

# The Historical Society of St. Catharines

## December 2004 Newsletter

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P.O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P6  
Web Site - <http://www.niagara.com/~dmdorey/hssc/hssc.html>

Our Mission and Goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and vicinity.  
Founded in 1927. Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

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## *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

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### *Upcoming Speakers Program*

Regular meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month between September and May in the Burgoyne Room of the St. Catharines Museum.

The museum is located at the Welland Canals Centre (at Lock 3),  
1932 Welland Canals Parkway (formerly Government Road), St. Catharines, Ontario.  
*(Programs are subject to change) (Refreshments are usually served after the program)*

All Programs above start at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted

**Thursday, January 27** – Sheila Wilson – History of the St. Catharines Public Library

**Thursday, February 24** – Alun Hughes – Captain Dick: Treasure Trove and Toponymic Truth

**Thursday, March 24** – Phil Gifford – Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes

**Thursday, April 28** – David R. Murray – "Justice and Crime in Early Niagara."

**Thursday, May 26** – David Beasley – The Knight of San Fernando Comes to St. Catharines; or Policing Turmoil in St. Catharines

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## Membership Renewal For 2005

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Individual \$10.00 or Family \$15.00

Make Cheque Payable to - The Historical Society of St. Catharines and mail to Society address.

*Tear off and return this form*

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Please enter my/our membership in The Historical Society of St. Catharines  
as: Individual \_\_\_\_\_ or Family \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ ; e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Yes I wish to receive Society meeting e-mail reminders \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find a cheque/money order in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Board of Directors of The Historical Society of St. Catharines

*Elected April 24, 2003 for Two Year Term*

Past President - John Burtiak - tel. 905-227-5120

President - Bill Stevens - e-mail [bilmstev@computan.on.ca](mailto:bilmstev@computan.on.ca) - tel. 905-934-8966

Vice President - Paul Lewis - e-mail [paul\\_e\\_lewis@ridley.on.ca](mailto:paul_e_lewis@ridley.on.ca) - tel. 905-684-9918

Secretary - Brenda Zadoroznij - e-mail [bzadoroz@Becon.org](mailto:bzadoroz@Becon.org) - tel. 905-935-3025

Treasurer - Chris Loat - e-mail [chris\\_loat@ridley.on.ca](mailto:chris_loat@ridley.on.ca) - tel. 905-685-6939

*Elected April 22, 2004 for One Year Term*

Director- Membership - Bill Harder - e-mail [whharder@warplink.com](mailto:whharder@warplink.com) - tel. 905-684-2528

Director - Dee Dickman - e-mail [ddickman@spartan.ac.brocku.ca](mailto:ddickman@spartan.ac.brocku.ca) - tel. 905-682-3094

Director - Joyce DeForest - e-mail [vdefores@mergetel.com](mailto:vdefores@mergetel.com) - tel. 905-685-4728

Director - Paul Hutchinson - e-mail [slabtown@niagara.com](mailto:slabtown@niagara.com) - tel. 905-227-2699

Director - Maurice Gomme - e-mail [magomme@Becon.org](mailto:magomme@Becon.org) - tel. 905-682-2329

Director - Joe Muskat - tel. 905-687-3359

Program Committee: Paul Hutchinson, Maurice Gomme and Dennis Gannon.

- If you have a program idea, please let them know, or jot it down on the back of the membership renewal form!

### Newsletter Notes

The Historical Society of St. Catharines Newsletter is published up to 4 times per year by the Society. The purpose of the newsletter 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 postal address. Opinions and comments expressed in the newsletter are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription by paid membership only. Bill Stevens produced this issue.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Next Issue March 2005

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When you return the membership renewal form on the reverse side, please feel free to submit program suggestions, or volunteer for a position of director on the Board of Directors ... elections will be held in April of 2005.

Do you have some old photos of family and friends, an event or site that shows a piece of history of St. Catharines? Program idea? Comments? ... let us know!

