

The Historical Society of St. Catharines

NEWSLETTER November 1999

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. Affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

Membership is based upon the calendar year and dues are individual \$10 or family \$15.00. Please join or renew now for the 2000 membership year.

The Society's Upcoming Speakers Program

November 4, 1999 (Thursday) - 7:30 p.m. in the Mills Room of the downtown library. The Society presents author Frank Caplan, speaking on PORT DALHOUSIE: "Footsteps Through Time".

December 2, 1999 (Thursday) - The Society will hold it's First Annual **SHOW AND TELL** Night. Members are requested to bring along an item of interest and in two to three minutes, explain the item. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. with a short business meeting in the Mills Room of the downtown library. A social will follow.

As this is the last newsletter for 1999, the Board of Directors would like to extend Season's Greetings and Best Wishes to members and their families.

January 6, 2000 (Thursday) - The Society is pleased to present member Alun Hughes. Alun is well known for his presentations on historical topics pertaining to Niagara. This is sure to be an interesting and enjoyable presentation. The program begins at 7:30 with a short business meeting in the Mills Room of the downtown library.

February 3, 2000 (Thursday). - The Society is delighted to have member Victoria Gateskil, author, researcher and feature writer, speak to the membership. The presentation will be in celebration of Black History month and will be a joint meeting with the Museum. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Burgoyne Room of the St. Catharines Museum on Government Road. Tours of the Museum will be available to members at 7:00 p.m.

March 2, 2000 (Thursday) - Society meeting and speaker - 7:30 p.m. at the library.

April 6, 2000 (Thursday) - Society **annual meeting** and speaker. 7:00 p.m. at the library.

May 4, 2000 (Thursday) - The final speaker in the Society's program this season. 7:30 p.m. in the Mills Room of the downtown library.

LOOKING AHEAD

Oille Fountain Planting - Sat., May 13, 2000 Bus Tour - Sat., June 17, 2000

Some Other Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

November 11, 1999 (Thursday) - Regular meeting and speaker of the Ontario Genealogical Society Niagara Peninsula Branch - 7:30 p.m. at the Thorold Public Library Chestnut Hall. The O.G.S. branch meets on the second Thursday of every month, usually at Chestnut Hall

February 12, 2000 (Saturday) - Niagara Heritage Showcase at the Pelham Library, Fonthill.

May 3 - 7, 2000 - The United Empire Loyalist Convention will be held at the Renaissance Fallsview Hotel in Niagara Falls, hosted by the Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF....

New Membership Chair - Wendy Robson has assumed the position of membership chair. Wendy can be reached at: wrobson@vaxxine.com
Our thanks to Avril Brass for her many dedicated years of service to the Society.

New Members - We welcome: Roseanne Partington and Mike Donaghue.

History Award Recipient - The Society congratulates Robin Healey of Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School on being the recipient of the Society award as the best student in O.A.C. History at his school, as determined by the principal in consultation with the history department.

World of Words - The Society participated on Saturday and Sunday October 16 & 17 at this event which took place at the Pen Center. Thanks to Bill Stevens, Joyce DeForest, John Jackson and Tom Jenkyns for manning the table.

Kevin McCabe - We thank Kevin for his presentation on October 7th to the 36 people in attendance. Kevin told the story of Florence Nightingale and her influence upon Dr. Theophilus Mack and his subsequent establishment of the Mack Training School for Nurses. Kevin is currently researching the history of "Mack".

Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame and Museum.

Congratulations are in order to Ted Sawicki and Ron Winterbottom who were inducted into the Lacrosse Hall of Fame on September 25th. They join the following members from St. Catharines: Inducted in 1997 - Ken Croft, Derry Davies, Frank Madsen, Bob McCready, Don O'Hearn, Ron Roy, Bill Frick, Helen Sawicki. Inducted in 1998 - Jim Brady, Peter Conradi, Jim McMahan, Carson Meyers, John Mouradian. Members of the Canadian Hall of Fame are automatically members of the Ontario Hall of Fame. Also, congratulations to Bill Frick on his induction into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame in New Westminster, B.C.

