



## **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

P.O. Box 25017, 221 Glendale Avenue, Pen Centre,  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2T 4C4

Our mission and goal: to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and area. The Society was founded in 1927.  
Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

**Our website is: <http://stcatharineshistory.wordpress.com>**

### ***March Newsletter***

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#### **Lecture Program – March 26, 2015 through June 25, 2015**

*Program Subject to Change*

##### **Thursday, March 26, 2015**

Presentation by Brian Narhi – **Topic: Tales from a Tombstone: Society, Sex, Scandal and Shenanigans in Early Upper Canada**

Brian Narhi, co-chairman of the St. Catharines Heritage Committee and local history researcher par excellence, will be speaking.

##### **Thursday, April 23, 2015:**

Presentation by Paul Pattison – **Topic: The St. Catharines Flying Club, the Niagara District Airport, and the Elementary Flying Training School during World War II**

Paul Pattison will talk about the experiences of his father, Fred Pattison (1897 -1983), which chronicles his growing up on a farm in Merriton, World War One, the U.S. Marines, his affiliations in the automotive industry, establishing the first Niagara District airport, and his involvement in the training of pilots during World War Two.

##### **Thursday, May 28, 2015:**

Presentation by Carla Mackie and Alan Veale – **Topic: Morningstar Mill and the Miller's House at Decew Falls**

Carla Mackie and Alan Veale will be making a presentation on Morningstar Mill's Water Supply: the history of Beaver Dams Creek (the cultural landscape of the area). The meeting will take place at the St. Catharines Historical Museum.

**Thursday, June 25, 2015, 6:30pm for house tour, 7:30pm for illustrated talk:**

Presentation by Elizabeth Finnie – **Topic: “The Other Merritts” -- the distinguished descendants of William Hamilton Merritt** (in a meeting to be held at Rodman Hall).

### **SOCIETY NEWS**

*The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture.*

#### **Society Notes**

**Membership Dues Reminder** ... Your Society membership needed to be renewed on September 1, 2014. Our membership form for the 2014-2015 is enclosed on the last page of this newsletter. If you wish to receive a membership card, notify John Calvert at: [jcalvert57@hotmail.com](mailto:jcalvert57@hotmail.com). We are also now sending the Newsletter to members by e-mail, so we ask that you provide your e-mail address on the membership form.

### **NEWSLETTER NOTES**

The Historical Society of St. Catharines Newsletter is published up to four times per year. The purpose is to inform the membership of issues pertaining to the Society and items of historical interest. Comments and queries should be directed to the Society's postal address. Opinions and comments expressed in the Newsletter are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription to the Newsletter is by paid membership only. This issue is edited by Dave Willer.

***Submission Deadline for the June 2015 Newsletter is May 15, 2015.***

#### **St. Catharines in 1876**

**By John Burtniak**

The September 2014 issue of our Newsletter contained a description of St. Catharines as appeared in Page's Atlas of 1876. The publisher also prepared additional information about the new City of St. Catharines inspired no doubt by the City's incorporation that year (1876). We will be publishing this material in its entirety over the course of three Newsletters. In the December Newsletter, we published the first installment. The following is the second installment and the final installment will appear in the June Newsletter.

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#### **CITY OF ST. CATHARINES**

Supplementary History to what has Already been Written

The City is well supplied with Banking and Monetary institutions, there being no less than five regular banking agencies, viz: - The Imperial Bank (formerly the Niagara District), C.E. Arnold, Manager; Bank of Commerce, H.C. Barwick, manager; Quebec Bank, D.B. Crombie, Manager, Consolidated Bank of

Canada (formed by the union of the City Bank of Montreal and the Royal Canadian), W.T. Benson, Manager; and the Bank of Toronto, Joseph Henderson, Manager. Besides there are the Banking House of Mr. James McEdward, who is also Official Assignee for the County, and of Mr. L.H. Collard, formerly that of the late D.C. Haynes.

