



Trafalgar Township Historical Society

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

Summer 2018 Newsletter



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Society News & Updates



Bronte Historical Society Turns Thirty!

On June 6th, 9th, and 10th, members of the B.H.S. welcomed visitors at Sovereign House to celebrate its 30th anniversary. Hosts on the day we visited were Betty Strong (historian) and Margaret White (social convener). Many interesting displays showed Bronte's history since settlement began as early as the 1820s. A few early prominent families included the Sovereigns, Belyeas, Brays, Hixons, and Riggs. Photographed checking historical materials are, from left, Margaret Wark, Glen Watt and Jane Watt, members of Trafalgar Township Historical Society. Entry and photo submitted by Ross Wark.



Oakville's Flower, A Part of History

Sean Livingston, Reserve Officer with C.A.F., and secondary school history teacher in Milton, spoke at our June 6th meeting at the schoolhouse. His recent book, *Oakville's Flower, The History of H.M.C.S. Oakville*, was the focal point of his presentation.

Launched on June 21, 1941, H.M.C.S. Oakville was christened on November 5, 1941, off shore from Lakeside Park to an enthusiastic crowd of 2,000 people. The Toronto Daily Star and The Telegram covered this historical event. Sean's book is filled with many photographs of the crowds and the christening by Mrs. Deans, wife of the town's mayor.

A major job of Corvettes like H.M.C.S. Oakville was to defend Allied fuel from U-Boat attacks, particularly in the Caribbean Sea.

A fieldstone cairn located in Tammery Park in Oakville's west harbour, commemorates the men who served from 1942-1945. Views from this park provide images of not only our historic harbour, but also the skyline of Toronto...on a clear day.

We thank Sean for a detailed presentation about an aspect of history few knew about, until now. Written and photographed by Ross Wark.

Recent Donations & Contributions

Memories from the late 1940's, through the 50's and early 60's of Hornby Orange Lodge

Don Learman commented on our digital record of the Hornby Orange Lodge members at a parade, identifying his great-grandfather, Stan Learmont. His comments have been added into the description of these two TTHS internet records, [Loyal Orange Lodge No. 165, Hornby](#) & [Hornby Loyal Orange Lodge No. 165](#)

Don remembers going to the Hornby Hall "to play euchre or crokinole. After the games, there would be a lunch. Then the square dance would start. The caller was a man named Brooks. (not sure of first name) Gere Sinclair played the violin & his wife played the piano. She played staring straight out at the dancers & never changed her expression, never looking at the keys. Being an Orange, there was no drinking but the dancing seemed to get better as the night progressed. We as kids sat in the gallery & watched. The best dancers were a couple named Kay. They would swing like tops. The time frame would be in the 1948 to 1952 frame. In 1961 some of us started a dance there. We called it the Hornby stomp, with a small record player, later we had a live band." Don met his wife of 55 years there.



TTHS and OGS member, Jane Watt, was able to identify Gear Sinclair as living in Glen William in 1935, in R.R. #4 Milton from 1940 through 1949 working as a farmer, then on Queen Street in Milton working as a caretaker and later

maintenance man from 1957 to 1962, then in 1968 he is listed as a caretaker living at 347 Woodward Street in Milton. Nothing after that.

Don has also remembered (because I asked him about the dry Orange Lodge being so near to the Brains Brewery in Hornby), "My great-grandfather Thomas Learmont lived in various places in the Hornby area. He stayed with my grandfather on his farm just south of Steeles on Trafalgar road in his later years. Thomas would go to Brains Brewery & buy a honey pail of beer & lower it down the well on a rope to cool it off. It was much to the displeasure of my grandmother who was a staunch anti drink person. The Brains Brewery had a pond which we all played hockey on. The mall that is there now was part of the farm. Hornby school was a 1 room & 8 grades. The same teacher taught my father & me. Nelly Jardine. A real stern woman." Note by Anne Choate Little.

Oakville Heritage Moments News

Evie Campbell from the Oakville Public Library recently contacted us about using some of our digital images in new Oakville Heritage Moments videos. She is working on videos about native plants, the fire department, the Mississauga of the Credit, literary history, the Erchless estate, and Oakville's sister cities, and these will shortly be made public.

As stated on their website: "Oakville Heritage Moments are a series of videos that capture a variety of historically significant moments of our community. Our initial six videos created in the summer of 2017 celebrate milestones for a variety of organisations, and display what life was like in Oakville and Trafalgar once upon a time."