Newsletter Note ... Next Issue February 2000

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 historical items of interests. 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 is by paid membership only. This issue was produced by Bill Stevens.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture & Recreation.

Remembrance Day - Thursday, November 11

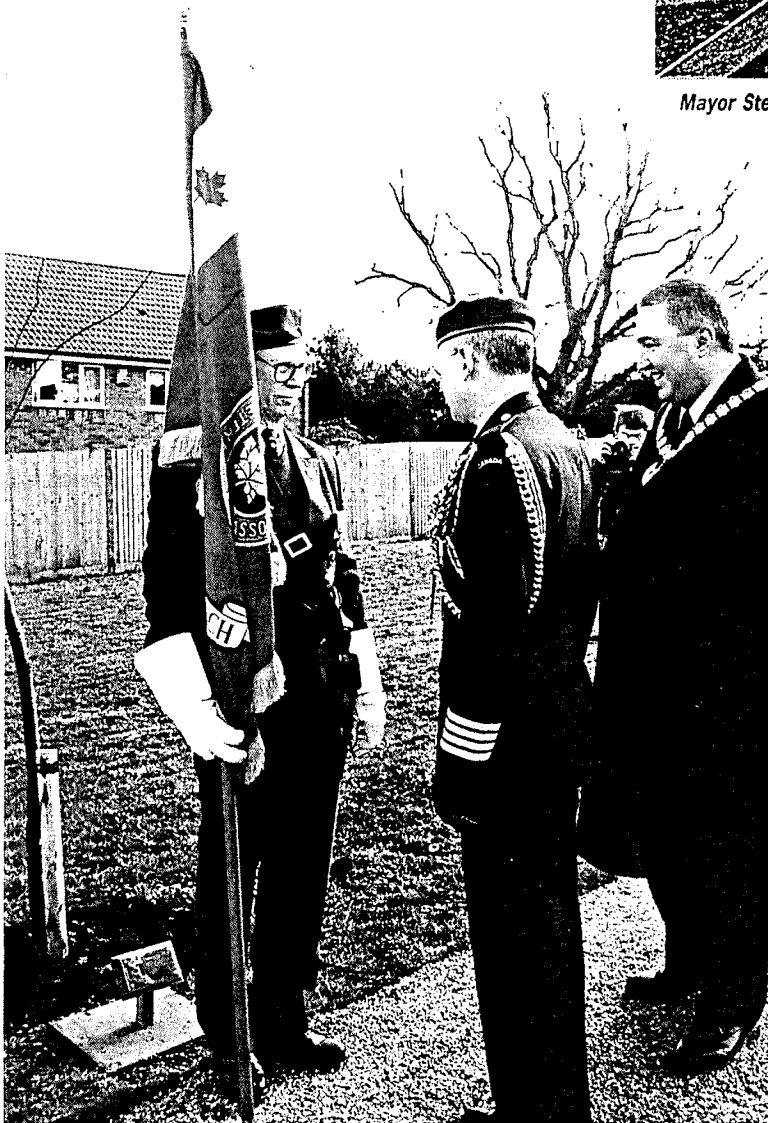
The photograph of the service and an article which appeared in the Sussex Express newspaper on March 12, 1999 are courtesy of Roy Adams. While this event took place last March, it is an important reminder today of the sacrifice made by many Canadians.

Sussex Express, Friday, March 12, 1999

Green in memory of war-time allies



Mayor Stephen Isted opens the new green in memory of Canadian soldiers
HU.10.9.A.C



THERE is a corner of a foreign field that will be forever... Canada, and it can be found in Crowborough.

On Saturday, the green was opened by town Mayor Stephen Isted and the Royal British Legion and the Canadian Veterans' Association were both in attendance.

