

# *NEWSLETTER*

P.O. Box 23104, 124 Welland Ave., St.Catharines, ON, L2R 7P6 August 1998

Web Site - <http://www.niagara.com/~dmdorey/hssc/hssc.html>

If you are not a member of the Society, we invite you to join. Membership is based upon the calendar year and dues are individual \$10 or family \$15.00.

## "TAKING THE WATERS: A HISTORY OF THE SPAS OF ST.CATHARINES"

"After more than a year and a half in preparation we are pleased to announce that the results of hours of research, editing and layout is expected to be put to the presses within a few weeks of now."... So said our February newsletter announcement! Well unfortunately, the copy took longer to go to press than foreseen .... unforeseen problems arose and a further delay resulted. This being the Society's first book publishing venture in awhile, it has proven a valuable learning experience in patience and an understanding of the requirements of just such an undertaking. None the less, we do expect a quality product to be available very soon.

## *CALENDAR --- Do You Have Some Rare or Unusual Picture?*

The 1999 Historical Society Calendar is already in the planning stages. We are looking for several pictures that have not been in print before. The calendar has been a huge success for the Society, and we are hoping that new pictures become available and allow us to continue producing this fine calendar to promote the City's historical qualities.

## *THE SOCIETY'S COMING EVENTS ---- Something for everyone!*

**September 3** (Thursday) - **PICNIC** - Traditionally we begin our speaker's program in September, however, Labour Day is late this year ... so we are having a picnic instead of a speaker. This event will be on the first Thursday of September at Morningstar Mountain Mills at DeCew Falls. Time 6-8 p.m. Bring your own picnic and lawn and join us for a guided tour by the Friends of Morningstar Mill. Dress casual .... rain or shine.

**October 1** (Thursday) - at the St.Catharines Museum - in recognition of the sport of lacrosse, a special meeting to introduce our members & guests to the new Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame. The program on Thursday will begin at 7:30 p.m.

**November 5** (Thursday) - in the Mills Room of the downtown library. Ron Brown will speak on Ghost Towns of Ontario and feature those in the Niagara area. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. with a short business meeting.

**December 3** (Thursday) - in the Mills Room of the downtown library. Richard Wright will speak on the Horror Children

**January 7** (Thursday) - in the Mills Room of the downtown library. Speaker T.B.A.

The program will begin at 7:30 with a short business meeting.

Program continues.....

**February 4** (Thursday) - in the Mills Room of the downtown library. Speaker will be Dennis Gannon on the topic of "Hiram Wilson".

**March 4** (Thursday) - in the Mills Room of the downtown library. Speaker will be Frank Caplan who will introduce his new book on Port Dalhousie.

***SUMMER EVENTS PROVE SUCCESSFUL - A Brief Report....***

## **HERITAGE BUS TOUR TO HALDIMAND AND NORFOLK AREA**

On Saturday, June 20 - 41 persons enjoyed a very lovely day trip. The morning portion was a tour of Ruthven Park after which the motor coach headed for Port Dover for lunch. The afternoon featured a tour of Cottonwood Mansion in Selkirk. Thanks to the bus tour committee of Joyce, Jim, Brenda and Dennis for an excellent tour.

## ***CELEBRATION OF MR. MERRITT'S BIRTHDAY***

On Saturday, July 4th at 10 a.m. John Burtiak conducted a brief service under rainy skies. Wreaths were laid in celebration of Mr. Merritt's birthday (which is actually July 3<sup>rd</sup>) at the statue at the east end of Burgoyne Bridge. About 20 people then joined Dennis Gannon on a very informative walk over to Rodman Hall where a tour of the building & grounds was conducted with refreshments following. Our thanks to Alison Burgoyne co-ordinator of volunteers and the two tour guides.

## **20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NIAGARA PENINSULA HISTORY CONFERENCE**

The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual History Conference will be held at Brock University on Saturday September 19 and will feature guest speakers: Ron Dale, Dennis Gannon, Dan Glenday, John Jackson, Cecilia Morgan, Carmela Patrias, Peter Stokes, Robert Taylor and Bobbie Styran. A Field trip to local historical sites will be held on Sunday, September 20. For further information and registration, contact John Burtiak at Brock University (905) 688-5550 ext.3264.

## ***HERITAGE HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER ....Keeps you up to date .....***

Keep up to date with all the Heritage events happening around Niagara by picking up a copy of "HERITAGE HAPPENINGS" at the library, or subscribe by sending \$20.00 per year to Dennis Gannon at 86 Queen Street, St.Catharines, ON, L2R 5H3.

## ***HERITAGE HOUR - At CFBU.FM 103.7 - BROCK RADIO***

Every Sunday night between 8 and 9 p.m. on Brock Radio you can listen to Niagara Heritage Hour. Tony Whelan is host of the show. The show features coming events, guests from the local heritage community, news, and information of all sorts. Be sure to listen in!

## ***HISTORICAL HATS OFF TO TAYLOR & BATE BREWERY***

St.Paul Street will soon be the new home of the Taylor & Bate Brewery. Hats off to the owners for choosing such a great location to re-establish this former St.Catharines industry. A report in the June 9 issue of The Standard indicates that the brewery was originally established in 1834 and operated here until 1935. We wish the family descendants great success.