The furniture establishments are large and creditable to the city, two of the proprietors Messrs. Joseph Grobb and J.B. McIntyre being aldermen. Messrs. Allan Bros. have a fine store in their elegant new block. The old and leading Furniture Store is carried on by Mr. Thomas McIntyre & Son, who commenced business in 1834, two years after he had set foot in the Village of St. Catharines. He is ably assisted in his business by his energetic son, Alderman J.B. McIntyre.

The educational advantages of the City are first-class, there being a nobly endowed Collegiate Institute under the Headmastership of John Seath, Esq., M.A., with an able corps of assistants, Messrs. Henderson, the two Robertsons, Christie, Campbell and Nash. Students are prepared in the Institute for Law, Medicine and Engineering, as well as the Universities, and some of them have carried off the Gilchrist Scholarship at the University of London, England. The school is free to all pupils who pass the entrance examination. The Trustees are Messrs. J.C. Rykert, Dr. Goodman, Dr. Oille, Dr. Jukes, F.W. Macdonald and James Douglas. The Public Schools are also in a high state of efficiency and consist of a spacious Central School on Church Street, and a School for each Ward. The Headmaster of the Central School is Mr. J.B. Grey; the City Inspector Dr. Comfort, the County Inspector being J.B. Somerset. The Trustees are J.E. Cuff, Chairman, W. Boles, A. Jeffrey, W.C. Copeland, W. Greenwood, Eli Higgins, Jas. Bird, J. Sisterson, J. Horner, Jas. Mills, Harper Wilson, John McLaren. There is also a complete system of sectarian education under the direction of the Roman Catholic Clergy, consisting of the St. Joseph's Convent, an imposing white brick structure late erected at a cost of about \$25,000, on the corner of James and Church streets. The school for boys, under charge of Brother Joseph is near the Central School, and there are several other Separate schools in the city. The Carmelite Brothers are teachers in the schools.

There are a number of good church edifices, among which are 3 Episcopalian, 3 Roman Catholic, 2 Presbyterian, 1 Congregationalist, 3 Methodist, 1 Baptist and two churches for the citizens of color. There is a probability of five or six new churches being erected in the eastern portion of the city.

The last few years have witnessed the erection of many fine residences and blocks of stores, among these may be enumerated Smith's extensive Saw Works, an immense stone structure, the Allan Block, Dufferin Block, Dr. Oille's Block, consisting of hotel and stores, Broadway Block, all on St. Paul street, and Bullivant's Block on King Street. Among the princely mercantile establishment may be mentioned those of Tait of the Masonic Temple, R. Struthers & Co., on Queen street, Henry Carlisle on Ontario, R. Woodruff & Co., on St. Paul street, Harper Wilson's Broadway, Monro's Crockery Store, Manhard's Buffalo Head establishment, T.C. Dawson's Dry Goods store, and many other of equal note. In jewelry establishments St. Catharines can compete with any city of the Province, especially as Douglas' and Fowler's splendid shops vie with each other in the extent and magnificence of their stock. Mr. Fowler's is like a fairy palace of bijouterie and his time is as accurate as science can make it.

The Fire Department is thoroughly equipped and well organized, under Chief Engineer F.P. Bergy, Assistant Engineer, A. Riddell. The new apparatus consists of two steam fire engines from Hyslop & Ronald of Chatham, in charge of A. Robertson, one Ferry hand engine, two hook and ladder trucks, two four-wheeled hose carriages, one two-wheeled hose cart, and one double horse hose cart, with the necessary appliances. The department is divided into four companies, No. 1 Protection H. & L. Co., under Capt. T. Woods; No. 2 H. & L. Co., Capt. T. Hennigan; Citizen Hose Co 1, Capt. G.C. Carlisle; Union Engine & Hose Co. No. 2, Capt. P. Fowler. The city is divided into six fire districts with a warden to each

as follows: J. Shickluna, G. Wood, W. Chatfield, James Bird, E.S. Friesman, J.C. Rykert, and the mayor elect. The headquarters of the Department are in a fine hall on the corner of St. Paul and Chestnut streets, with stations on Welland Avenue and G.W.R. Hill. Owing to the efficient state of the department no fires of any magnitude have occurred for years.