There was also a display from the Household Cavalry Mounted Division on the green before the ceremony which took place at 10.30am.

The land has been donated by Sunley Estates who have developed some of the site behind All Saints Church.

The area, that will be named Canada Green, has been created in the memory of nine members of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment from Ontario, Canada.

They were killed by a flying bomb while stationed in the town in July 1944.

The half-an-acre site has a flagpole and nine maple trees, the national symbol of Canada, have been planted to create an avenue.

Cllr Isted said the day had been a success: 'We have always had strong links with Canada so it is nice to be able to remem-

ber the people who died. A lot of the Canadians who were here during the war married Crowborough girls and stayed here.

'We have a memorial where it happened and their names are on our war memorial, but now we have another reminder.'

Bill Smith, president of the Canadian Veterans' Association and who lives in Jarvis Brook, said: 'We are very happy that it has been open. We have strong links with Crowborough and the people have been very kind to us.'

'It is a nice way for my friends to be remembered.'

Historical Society In St. Catharines

Undoubtedly the first historical Society in St. Catharines is the one mentioned in the "St. Catharines and Vicinity Directory of 1877-78" which is said to have been formed in the 1820's. This is likely the same Society that issued a circular in 1863 so that "the objects contemplated by the Society will be better understood."

Their secretary Rev. Thomas D. Phillips said "I am directed to draw your attention to the claims of the Society through whose agency a considerable amount of useful matter has already been collected. They embrace documents and published works of an old date, relative to matters of general interest concerning the early history of the country; also, several very complete biographical sketches of some of the best known of our first settlers — men whose influence in the formation of our institutions was such, that their lives form no inconsiderable part of the early history of Canada; and whose immediate descendents are, in too many instances, rapidly passing off the stage of life, without leaving us those memorials of their ancestry from which a people's history can best be compiled.

The success which has attended the scanty efforts already made, convinces us that a rich mine of valuable information, now latent, can be struck, and an interesting repository of useful knowledge formed, if our operations could be extended, and a large number of persons induced to co-operate in a work calculated to elicit the best feelings of the patriot: who thus collects for the benefit of posterity the materials for constructing a historical edifice, which all may yet hope to see made worthy of our noble country. With this view we venture to solicit from you, either in an original or copied shape, any historic records likely to interest, to be deposited in the archives of the Society. At our monthly meetings papers on historical subjects are aired; and any communication of this nature will be thankfully received on behalf of the Society" — Some of the information they collected is now available at the Archives in Ottawa.

In 1864 the "Historical Society of Canada West" published William Hamilton Merritt's "Journal of the war of 1812" and the following year they met to consider amending the constitution and changing the name from the "Upper Canada Society" to the "Historical Society of British North America", and a committee was appointed to examine the materials on the subject of a biography of the late Honourable William H. Merritt. By 1866 the amalgamation of the Literary Society, Literary Association, Mutual Improvement Society and the Historical Society took place forming a new Literary Society (of men only!!!)

In a booklet published in 1896 by D. M. Walker & Co., there is a record of a St. Catharines Historical Society which was organized on September 22, 1896 in the Collegiate Institute Hall. The officers for the first year were: President, W. J. Robertson LL.D.; Vice-Presidents, Hon. J. G. Currie, Rev. Dean Harris, W. H. Merritt, M.D.; Secretary, Miss Cloney; Asst. Secretary, Rev. W. W. Smith; Treasurer, Dr. Kilmer; Historian,

Mrs. J. G. Currie; Executive Committee, Mr. A. R. Carnochan, Mrs. Youmans, Mrs. A. G. Brown, Mr. J. Henderson, and Mrs. W. H. McClive.

The name of the present society has been a matter of discussion since the first public meeting 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 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 reference, 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. Bright prepared the Societies first pamphlet, an information guide for these visitors.

In June of 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 a 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 their 1967 president David Plumb.