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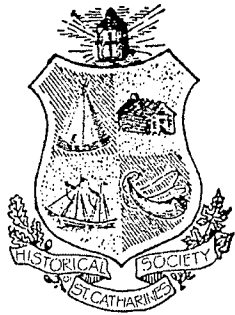
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# The Historical Society of St. Catharines NEWSLETTER

December 2004

## Members' Items of Interest

- \* Chris Loat has been appointed Treasurer of the Society. We thank Chris for stepping forward to assume this important position.
- \* A Provincial Heritage Workshop was held at St. Thomas' Anglican Church on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. The Historical Society was asked to conduct a walking tour following the workshop. We thank Paul Lewis, John Burtniak and Bill Stevens for volunteering to do this.
- \* Society member Roxann Vivian Smith was featured in a full-page article in the Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Standard*.
- \* Congratulations to Society member Margaret Ferguson and her husband Bob upon receiving the T. Roy Adams Humanitarian of the Year Award. They were featured in a full-page article in the Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Standard*.
- \* Welcome to New Members: Ulrich Ehlert, Karen Mitchinson, Walter Asbil, Ross Tucker, Anne Tucker, Susan Wilson, Nicole Beaulieu
- \* Saturday, June 11, 2005 is the date of our bus tour. The tour will feature a drive around the western half of the Niagara Peninsula. Joyce DeForest will once again be taking reservations.
- \* Member Andy Panko was featured in the "15 Minutes With" column in the Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Standard*.
- \* Society member Maurice Gomme has started to compile a list of St. Catharines' streets and how they got their name. We want all Society members to work on this and if you know of how a street got its name please submit information to Maurice by e-mail [magomme@cogeco.ca](mailto:magomme@cogeco.ca). When the list of unknowns gets shorter, it will be posted in the newsletter for your information.
- \* Just a reminder to mark down on your calendar the next Society Meeting on Thursday, January 27, 2005 – 7:30 p.m. when Sheila Wilson will present The History of the St. Catharines Public Library.

## Upcoming Events at Lock 3

- \* November 30 – 10:30 a.m. – Merritt Day – Celebrate the Opening of the First Welland Canal when the Ann & Jane travelled through the locks in 1829. Organized by the Welland Canals Foundation.
- \* Ongoing till January 23, 2005 – "Let's Celebrate: Festival of Lights" at the Museum.
- \* February 7 – April 24, 2005 – "And Still I Rise... A History of African-Canadian Workers, 1900-Present" – Celebrate Black History Month at the Museum. This exhibit from the Worker's Arts & Heritage Centre in Hamilton features the rich heritage of African-Canadians in Ontario.
- \* Looking for that special little gift? Remember, that the gift shop at the Museum has a wonderful selection of items for sale and profits from the gift shop go to the Museum.

## Important Dates to Remember

- Tuesday, January 11, 2005 – Sir John A. Macdonald Day
- Wednesday, February 2, 2005 – World Wetland Day and Groundhog Day
- Tuesday, February 15, 2005 – Flag Day (It was 40 years ago, on February 15, 1965, when the flag was first raised)
- Monday, February 21, 2005 – Heritage Day

## Past Program Reviews

Thursday, May 27 – Mark Losier dressed as William Hamilton Merritt spoke about Merritt's Light Dragoons of the War of 1812. Mark spoke of the formation and battles of the Dragoons. He spoke of the differences between officers and regulars and the costs involved in being part of the cavalry regiment. He finished his presentation by reading a list of the troop members. Mark has been an interpreter at Fort George for over 24 years and has been involved in many re-enactments. He would eventually like to see a group formed as the Merritt Light Dragoons. Attendance was 48.

Thursday, September 23 – Robert Malcomson, author of the book "*A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812*" reminded the 51 attendees of the significance of this battle through a presentation filled with slides of the sites and people involved. Robert, a local resident and retired schoolteacher, has researched many aspects of the War of 1812 and written several books and articles on this conflict. Robert's knowledge of the prelude to the battle, the forces available on both sides and the tactics employed throughout the battle were evident in the detail he presented. If you have not read his book, you may want to do so; it will convince you that Canada is only a Nation to day, due to the bravery of the Indians, Militia Men and British Soldiers who fought in this battle on October 13, 1812.