The volunteer organization is composed of the 19<sup>th</sup> Lincoln Battalion of V.M.I. under Lieutenant Colonel J.G. Currie, the Major is Lieutenant Colonel F.W. MacDonald, Major E. Thompson, Adjutant W.C. Copeland, Surgeon A. Jukes, Assistant do. J. Reilly, Quartermaster, Lieutenant J. Kew, Paymaster, Major T.L. Helliwell, Bandmaster, C. Heinecke. The headquarter companies are No. 2, 3 and 5. No. 2 being under the command of Capt. Ferguson, Ensign Lieut. H. Day., No. 3, G.C. Carlisle, Lieutenant C. Moores. No. 5 under Capt. M. Brennan and Ensign E.A. Jukes. No. 1 Co. is stationed at Niagara, under Major Thompson, No. 4 at Beamsville, under Major G. Walker. No. 6 at Virgil, Capt. Hiscott, Lieut. Gage Miller, St. Catharines Garrison Artillery, under Capt. J.T. See, Lieutenant J. Wiley. There is a good brass band belonging to the Battalion, and also the St. Patrick's Temperance Band, under Mr. Robinson.

The police force is one of which the citizens are justly proud, and was organized in Nov., 1872, by Chief John Cumming, who had large experience in Scotland and England, as well as in Canada. The Police under his charge have continued to progress in efficiency and force, and now consists of a Chief Constable, two Sergeants and ten men. The force after escorting Lord Dufferin, Governor General, through the city, at his visit in August, 1874, was pronounced by his Excellency to be the finest equipped and disciplined body of police he had ever seen. The system of discipline is thorough, and is such as to secure efficiency of action, as the Chief has the reputation of having an iron will.

St. Catharines is noted far and wide for its Mineral Springs, the healings waters of which are renowned throughout the continent, and their curative effects have been so thoroughly tested in such a variety of instances that the elegant and extensive hotels erected in consequence of the influx of visitors are always filled with tourists, especially from the Southern and South-western States of America. The springs have long been known as medicinal in their nature, and there is little doubt that the Aborigines were aware of their virtues and that the medicine men of those days added to their reputation by using the waters. The early white settlers made very large quantities of salt in the vicinity of springs, and it is over thirty years since the waters became noted for cures.

The Artesian Wells, which are now widely known, much resemble the Spas, of Germany, but their curative properties are of a far higher order. The following analysis by Prof Croft of Toronto and Dr. Mack, of St. Catharines, shows their chemical composition to be as follows:

Sulphate of Lime .....	2,1923
Chloride of Calcium.....	14,8544
Chloride of Magnesium.....	2,3977
Iodide of Magnesium.....	0,0042
Bromide of Magnesium.....	62
Chloride of Potassium.....	0,3555
Chloride of Sodium.....	29,8034
Chloride of Sodium.....	} 78
Silicic Acid.....	}
In one pint of natural water,	506215.

The Stephenson house, erected in 1842, and now under the direction of Messrs. Stinson & May, is furnished in such a manner, with regard to elegance and comfort, as will make it compare favorably with

any first-class hotel on this continent. The main building, with the Bath Houses, Billiard Rooms, and other necessary buildings, occupies a space of about six acres, with a frontage of over four hundred feet on Yate street, running from Ann to Salina Street, down to the famous Artesian Well, the Valley of the Welland Canal. The rooms are large, and warmed with and ventilated on the most scientific principles; they are lighted with gas, and a large number of them are arranged in suites, particularly convenient for families. The view of the surrounding country from the hotel is magnificent. Seen from the cupola, about 100 feet above the water level of the Welland Canal, the panorama is grand. Below is the Canal with its ever shifting scenery of schooner, ship and steamboat, wending their way to from the clear waters of Lake Ontario, some bound for London or Liverpool, or thence to Chicago.