At the St. Catharines Museum

November 21 through December 23 - Victorian Christmas Holiday Program.

November 20, 1999 through February 20, 2000 - Exhibit - Ghosts of Fashions Past: Women's Dress in the Age of Dickens, 1836-1870.

November 27th is Merritt Day at the St. Catharines Museum. At 10 a.m. a celebration of the opening of the First Welland Canal in 1832 will take place. This event is being organized by the Welland Canal Foundation.

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. CATHARINES MUSEUM

On June 3, 1967 (Canada's centennial year) the former Merritton Town Hall opened as the home of the St. Catharines Historical Museum.

The opening was the culmination of the efforts of the Lincoln Historical Society which had voiced, as early as 1938, the need for a permanent place to house displays and preserve historical artifacts which the Society had collected. At that time, the Society sought the City's support, as they did again in the 1950's, but it was not until 1965 when the Chamber of Commerce promoted the museum as a tourist attraction that the idea became a reality.

City council suggested the old Merritton Town Hall as the ideal location, because the hall was itself a heritage building. The City undertook this as a Canada Centennial Project and approved Gordon C. Merritt, of the Historical Society, as the chair of the Museum Association. The Museum's first director was John Smith, a former St. Catharines mayor and Lincoln M.P.

As the Museum expanded, the Old Town Hall became increasingly cramped and confining, so a search began for a larger site. Among those investigated was the old Robertson School on Church Street and the historic Lincoln County Courthouse building on King Street. But, no city-owned building, was deemed appropriate (without extremely high renovation costs).

Finally, a site was approved and the Museum Board embarked on a most ambitious project to raise enough funds to assist the City in building a new Museum.

The new Museum was officially opened on May 18, 1991 at the Welland Canals Centre at Lock 3. Here, both citizens and tourists alike can marvel at the intertwined history of St. Catharines and the Welland Canals. It occupies a unique location at the Welland Canals Centre, sharing the facility with a Tourist Information Centre, the Museum Shop, a Snack Bar, a full service restaurant and in the fall of 1998, the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame & Museum opened as an extension to the galleries.

The St. Catharines Museum has an impressive past and an exciting future.

Taylor and Bate Brewery

On September 2 - 65 members and guest enjoyed a great evening at the brewery. Tim Taylor spoke of the history and events leading to the re-establishment of the brewery in downtown St. Catharines. Tim provided the following history to print here:



James Taylor sailed from Surrey England at age 20, in 1833. Within a year he found his way to the bustling village of St. Catharines, leased a small former brewery building on the banks of twelve mile creek and began crafting fine ales. The Brewery was made of stone and measured 30 by 36 feet. The facility stood on 1.5 acres of land. Fire destroyed the Brewery in 1839 but Taylor's determination to keep going was strong. He began again on the same site. By January 1840 the Brewery was back in operation and preparing for expansion.

In 1857, Taylor took Thomas B. Bate as a business partner, changing the name officially to Taylor and Bate. Growth continued through the 1870's....business doubled in terms of both output and employees. The company owned two schooners

for delivering both ingredients and finished product. James Taylor died in 1866. He was succeeded in the business by his son, Henry James Taylor. Official records in 1902 list the principals of the company as Lizette Ann Taylor (wife of James), her son Henry J. Taylor and W. T. Bate.

By the 1920's, an inexorable movement began which saw dozens of Ontario breweries swallowed up by larger organizations. In a series of transactions, Taylor and Bate was sold to Canadian Breweries (part of E.P. Taylor's—no relation to James—growing empire) and finally closed in 1936. The Brewery building, largely unused in the following decades, was demolished in 1979 to make way for a major highway (#406). Taylor and Bate Brands were never to be used again....

Now some 164 years after James Taylor began brewing in Canada, fifth-generation descendant, Tim Taylor, and a group of enthusiastic investors, have re-opened the family business just steps from the original Brewery in downtown St. Catharines. Once again, Niagara Spray and other seasonal brands like Celebrated Amber Ale, Silver Spire, Extra Stout Porter and Brilliant Ale, will lead Taylor and Bate to the forefront of fine beers and ales in Ontario.