Thursday, October 28 – Hannelore Headley is best known as the owner of a used bookstore on Queen Street. However, the store does offer some new books, primarily on local topics or by local authors, and one such new book is titled "*Blond China Doll: A Shanghai Interlude 1939-1953*", written by none other than Hannelore herself! The Society was most pleased that Hannelore agreed to speak about her new book when our previously scheduled speaker Phil Gifford had to cancel due to unforeseen work commitments out of the area (Phil will speak at the March meeting). Hannelore looks back in time to tell of the fourteen years she and her family spent as refugees in Shanghai, China. It is a story of a young girl during a time dominated by war, politics and desperation. The story begins in Berlin on the night of November 9, 1938, the night known as the "Night of Broken Glass". In 1939, Hannelore and her German Jewish family fled for safety in China. By 1951, Shanghai had become politically dangerous under the Communists. Under this threat the family left China for Canada. The book is a personal journey of a girl who became a young woman during a time never to be forgotten. A web site [www.blondchinadoll.com](http://www.blondchinadoll.com) is available to find out more about this book. Attendance was 68. A raffle was held and refreshments were enjoyed after the presentation. We thank John Burtiak for donating several books for each meeting's raffle.

Thursday, November 11 – Remembrance Day – Society President Bill Stevens placed a wreath on behalf of the Society at the service held at the downtown cenotaph. A large turn out was on hand to remember those who made the supreme sacrifice so that we can live in freedom.

Thursday, November 11 – A joint meeting held in conjunction with the Ontario Genealogical Society Niagara Peninsula Branch attracted a very good turn out from both organizations with 76 attending. Rob Leverty from the Ontario Historical Society spoke on the struggle to preserve our cemeteries. Ontario's Cemeteries are unique repositories of human history and the resting places of human remains and associated artifacts like grave markers, tombstones and monuments; they are important elements of our collective heritage, a priceless historical record of the past, and witnesses to the continuity of life in Ontario. Cemeteries can also contain significant ecological features invaluable to the natural heritage of Ontario. The following four principles are basic to all the peoples of Ontario: 1. the sanctity of the deceased is paramount to all other concerns, 2. the deceased have a right to rest in peace in the tradition and custom of their religion, 3. common human dignity must be respected and 4. the living must be responsible for the care of the deceased. It is in the public interest that cemeteries be protected, preserved and maintained in their original location.

## Those Who Served as Leaders of Merritton

In 1874 Merritton was incorporated as a Village

### Reeves

1874 - 1879 – W. W. Waite	1897 - 1898 – Stephen R. Bradley
1880 - 1881 – John MacLean	1899 - Milo G. Phelps
1882 - James D. Mubrennan	1900 - 1901 – Dr. J. H. Vanderburgh
1883 - 1884 – Richard Leeson	1902 - William H. Wilson
1885 - 1887 – Elija H. Phelps	1903 - 1909 – Elija H. Phelps
1888 - 1891 – John MacLean	1910 - 1912 – William H. Wilson
1892 - James Prior	1913 - 1914 – Richard Carroll
1893 - 1895 – William H. Wilson	1915 - 1917 – Henry J. Bradley
1896 - Jessey M. Ness	1918 partial - A. R. Thompson

On July 1, 1918 the Village became a Town with a Mayor as its Chief Executive and a Reeve as the County Executive

### Mayors

1918 partial - 1920 – Thomas F. Hastings	1934 - 1941 – John R. Scott
1921 - 1922 – Robert Stuart	1942 - 1945 – Frederick O. Leeson
1923 - 1924 – Harry N. Boyle	1946 - 1950 – Leslie H. Skipper
1925 - 1926 – Thomas F. Hastings	1951 - 1955 – Frederick O. Leeson
1927 - 1930 – Harry N. Boyle	1956 - 1960 – Harley M. Johnson
1931 - 1933 – Thomas Fairburn	

### Reeves – County Executives

1918 partial – Richard Carroll
1919 - 1928 – William A. Richardson
1929 - 1930 – George A. Wilson
1931 - 1936 – William E. Nesbitt
1937 - 1944 – Joseph D. Hilts
1945 - Alexander Swindley
1946 - 1949 – Leonard J. Hoare

### Reeves

1950 - William Brown
1951 - James Ricci
1952 - Harley M. Johnson
1953 - Leonard J. Leo
1954 - 1955 – Albert Essex
1956 - 1958 – Jack McNaughton
1959 - 1960 – William McIntosh
1960 - William Marshall

On January 1, 1961 Merritton was amalgamated into the City of St. Catharines

## Items of Interest

\* Congratulations to Tom Smelle, Carl Smelle, Donald “Nip” O’Hearn, Craig Woodhouse and Levio “Red” Ferracuti on being inducted into the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame.