The Springbank Hotel and Bathing Establishment, another famous resort for tourists and invalids, was erected at great expense by Dr. Theophilus Mack, who reputation as a surgeon and physician is not confined to this country alone. Springbank is a large and costly pile, and is fitted up with all the latest scientific appliances for the cure of disease by the application of water, steam and electricity. The Turkish Baths are a specialty and are widely known. This hotel is kept open all year round, and takes rank in the first class. It is conducted by Messrs. G. Ruel & Co.

The Welland House, is a also a first-class commercial house, and is a large and elegant white brick structure.

The Murray House and Cairns House have also a good reputation as commercial hotels.

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## **A Confederate lived among us** **By Gail Benjafield**

The way it started was rather odd. I became interested in an old Victorian house in St. Catharines west end and tried to convince an historian friend to look into it, but he was not interested. Later, as my husband John and I were walking around, we saw a man entering the house with two large Scottish greyhounds. I asked him if he was the owner. He was, and I told him of my interest in the house, as I was serving on the city's Heritage Committee and the house intrigued me. We exchanged contact numbers and the search began. It was an engaging search, as the homeowner had already tried to find out the history of his recently purchased house. He had been to the Special Collections Room of the Central library and to the Mayholme Foundation to pursue his research, but he was stuck. Stuck with the story that a Colonel Bowen -- possibly of Brock's army in the war of 1812 -- was the original homeowner. I enlisted the help of my colleague on the Heritage Committee, Brian Narhi, and both of us delved into research. We both went through all the city directories in Special Collections, and Brian followed up with a land registry search for the building, while I focused on local history and genealogy sites to track this fellow and his house down. This took months, making me put aside personal research planned for the summer of 2013.

Through genealogy sites, I found a Medina N.Y. local historian was also interested in the original owner of the house, James Bowen. Marilyn Robinson had been inquiring about a local rural family of that same surname; the men in the family were active in The American Civil War. Indeed they were. As it turns out there were five Bowen half-brothers, two of whom were on the Union side, and two Confederates. Our Bowen was of the latter. According to a Fulton Newspaper Report, the four ex-soldiers and younger half-

brother, got together for the last time in Medina NY. The account states the second eldest, James live in St. Catherines (sic) Canada (1).

Our Bowen first appears in Central St. Catharines lodging on Church Street in the mid-1860s. He lists himself as a coffee merchant, and maybe so, although his deepest interests were in the Confederacy. In fact, while Marilyn Robinson pursued his Union eldest brother Ambrose (her g-g-g-grandfather). Ours was James L. Bowen. All the brothers seem to have ties to the south, Virginia certainly, although James was born in Sennet NY, just slightly southwest of Rochester. He was listed as engineer with the Confederate Side when he entered the army and we have every reason to believe he was a topographical engineer who drew the Battle of Bull Run. The map says a James L Bowen is the artist (2). This remains speculative as there might be another James L. Bowen. Supporting our speculation though is that James L. Bowen entered the confederacy in 1861. He was immediately made a Colonel, noted as an engineer. As is well known now, Niagara was a hotbed of supporters for the Confederate side. There are many books to be found locally to support this fact, and historians have given talks on the lead men in Niagara who plotted against Lincoln and may have well been involved with the St. Alban's Raid. While the immediate border towns were the main places where the confederates schemed downtown St. Catharines also had a fair whack of them sitting amongst us (3). *Come Retribution* refers to a major plotter, Clement Clay, living in a house downtown.