TAYLOR AND BATE BREWERY

75 ST. PAUL STREET
ST. CATHARINES, ON N0B 1S0
905-682-0268

The Ontario Historical Society

The Ontario Historical Society is located at 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 3Y2. Members receive the OHS Bulletin four times per year. It covers Ontario Historical events, news, book reviews, and all sorts of interesting news pertaining to historical items of interest. The St. Catharines Historical Society maintains membership in the OHS. Membership for Individuals/Institution/Organization is \$20.00 per year. The OHS also publishes a biannual scholarly journal, Ontario History which is available to members for \$21.40 per year. This publication is celebrating one hundred years, and the Autumn issue of Ontario History is a special centenary issue highlighting one hundred years of publishing history. Membership in the OHS provides you with an avenue to learn more about Ontario's rich historical past and add your name to those who support the efforts by the OHS to promote and lobby for Ontario's historical community.

The Morningstar Mill

The Friends of Morningstar Mill have done a marvelous job of restoring the mill, and it is truly a delight to visit. Take the time to get out to the mill and enjoy the coming winter!

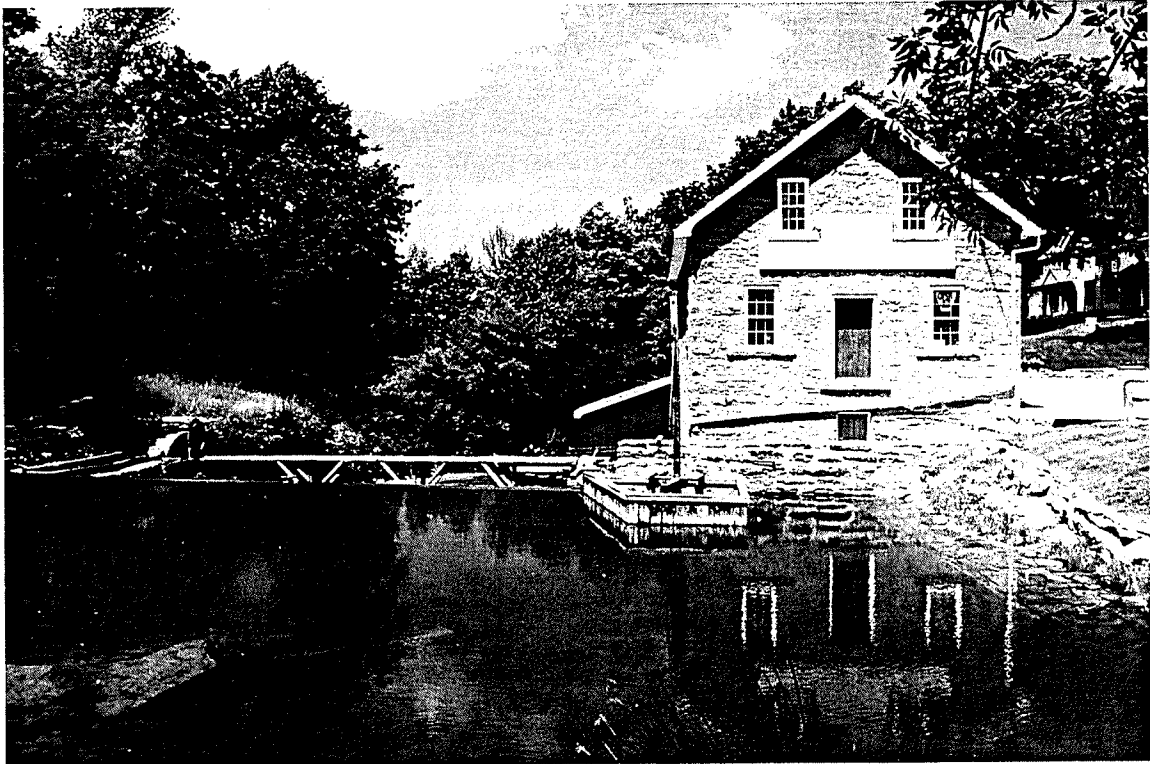


photo by Michael Ceci of Michael's Photography

A Great Christmas Gift Idea

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

The Society is very pleased with being able to offer this publication for sale to members at \$13.00 at Society meetings. The book can also be purchased at regular price (\$15.00) from the following book stores: Chapters, Hannelore Headley's, and the Museum shop. We thank these stores for their support in stocking this book.

"GOADED TO MADNESS - The Battle of Slabtown"

This new book is produced and written by Paul Hutchinson and Michael Power. At only \$9.00, this book is a real bargain. The story is fascinating and at 39 pages, plus an index and notes, is one that you will not put down until finished. This small piece of our City's history has been well researched by the authors. Their efforts, to put the material into a comprehensive book format, ensures that yet another piece of our history is preserved.