## ***THE NORTHUMBERLAND BELL COMES BACK TO TOWN***

Thanks to John Roseman for bringing the Northumberland bell back to Port Dalhousie and St.Catharines. The ship was destroyed by fire in June of 1949 after several years of ferrying people to and from Port Dalhousie and Toronto.

## ***LOUIS SHICKLUNA our 1998 Niagara Enterprise Hall Of Fame Nominee***

The Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards takes place annually in October. There is one member selected into the Historical Hall of Fame each year. The category recognizes the contributions of the builders of the Niagara economy. The Society has nominated Louis Shickluna for this award.

Louis Shickluna was born on June 16,1808 in Senglea on the Island of Malta. At the young age of 11 years he became involved with the marine industry. In 1838 and at the age of 30, Louis arrived in St.Catharines and leased a former shipyard from William Hamilton Merritt. In 1845 he purchased it outright.

Business prospered, but

in 1856 he sold the yard

only to repurchase it in

1857. Upwards of 250

St  
men were employed  
through to 60's.  
Louis died at 3 o'clock  
Saturday morning April  
24, 1880 at the age of  
71 and was buried in  
Victoria Lawn Cemetery  
in section C. He left his  
4<sup>th</sup> wife, Mary Ann  
DUNN, who died in  
1913. He was also  
survived by 4 sons and  
2 daughters. His son  
Joseph continued the  
operation until he sold  
it in 1892

*This picture of Louis  
SHICKLUNA was  
probably taken in 1871  
prior to his trip back to  
Malta.*

Much of the information for this short write-up was extracted from an article written by Peter Warwick and held in a binder (929.209713Shi) in special collections at the library.

### **DECEW FALLS HYDRO GENERATING STATION CENTENNIAL**

The following is from the: "Canadian Electrical News and Steam Engineering Journal - Vol. VIII, No.12, December 1898"

"Saturday, November 12 (1898) will go down, in the electrical annals of Canada, a red letter day, as it will chronicle the formal opening of the electric power plant of the Cataract Power Company of Hamilton Limited, for the transmission of electrical energy from a point on the Niagara escarpment near DeCew Falls, to Hamilton, a distance of 35 miles, the conception and carrying out of which must always stand as a monument of business pluck and enterprise on the part of those interested in and forming the Cataract Power Company. Over three years ago when the transmission of energy by

Electricity over long distances for commercial purposes was still in much of an experimental stage, the possibility of utilizing the magnificent fall of over 200 feet, obtainable at DeCew Falls where the waters of the Beaver Dams creek tumble over the Niagara escarpment for the generation of electrical energy to be transmitted to the City of Hamilton, 35 miles distant..."

The article continues for 4 full pages detailing the engineering marvel of the day. The article provides the names of the founders of the Cataract Power Company of Hamilton Limited: John Patterson, J.M. Gibson, John Moodie, James Dixon, and J.W. Sutherland who were all well known citizens of Hamilton. After creation of the Company, detailed plans were prepared, and the final version of the generating station was constructed 3/4 of a mile east of DeCew Falls along the escarpment where an additional fall of 70 feet was obtained. A 4 1/4 mile long canal was constructed from the Welland Canal at Allanburg over private right of ways to provide an obstructed waterway. Storage basins were also constructed to conserve the water during periods of light load. The transmission of the power to Hamilton was the next obstacle, as the distance was greater than any previous transmission distance undertaken. The longer the distance, the heavier the cable, and at 10,000 volts, which was the highest pressure used anywhere to date, the cable would be too big and too expensive. After a year of attempts, a voltage of 24,000 was eventually engineered and ground was broken for the construction of the transmission line on October 5, 1897 and current flowed to Hamilton on the afternoon of **August 25, 1898**.

Come and celebrate this August 25 with a plaque unveiling and on August 29 between 10-4 o'clock for an open house at the DeCew station. Both events are being planned by Ontario Hydro.

To read the entire article or obtain further information, visit the special collections area of the St.Catharines Public Library and look for the folder catalogued as 621.312134Art.

## ***COMPUTORS AND THE INTERNET - surfing the world wide web!***

***Genealogy in Niagara***- this is a new connection to the Niagara Genealogy web site, which is part of the Ontario Gen Web Network go to: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~onniagar/>

***Niagara Mailing List***- this is a new site devoted to genealogy and history in Niagara. You can post short e-mail messages, place a query, answer a query from someone else, read about some current news, etc. There are currently already about 150 members in just a few weeks.

**To subscribe you simply e-mail the list at:** [NIAGARA-ONT-L-request@rootsweb.com](mailto:NIAGARA-ONT-L-request@rootsweb.com)

And in the body of your message, simply write ... subscribe. You will be notified that you have joined and provided with instructions on posting and to unsubscribe.

## **Newsletter Note ...**

The St.Catharines Historical Society 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 the Society and historical items of interests. Comments and queries should be directed to the Society postal address. Opinions and comments expressed in the newsletter are those the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society. Subscription is by paid membership only This issue was produced by Bill Stevens.