\* Touted to be the world’s largest digital collection of Canadian local histories, Our Roots: Canada’s Local Histories Online can be found at [www.ourroots.ca](http://www.ourroots.ca). Organized by the University of Calgary Press and Universite Laval Library with the cooperation of another dozen academic and archival institutions, the website enables free access to more than a century’s worth of published material. There is a keyword search as well as by author, title, etc. which allows you to find material easily.

\* On September 24, the Hon. James Bradley announced plans for a “St. Catharines Heritage Corridor” to run through downtown from the west end of the City and then along Queenston Street and ending at the Museum. This is a great initiative and with support of local politicians and property owners along the route, we could see a major heritage route created.

## Those Who Served as Leaders of Port Dalhousie

On October 30, 1862 the Municipal Council of the County of Lincoln passed a By-Law to change the status of the unincorporated Village of Port Dalhousie to an Incorporated Village of Port Dalhousie and further enacted that the first election in the village be held.

### Reeves

1863 - 1870 – John Lawrie  
1871 - George Adams Clark  
1872 - John Lawrie  
1873 - George Adams Clark  
1874 - Stephen Decatur Andrews  
1875 - 1876 – John Lawrie  
1877 - Johnson Gregory  
1878 - 1883 – John Lawrie  
1884 - 1890 – Eugene F. Dwyer  
1891 - 1893 – Charles A. Wilson  
1894 - 1896 – Charles Phillimore  
1897 - 1898 – Thomas Read  
1899 - 1900 – Albert Zimmerman  
1901 - Richard F. Foote  
1902 - 1906 – Thomas Read

1907 - 1908 – Richard F. Foote  
1909 - 1911 – Alex. M. Humphries  
1912 - 1913 – William G. Sutton  
1914 - 1916 – Thomas O. Johnston  
1917 - William G. Sutton  
1918 - 1919 – Robert H. Johnston  
1920 - 1921 – William G. Sutton  
Jun-Dec 1921 – William Cavers Muir  
1922 - 1923 – James A. Wellington  
1924 - 1927 – Robert H. Johnston  
1928 - 1929 – Fred J. Sutton  
1930 - Charles A. Ansell  
1931 - Fred J. Sutton  
1932 - 1935 – Charles A. Ansell  
1936 - 1940 – David Blackwood  
1941 - 1947 – Robert Mercer Johnston

On May 9, 1948 Port Dalhousie became a Town

### Mayors

1948 – 1949 – Romaine Kay Ross  
1950 – 1960 – Robert Mercer Johnston

On January 1, 1961 Port Dalhousie amalgamated into the City of St. Catharines

## St. Thomas' Anglican Church – 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The congregation of St. Thomas' Anglican Church celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at a Sunday service on October 17, 2004. During the service, a drama was performed titled "Securing our Future – Forward in Faith", written and directed by Margaret Newby, which re-enacted a meeting of the Rector and Trustees held in Thomas Merritt's office on an evening in February 1879. A few of the parishioners in the cast are members of our Historical Society.

The cornerstone of the Church was laid on September 12, 1877 and the first worship service was held on October 19, 1879. The architect was M. E. Beebe of Buffalo and the builder was T. Sullivan. The original cost of this 'Richardson Romanesque' style Church was \$22,000. In 1905 the stained glass window depicting St. Thomas was dedicated as a memorial to Augustus Halliday, a freed slave who farmed a small property on Wellington Street and attended church every Sunday. The parish hall was built in 1925. St. Thomas' has been the Parish Church of Ridley College since 1889. The students attended St. Thomas' each Sunday until a Chapel was built at Ridley in 1923. In 1983 a columbarium (a repository for cremated remains) was built in the basement and dedicated by The Right Reverend John C. Bothwell on Advent Sunday, November 27, 1983.

## My Three-Day History Binge

By Bill Stevens

Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> started off windy, cold and rainy, but luck was on side as at 1:35 p.m. the rains ended and the wind had subsided somewhat. The Heritage Designation ceremony set for 2:00 p.m. at Mayholme proceeded on time with a very large number of heritage supporters in attendance. I had the privilege to act as Master of Ceremonies for the event. Corlene Taylor had faith in me and considering the importance of the occasion and with all the dignitaries present along with the crowd, I wondered if I was up to the task. Once the speeches ended and the plaque unveiling had taken place, I breathed a sigh of relief. I was also thankful to those who took credit for the change of weather fortunes. About 225 people, many of them Historical Society members, went through Mayholme on Saturday alone and it was certainly worth doing so! This facility has added a new dimension to the historical assets we have in this City and will be an invaluable resource for historians, particularly those searching their roots in Niagara.

Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup> was cold and very windy as Ivy and I dashed for the Port Dalhousie Lighthouse doorway. There we met two very informative volunteers who explained the intricacies of climbing up to the top, and the need to come back down backwards. While I had been up to the top before, Ivy had never been inside, so Doors Open provided that opportunity. Once at the top, the view was absolutely spectacular and watching the waves crashing over the western pier was awesome! We then went to Ridley College and were greeted by the official Town Crier Mark Molnar, who was truly up to form. Inside students supplied a tour briefing and our tour guide turned out to be none other than our Society Treasurer Chris Loat. We had never been inside the Chapel and Chris showed and explained to us many interesting features. It was then off to the newly renovated Court House downtown, where I anticipated a simple walk through, but it turned out to be a two-hour stop. Carousel Players had organized this Open Doors venue to ensure you saw everything, even the upper attic area and into the clock tower ...wow what an experience. Mr. Horvath, the local jeweller, was on hand and explained his duties as clock tower keeper and as a City we are indeed truly blessed with such an individual. Carousel Players gave us a complete tour and even undertook a re-enactment of a true court case held in that courthouse! Never one to be near the library and not go into Special Collections, I took the opportunity to do an hour of research for this newsletter! Having a couple hours left before the second annual Doors Open in St. Catharines wrapped up, we decided to see inside St. Thomas Church, at least beyond what the glass doors will permit. Again, a Society member, Wynn Nicholson greeted us and her son gave us an extended tour and historical commentary. Of particular interest to me was a painting of the church by Marion Nelson Hooker and the Columbarium.

Monday, October 18<sup>th</sup> was a normal day at work, but followed by a ghostly experience! Society member Mark Losier had told me about his activities at Fort George conducting tours for The Friends of Fort George, but his description was not close to the real thing. The Social Committee at work had organized a Ghost Tour and having been promised it would be very interesting to a person interested in history, I signed up. While Ivy and I dressed for the weather, it couldn't have been colder and windier as tour leader Kyle Upton and his assistant Mark Losier met us in the parking lot. With only a candle lantern we set off to the fort gates where our first scary event took place ... Stinky the skunk was having a little run-about over the ramp area! Inside it was dark, very dark and the candle glow created images on the ground and walls, but that was about all I saw in the way of ghosts, what others saw I couldn't verify. The history, the ghost stories and fun we had, made for a most interesting historical event. Over three days, I saw many Society members volunteering at or visiting these sites and I am sure we all enjoyed the experiences and are looking forward to next years Doors Open Niagara.

*In celebration of  
Black History Month*  
**Harriet Tubman's  
Gravesite in  
Auburn, New York**

Photos of monument by  
Bill Stevens, October 29, 2004

Located in Fort Hill  
Cemetery, Section 36 –  
West Lawn C – the  
Monument Transcription  
Reads as follows:  
To The Memory of /  
HARRIET TUBMAN  
DAVIS / Heroine of the  
Underground Railroad /  
Nurse and Scout in the  
Civil War / Born about  
1820 in Maryland / Died  
March 10, 1913 at  
Auburn, N.Y. / "Servant  
of God, Well Done" /  
Erected by the / Empire  
State Federation of  
Womens Club's /  
July 5, 1937.



**FORT HILL CEMETERY**  
19 FORT STREET  
AUBURN NY 13021  
EST. 1851

PH: 315-253-8132  
Office Hours: Mon. - Fri.  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