"A Nickel A Ride"

The announcement of this book reads: "There are those who remember the days when a nickel could buy you a streetcar trip to Port Dalhousie, a ride on the carousel, or a ticket for a dance. But even if one didn't have a nickel, then the beach and the water were still free." Featuring 100 pages, 19 narrators, and 40 photographs. Selling for \$14.95 plus G.S.T. and sold at several locations including Chapters Book Store and Taylor and Bate Brewery.

What Were Those Objects?

Back on August 5th an article in The Standard featured some objects in the back yard of the former Luffman home on Lake Street. Well, we have been told that these were the bases of model lighthouses that were part of a pond and garden creation that has since disappeared.



Query from member Harold Morgan, U.E.

Harold is looking for descendants of William and Barbara Thompson. Both William and Barbara are buried in Victoria Lawn Cemetery Section "M" in St. Catharines. Harold believes that they owned a dairy farm and orchard in the Beamsville area at one time. They died in 1917-18. Contact Harold at Box 80, Desert Cove, RR 7, Vernon, BC, V1T 7Z3 or at e-mail address haroldmorgan@home.com

Hugh McSloy - Do you have any information?

I am looking for information on the McSloy Family for a future newsletter article. Your editor Bill Stevens welcomes any information.

Heritage Hour - At CFBU - FM 103.7 - Brock University Radio

Join host Tony Whelan each Sunday between 8 and 9 p.m. and listen to Niagara Heritage Hour. The show features coming events, news & guests from the local heritage community. Be sure to listen in!

Niagara Mailing List

This Internet site is 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. To subscribe you simply e-mail the list at: 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.

PAST PRESIDENT WES TURNER GOES ON A DIG

At the Butler Homestead

"Digging up the Past - The Adventures of a Volunteer "Archaeologist" by Wes Turner

