

This is part of an article titled "Historical Society in St. Catharines" originally published in Junius A to Z and reprinted in the Society's November 1999 Newsletter.

The first public meeting was held January 21, 1927. It is now known as the St. Catharines and Lincoln Historical Society, as our interests cover both city and county. Mr. Frederick R. Parnall was the first president with Mr. H. Colin Blain as secretary, until 1936 when Mr. Blain became president with Mrs. J.A. Brighty as secretary.

The aims as stated in 1927 were "the collection, preservation, and exhibition and publication of materials for the study of history, especially that of the County of Lincoln, and to this end acquiring documents and manuscripts, obtaining narratives and records of pioneers, conducting a library of historical references, maintaining a gallery of historical portraits and pictures and in some degree a historical museum, thus diffusing information relative to the history of the County as well also of the province and of the Dominion, and in general encouraging and developing the study of history."

In 1930 the Society published their Annual Report of 1929 and a first list of exhibits, and a list of their members - 68 with 7 of them being life members.

In June of 1932 the Ontario Historical Society held their Annual Meeting in St. Catharines. Mrs. Brighty prepared the Societies first pamphlet, an information guide for these visitors.

In June 1934 a committee meeting met to discuss the advisability of forming a branch of the United Empire Loyalists in St. Catharines and on the 27th the actual organizational meeting was held at the Y.M.C.A. with over 20 persons present.

By 1938 the meetings became less frequent and their collection was stored in an attic in the fire hall. A suitable place for exhibition became the cry of the group headed by A.E. Coombs M.A., B.Paed. With the

Society's revival in 1950, the Ontario Historical Society Annual Meeting was again held here. G.M.Lampard headed the group in 1951 followed by Mrs. George E. Montgomery. In 1953 the first Laura Secord pilgrimage to Decou Falls was held and by 1955 this was managed by the Society at the request of City Council. In 1957 Alderman Wilfred Bald became president, resigning in 1959 when he became mayor. The vice-president R.S.K. Welch (now the Honourable Provincial Secretary), took office. It was during his term of office that the Historical Society held its first meeting at Rodman Hall in May of 1960 - finally permanent quarters. When Mr. Welch resigned in 1961, Norman MacDonald became president and the Society continued to grow. Gordon C. Merritt became president in 1964 and it was under his direction that the hope and dream of the Society "THE MUSEUM" became a reality. It is here that the collection of the years will be housed and displayed and now the Society can carry on with other phases of history under the direction of the 1967 president David Plumb.