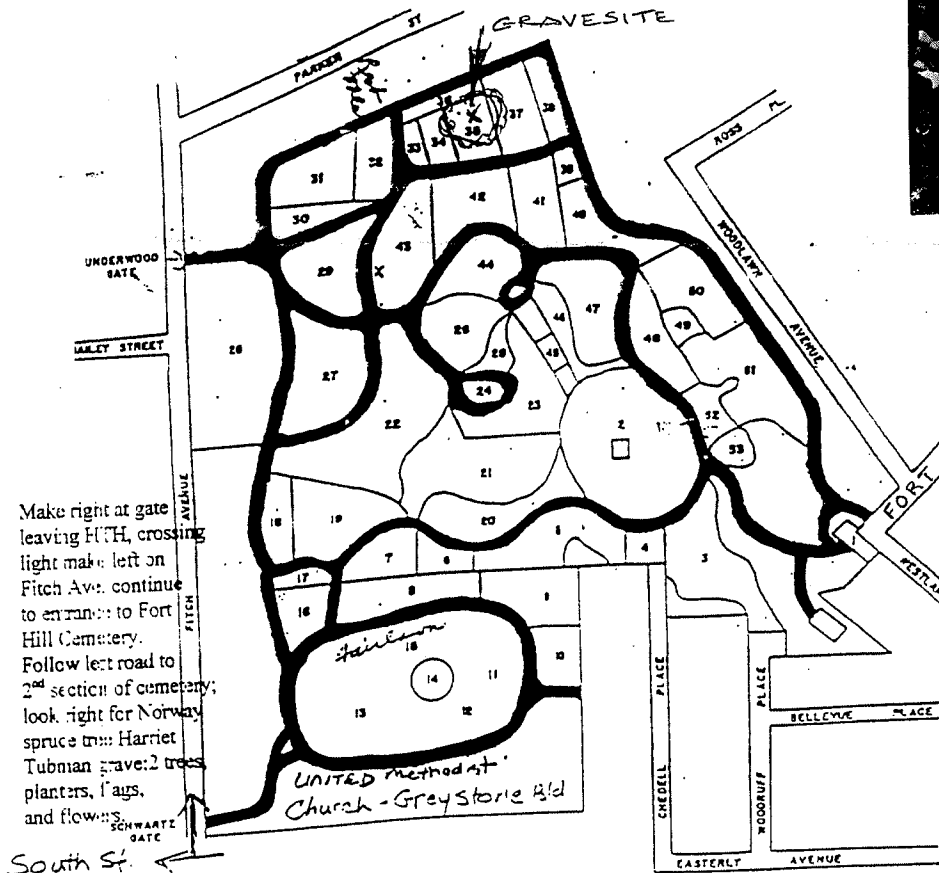
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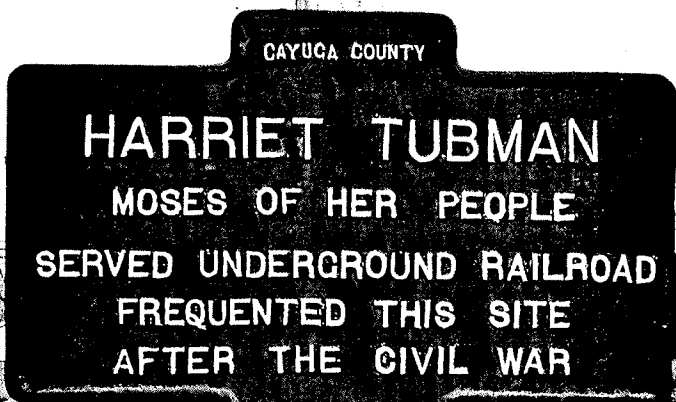
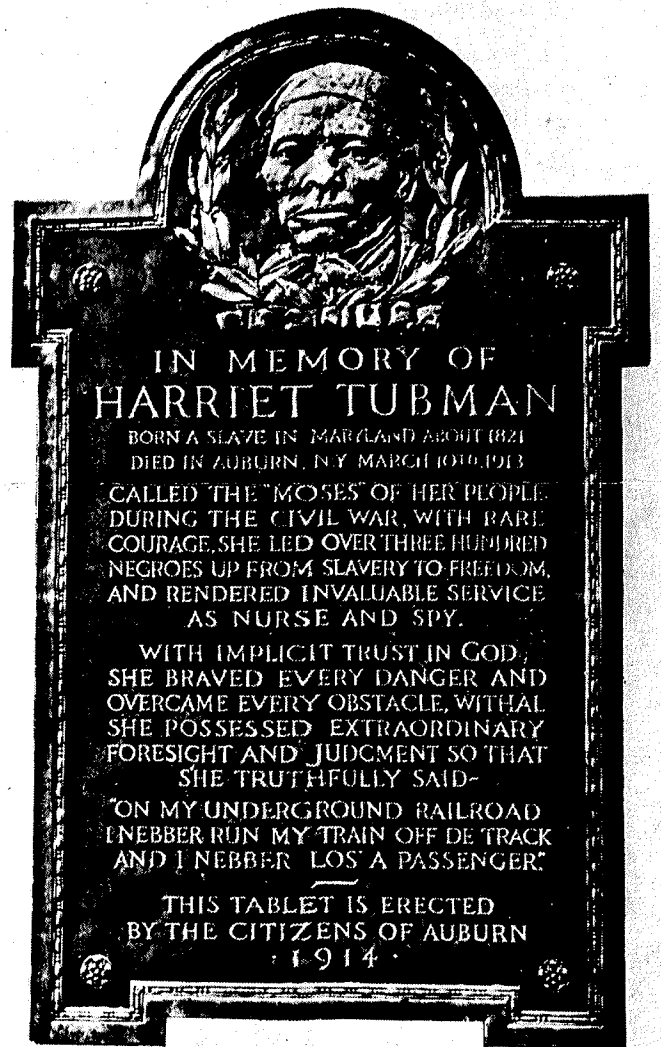
Photos and information on the following page are of the Home of Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York. The home is located at 180 South Street. It is owned by the AME Zion Church. Rebuilt in 1952. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Interior restored, 1979, to represent the period she lived there (1860-1913). The site is the location of the Annual Tubman Pilgrimage held on Memorial Day weekend.