The Robinsons, Brian Narhi and I all shared our information with each other and with the home owners on Grapeview. Narhi's land registry search confirms that the house was built c. 1875 and that Bowen was likely the first owner (4). The house is as impressive within as it is from the outside. Very little modernization has changed the immediate large front interiors. It is indeed a grand farmhouse.



Through genealogical research I found that Bowen had married twice, but nothing whatever seems to tell us anything of his second wife's lineage. Children from his first marriage all lived in the south, Baton

Rouge, to be precise. Bowen and his second wife married in 1871 and appear in the 1891 Ontario Census records as on the corner of Grapeview and what is now First Street Louth. My eureka moment came when I decided to call Victoria Lawn Cemetery and see if anyone named Bowen had been buried there between 1891 and 2000. Contact! A James Lawrence Bowen was interred in the old Protestant section G in late December 1898. But before going to the Cemetery plot, I searched the death records for Ontario and discovered his death as actually Dec. 27, 1897.

Victoria Lawn says 1898, the Registrar General records say 1897. Who is right, who wrong? I suspect the relatives who put up the huge granite stone, which stands rather magnificently alone, with no others near it, made an incorrect engraving. But it adds to the charm of the story. It is an expensive stone for its time as the picture shows:



but the engraving is so shallow that one cannot read the entire epitaph without running fingers along the stone tracing the engraving. And the second wonderful surprise was what that engraving revealed. At the bottom, the engraving says 'Friend of the Lost Cause', a known code for the Confederacy. Numerous books have been written about 'The Lost Cause', and several books about Canadians who joined the Confederacy side. In no time Marilyn Robinson and her husband Tom drove to St. Catharines. Then Brian and I, my husband John and the Robinsons did several grave rubbings, both to keep as mementos of our research and to give to the current owners of Bowen's farmhouse in what was once far outside the city in Grantham Township, but what is now very much a part of an enlarged city. So a leisurely stroll around a neighbourhood one summer lent itself to a rather fascinating story of an unique old farmhouse and its intriguing soldier-inhabitant.

#### Footnotes.

1. Medina Tribune, Thursday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1882.
2. Battlefield of Young's Branch or Manassa[s] battle fought July 21, 1861. 1862, English, Map edition. Creator James L. Bowen: Warder & Catlett ... Enquirer Book and Job Press.
3. a) Karolyn Smards Frost, *I've Got a home in Glory Land: a Lost tale of the Underground Railroad*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007  
b) Claire Hoy. *Canadians in the Civil War*, McArthur and co., 2004  
c) Wm A Tidwell, et al. *Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the assassination of Lincoln*, Barnes and Noble, 1998  
d) Adam Mayer. *Dixie & the Confederacy, and the War for the Union*, The Dundurn Group, 2003
4. Brian Narhi. (research) Abstract to Deeds, Part Lot Concession 5 (Parcel 7), Grantham Twp. Niagara North Land Registry Office, mf 30E75. Prior Grantham Twp. Old books 2 & 3, and Grantham Memorials (mf 30E6)

## **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

### **Membership Renewal**

For membership year **September 1, 2014 through August 31, 2015**

Membership Dues: **Individual \$10.00; Family \$15.00**

Make cheques payable to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines

Mail to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines  
P.O. Box 25017, 221 Glendale Avenue, Pen Centre  
St. Catharines, Ontario, L2T 4C4

Your membership information will not be shared with any other group or business.

Note: As this is a general mailing, if you have already renewed your membership, please disregard this notice.

For your record: Renewed on: \_\_\_\_\_, 2014 - Cheque in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Remove the form below and return with your remittance*

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## **The Historical Society of St. Catharines**

### **Membership Renewal**

For membership year **September 1, 2014 thorough August 31, 2015**

I wish to renew my/our membership: **Individual:** \_\_\_\_\_ - **Family:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

postal code/zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

My/Our telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to receive Society meeting reminders and notices by e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to receive Society Newsletter by print: \_\_\_\_\_

My/Our e-mail < \_\_\_\_\_ >

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_