The site had been a farm originally owned by Col. John Butler, commander of Butler's Rangers in the American War of Independence, Loyalist, and founder of Niagara (NOTL). The homestead dated from the late 18th century, but probably the buildings were burned, along with the town of NOTL, during the War of 1812. Afterwards, the land was used for farming or pasture and trees were allowed to flourish in the rear of the property where likely the house had been situated. For purposes of archaeology, that meant what was in the ground had been little disturbed. Now, what was there? For a man and family of such importance, little was known of what might be found. For, Dr. Ron Williamson and his team of archaeologists and other experts, as well as for volunteers, it was a voyage of discovery. Here is the experience of a volunteer, untrained in archaeology, but very keen to learn. I arrived just after 9 a.m. and was led across a rough field, lush with grass and wild flowers, into the bush at the back. What I first noticed were the numerous squares dug down to the subsoil which varied in depth from 10 to 20 cm below the surface. Some squares had small yellow flags attached to thin metal stakes stuck into the ground where there was a find that deserved further investigation. Other flags or wooden stakes marked the corners of the squares called excavation units. A couple of those sites showed what appeared to be an animal jaw with several teeth still present. I was also shown what appeared to be the stones of a foundation wall. Archaeology is certainly a hands-on discipline. The experts in archaeology, in flora, and in fauna dug in a very skilful way and threw the dirt into screens. That's where the volunteers came in handy. Our job was to shake the screens to get rid of useless dirt and to look carefully for any man made or animal objects. Pieces were to be put into one of three bags: one for ceramics, and glass, one for metal and one for bone. Two of us worked the screen, piling finely shaken earth below as we eagerly picked out our finds: hand-made nails, some in very good condition, a screw, many fragments of pottery and glass (all very small), and little pieces of bone. No buttons, dishes, cups, plates or treasure was found by us. We did see buttons and large bone fragments that had previously been found elsewhere. The dryness of the ground made it dusty work and, declining to wear gloves, we soon had dirty hands, as well, after two or three hours, my old back began to remind me that I had been standing all that time. Nevertheless, we persisted until lunchtime because both the work and the conversation were so interesting. I gained a real insight into archaeological methods, attitudes and knowledge of what the finds might indicate. Of course, the bulk of the work is still to be done later in labs where all the thousands of items will be examined, analyzed and, perhaps, connected to make complete artifacts. As well, a backhoe was working nearby gently removing a layer of topsoil to reveal what looked like a stone foundation wall. Was it a house or barn or storage shed? Time and Dr. Williamson's archaeologists will some day tell us. I planned to return for another go at shaking a screen and finding material that has rested in the ground for close to 200 years. I made my second visit on a hot, dry July day. Digging in the clay hardened by the sun, was slow and heavy work. The volunteers ranged in age from ancients like me to a grade 8 student, but all worked easily together vigorously shaking screens. We found many small fragments of glass and pottery, a few nails, a few buttons, but most interesting were some metal straps. Buried just below the surface, one was shaped like a stirrup and the other like a hook. What were they used for we could only guess. Another mystery to be cleared up. It was a pleasure to make my small contribution to the work of Archaeological Services Inc. and to meet those experts on the site who generously shared their knowledge and showed great patience in answering a lot of questions. If you get a chance to take part in an archaeological dig don't hesitate to give it a try.

Ed note: Dr. Ron Williamson has tentatively agreed to speak about the findings of this archaeological survey at the Society's April 2000 Meeting.

2000 CALENDAR - NOW ON SALE

-- for only \$6.00 at Meetings and \$7.00 by Post--

The Historical Society Calendar is now available. On sale at all meetings and events of the Society or it can be ordered from any Board member. Also available at the following book stores: Hannelore Headley's, Beatties, Museum Gift Shop, Chapters and Brock University Book Store. A great buy - a great gift item. Only 250 copies will be available this year and we expect to sell out. This year, the theme is post cards.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

The Society asks for your membership renewal for 2000

As a member:

- You are supporting the goals and mission of the Society
- you are helping promote the awareness of the history of St.Catharines and Vicinity
- you are supporting a program of guest speakers on historical topics
- you will receive a membership card to show that you are a member in good standing
- you will be eligible to become a member of the Board of Directors
- you can serve on committees to help organize events and programs
- you will receive notices of special events
- you will receive the Society newsletter, usually quarterly
- you have a vote at the annual meeting and general meetings
- you may receive a discount on items sold by the Society
- you will receive first opportunity to participate in Society special events
- you will may receive a discount on Society functions where charges apply
- you will be supporting the History Award presented to high school OAC students

Your level of involvement is up to you; however, we need your membership support to be a viable organization.

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

Individual - \$10.00; Family - \$15.00 - membership is the calendar year.

Mail your membership to the Society today:

The Historical Society of St. Catharines
P.O.Box 23104
124 Welland Avenue
St.Catharines, Ontario, L2R 7P6