I thank Christine Carter for the wonderful tour.

Photos taken by Bill Stevens, Oct. 29, 2004







## The "Collegiate"

In 1827 a public meeting was held to establish "The Grantham Academy", a private school at the time. However, it was two years before it opened in 1829. Incorporation did not take place until 1830. The school was supported by voluntary contributions of the shareholders. As we know, it eventually became a public institution. The school was initially located on Church Street in what is today's Folk Arts Centre, also known as the Robertson School. In 1871 the name changed to The St. Catharines Collegiate Institute. In 1922 the school moved to its current location on Catherine Street and was renamed the St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School. The enrolment in 1923 was 797 and this went up to 1,690 students in 1929.

The accompanying illustration on this page is from the 1929 school year book "Vox Collegiensis", produced by the students 100 years after the first classes were held.

The school currently has just over 900 students. This year represents the 175<sup>th</sup> year of continuous education and makes it one of the oldest active high schools in Ontario.

# St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School

The Foremost Educational Institution in the Niagara Peninsula



## THREE SCHOOLS IN ONE

### COLLEGIATE

### COMMERCIAL

### TECHNICAL

Collegiate Department offers a full course of 4 years, leading to Junior Matriculation and Second Class Teacher's Certificates and a fifth year for Honor Matriculation and First Class Teacher's standing.

Commercial Department prepares boys and girls for business and office work. The regular course is three years and provides a thorough training in general knowledge including English History, Science and Mathematics, while special attention is given to Bookkeeping, Shorthand, Typewriting and other Commercial Subjects.

A special one-year course is offered to those who have successfully completed two or more years in any regular Collegiate Course.

Technical Department offers two courses:

(a) Industrial (for boys only)

A three-year course leading to manufacturing and industrial trades. Affords a good general course in English, Science and Mathematics with special attention to Shop work and Drafting.

(b) Household Arts (for girls only)

A three-year course leading to Nursing, Salesmanship, Trades, Art and Homemaking. Affords a good general academic training in English, Science and Mathematics, with special attention to Dressmaking, Millinery, Art, Cookery and Home-nursing.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 1929

A. H. Trapnell (Chairman), A. A. Craise (Vice-Chairman), W. P. Holmes, G. A. Robertson, Mrs. Mary Malcolmson, F. N. Rutherford, Wm. Nicholson, J. G. Schiller, J. J. Mackan, J. S. Dunlop, F. R. Paxton, C. J. Harris, J. W. Crawford.

Additional Members of Advisory Vocational Committee—Chas Sim, J. E. Riffer, C. N. Candee, Ellis Jones, Frank Malloy, J. W. McKinnon.

C. T. McBRIDE (Secretary)

W. J. SALTER (Principal)

Administration Offices: 15 Welland Ave., Telephone 346