2013 were named Citizens of the Year. For 19 years they edited the Ontario Historical Society's *OHS Bulletin* book pages, reviewing many hundreds of works relating this province's history. In 2010 they were honoured by the Ontario Historical Society with its prestigious Cruikshank Medal.

***Raible will present "Mackenzie's Flight For His Life" at the upcoming meeting of the TTHS on Wednesday July 8, from 7-9pm at the Old Palermo Schoolhouse (details on page 6).***



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### TTHS Stories: "Adventures of the American Four Among the Pine Stumps of Canada"

Submitted by Ross Wark

The TTHS is indebted to Mr. David Hesel, of Cleveland Ohio, for providing us with a typed copy of a diary entitled "Adventures of the American Four Among the Pine Stumps of Canada".

In 1885, four young Americans visited the Drumquin area of Trafalgar Township. A detailed account of their adventures is contained in journal entries from August 31st to September 29th.

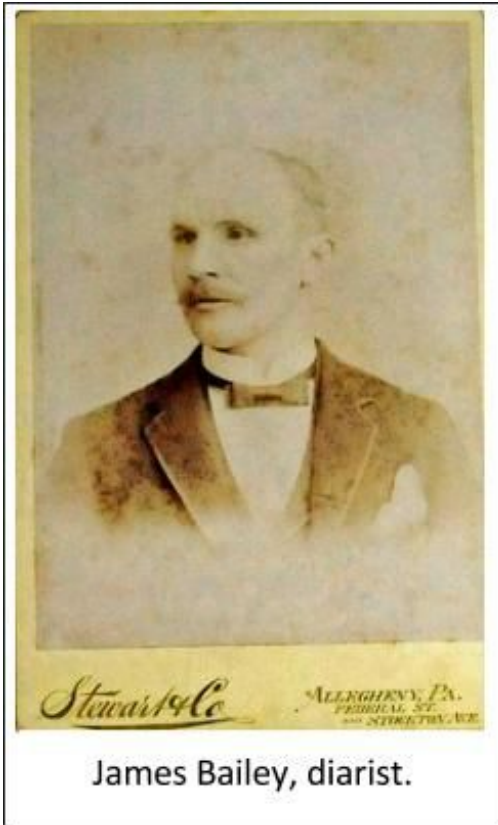
They were met at the Oakville train station and driven by horse and buggy to the farm of Aunt Ann and Uncle Joe Hall on 7th Line (Trafalgar Road near Britannia) where they enjoyed "a first class supper and a good night's sleep among the feathers".

From their "home base" at the farm, Alice and James Bown (twins), older sister Jennie, and cousin James Bailey made many forays into the surrounding communities... roller skating at the rink in Oakville over several evenings, visits to the post office and cemetery in Drumquin, touring the Saunders honey hives in Auburn, a community play in Postville and a two day outing to the Exposition Grounds in Toronto (C.N.E.).

Evening entertainment at the Hall home and neighbouring farms included games of euchre, hymn and song singing, loud musical instruments and lots of conversation!

Food, and lots of it, is mentioned through-out diary entries. Many locals, including people from the Turner, Lawrence, Bailey, Weir and Howes families, came to meet the "American Four". In their "off" time, the young people watched the varied farm activities and hunted in the local woodlots. After a month in Canada, they returned to their homes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Click to view the TTHS OurOntario pages for photographs of [Joseph](#) and [Ann \(Bailey\) Hall](#), and of the "[American Four](#)", as well as [reproductions of several diary pages](#) describing the visit to Drumquin.



James Bailey, diarist.



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### Upcoming Events

#### Upcoming TTHS Meetings in 2015

Wednesday July 8, 2015

Location: Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West

Wednesday Nov. 11, 2015

Time: 7:00 p.m.

*Note: The TTHS will now hold its regular meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month!*

**Special Guest Speaker Chris Raible at our meeting on July 8 - see page 4 for more information!**

Friday Aug. 21, 2015

#### Archives Open Research Dates in 2015

Friday October 16, 2015

TTHS members and the public are welcome to join us in researching family and community histories!

Location: Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West

Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday Sept. 26, 2015

#### Heritage Day Fall Fair

Location: Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West



Above: TTHS Board members (from left) Syzan Talo, Mike Reid, Natalia Lischyna, Mario Testa, and Michelle Knoll at the OPNC annual garage sale on May 2, 2015.

### Welcome New TTHS Board Members!

On Saturday, May 2nd, TTHS volunteers joined other community groups and residents at the annual garage sale in support of the Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre on Sawgrass Drive. The event provided an opportunity for the newest members of the Society's Board of Directors to represent TTHS and support a great cause!