The initial six videos include one of Palermo United Church, another of the 50th Anniversary of the Synchronized Swimming program, and of the 50th Anniversary of the Centennial Building, also of Oakville in the First World War, and several others.

This link is to the current videos is in Oakville Images on the internet: <http://images.oakville.halinet.on.ca/465/Exhibit/2> They can also be seen using the Oakville Public Library website.

(Oakville Images is a partnership of the [Oakville Public Library](#), [Oakville Historical Society](#), [Oakville Museum at Erchless Estate](#), [the Town of Oakville](#), [Appleby College](#), [Bronte Historical Society](#), [Trafalgar Township Historical Society's Digital Collections](#) and Private Collectors.) Contributed by A. Choate Little.

Growing Up In Palermo

Wayne Shillum, former Palermo resident, dropped by our Archives Day on May 18th to share his new book *The Farmboy, From 1950's Palermo, Ontario*.

In the summer of 1950, the Shillum family moved from their Toronto home to a 100 acre farm on the Back Concession (Burnhamthorpe Rd) west of Hwy. 25 (Bronte Rd).

Wayne provides a detailed description of all things farming: buildings, grounds, milking process, crops, animals and harvesting.

In the autumn of 1950, Wayne attended grade one in S.S. #2, now our Society headquarters. In 1955, he moved to the new Palermo Public School on Old Bronte Road.

Recreational activities included skiing on farm slopes, swimming and fishing in the 12 Mile Creek, and riding the family pet horse, Trigger.

Social activities centred around St. Luke's Anglican Church and local families.

Wayne's written accounts of life in Palermo include many family photos. In 2017 he added up to date information on the Palermo community in general. In all, an interesting personal memoir. Article and photograph by Ross Wark.



TTHS Queries

Tunnel Under the Oakville Train Bridge

While reviewing the comments people have made on our internet records, an old question came up. Can you tell us about a man-made tunnel under the train bridge in Oakville?

A few years ago, Ken Chambers posted his memories of exploring the Merton cave and swimming under the train bridge as a kid in the 1950's. He remembered entering this tunnel from the north end. The south end had caved in so they weren't able to go all the way through.



Here is Ken's comment as posted 20 October 2010 on our record:

I was born in 1938 and can remember going to the cave in 50/51. Went in 1961 with a friend who went into the spring too see it really went into a farmers well where King escaped.(used diving gear. too cold and dark and I don't think that anything was accomplished.) When we were kids we used to swim under the train bridge in Oakville and can remember crawling through a man made tunnel that ran under the tracks, we never did get through as the south end had caved in. Any idea's as to why it was there. I have a twin brother in Milton who enjoy's exploring the escarpment, to-day he toured the Limehouse Kilns. As kids there was so much to do in the Bronte and Oakviil area, your site brings back lots of memories. Ken.

Here is the link to our record with Ken's comment, (click on "View Comments..." on the right to read his whole comment and add your own to it): [Merton School Trip to The Cave Which Had Sheltered William Lyon Mackenzie, ca 1915](#)

Hope you may know something about this, or have memories of your own.

Upcoming TTHS Events

Guest Speakers & Meetings

Location: Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West

All are welcome to attend our guest speaker evenings to learn more about Trafalgar through informative and interactive discussions. Light snacks and refreshments are provided. If you know anyone who might be interested in being a guest speaker in the future, please contact Michelle at michelle@tths.ca!

| Date & Time | Activity |
|--|--|
| Saturday, September 29 at 10:00am-4:00pm | Family Heritage Fair Desk & Book Sale: Heritage displays, activities and BBQ |
| Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 7:00pm | Guest Speaker Evening: Jay Young of Archives of Ontario: Dear Sadie, Loves, Lives & remembrances from WW1 |
| Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 7:00pm | Guest Speaker Evening: David Hobden: Early Settlement of Halton County & Annual General Meeting |

Open Houses - Archives Research

Location: Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West from 1:30pm to 3:30pm

All are welcome in joining us in researching family and community histories. Do you have something to donate or contribute? Bring your precious documents and artefacts to one of our open houses and we would be happy to learn about your story! We can scan your documents and add them to our archives so that others can enjoy and engage in research. Join us from **1:30pm to 3:30pm:**

Friday, September 21, 2018
Friday, January 18, 2019

Friday, October 19, 2018
Friday, February 15, 2019