

# NO FIRE AT THE LAKE

This is the tenth newsletter of the Brampton Historical Society. Buffy's Corner survives in our here-today-gone-tomorrow world.

An edition of Buffy's Corner begins with an editorial brainstorming session of the current events in the BHS and our city. Publication should have coincided with Heritage Week, February 19 - 25 but it didn't happen. We apologise.

Unrelenting winter froze my thoughts and forced me to take flight for sun and inspiration.

"No fire at the lake", quipped Angie.

January dropped me just north of the Mediterranean Sea in the Cevenne foothills amid Roman ruins, chateaux, abbeys, caves, awakening vineyards, and outdoor markets. Here in France the sun is teased by afternoon "mistrals" and spring seeps through blossoms and bird songs. Trains proudly connect people; their stations bustle. Medieval villages dimple the landscape. I touch history and history touches me.

"Pas de feu au lac", says my postcard to Angie.

The tenth Buffy's Corner was delayed but our contributors' articles were ready. And Andrew Cook at Peel Graphics gives us speedy service.

We try to be conscientious about Buffy's deadlines. Many members, unable to attend meetings, rely on Buffy's to keep up-to-date.

A reader once said, Buffy's Corner is informative and entertaining. Sometimes it is difficult to make history fun when fine old buildings are destroyed and cemeteries are dug up.

Good news to report is a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the restoration of our 1857 Map of the Town of Brampton. Also we are now a registered charity and give tax-deductible receipts for donations (not membership fees).

If you received this newsletter, you are a bona fide/paid up 2001 member of the BHS. If you are reading a recycled Buffy's, catch the train bound for history; become a BHS member today.

Read about Paul Hunt's dream station; follow Rowena Cooper's trails; travel back to the farm with Fred Kee and underground with Albert Post. History is happening at Buffy's Corner.

*Buffy*

# Buffy's Corner

The official newsletter of the Brampton Historical Society  
*Conserve, Educate and Celebrate Brampton's History*

Volume 3, No. 1 ..... March 2001

Buffy's Corners, the original name of Brampton, was the site of the respectable tavern owned by William Buffy, considered to be the father of Brampton. His pioneer spirit (pun intended) lives on in the name of our journal. History "buffs" are invited into The Corner to share their stories and comments.

## In This Issue:

Historic Moments in Time

Dreaming Out Loud

Tavern in the Town

The Tunnels at Dales

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## Brampton Hysterical Society Joke-of-the-Month

A consultant is someone who ...

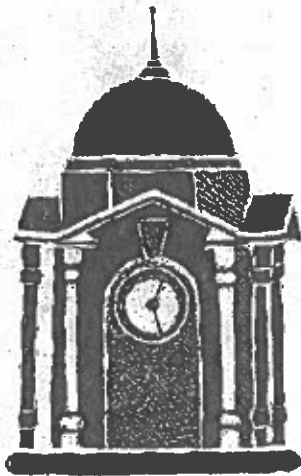
- borrows your watch to tell you what time it is
- is more than 50 miles from home with a briefcase
- learns faster than you do

*Buffy's Corner, published 4 times per year, is free to BHS members (see back page for membership details)*

Printed by Peel Graphics Inc., 10 John St. Brampton

## All Aboard!!!!

Janice Baumly  
Jane Freed  
Ken Giles  
Connie McIlwrath  
Harold McIlwrath  
Lesly Metzger  
Howard Shaw



Thanks to members  
who have renewed

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Heather Gunter

We're off to a good start in 2001. Our January speaker was Richard MacFarlane who told the story of J. Douglas MacFarlane, Canada's Newspaper Legend. Our speaker in February was Heather Broadbent speaking on Heritage Conservation in Caledon. It's people like these who keep history alive.

In March we look forward to Diane Allengame-Kuster, who will speak on "Researching Your Home" and our shared presentation of the Antiques Roadshow. In April Mike Filey shines with "I Remember Sunnyside."

Our membership is climbing, thanks to renewals and new members. It's great to have such interest.

We are now a registered charitable organization and will issue receipts for donations, which are tax deductible. Many thanks for donations already received.

We have received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$18,000 to be used for the restoration of our 1857 map. Dorset Conservation Inc. has begun conservation of the map and we are pleased with the progress made. Andrew Cook of Peel Graphics and publisher of Buffy's Corner will print posters of the map to be sold to the public. We will keep you informed of progress.

The year 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer. Our volunteers already involved have a fabulous energy drive. Although few in number we each do a number of different jobs. We need more volunteers to help keep our society rolling. As the saying goes, many hands make light work.

"The quality of the future depends on what is kept from the past."

Pierre Berton

## Heritage Week February 19 -25, 2001.

Michael Avis

Heritage Week is a provincially-designated event that reminds us of our history, heroic characters and a pioneering way of life. It's colourful, interesting and it's ours.

I always derive pleasure when passing through some of the older sections of places such as Oakville, Thornhill, Georgetown and Markham. I admire the fine old architecture that has survived, much of it lovingly restored; stately Georgian, humble salt box, trellised Regency homes that have endured and provide us with a tangible record of living styles of bygone eras.

Many communities, including Brampton, have initiated a plaquing programme whereby owners of older homes are encouraged to install an attractive, hand-painted wooden plaque to the outside of their house which indicates the year of construction, name and/or occupation of the original owner. It is particularly important (though not necessary) if the original owner was a notable figure from the past.

Although in Brampton we have many fine homes dating from the 1800's, any building constructed before 1940 is eligible. Application for the historic plaque must be supported by all the necessary documentation. Research for the required information can be an interesting and educational exercise for the whole family. It should be of particular interest to the younger family members who can take photographs, learn to use the archives, track down old deeds, discover faded maps, photographs and assessment information to support their application.

Installing a plaque will not only demonstrate a certain pride but also help showcase Brampton's architectural and historic features and promote heritage awareness.

Homeowners interested in being part of this worthwhile programme are invited to contact the Brampton Historical Society or Maureen Sim, Co-Chair of the Brampton Heritage Board at 457-0560. We will be happy to assist you and answer any questions you may have regarding this programme and provide you with the necessary forms.

We urge homeowners and businesses to help history come alive and take pride in Brampton's heritage by participating in our Historic Plaque Programme.

*Author's note: Plaquing does NOT mean heritage designation. Plaques obtained through this programme are solely for the purpose of identifying buildings of our historic past and do not imply conservation benefits, regulations or restrictions.*

## DREAMING OUT LOUD

Paul Hunt - Chair, Advocacy Committee

Last fall the town of Orangeville bought the CPR railway line from Orangeville to Streetsville in Mississauga from the CPR. This was accomplished with a lot of hard work and co-ordination by the town and a consortium of six companies, five in Orangeville and one in Brampton (Vulsay Industries) that needed the rail line to stay open to guarantee a supply of raw material to continue their operations.

This created a win-win situation for the companies and for the towns because jobs would remain in place and planned expansion in the future could continue by those involved. The six companies will pay for the maintenance of the tracks, signals, etc. while the town of Orangeville will pay the taxes to the municipalities where the right-of-ways are located.

To date more than \$3 million has been spent to get the system up and running.

For years there has been talk of running excursions from Brampton (or Streetsville) to Orangeville through some very picturesque countryside as well as through a renowned curved trestle at The Forks Of The Credit.

Cataract is another place of interest on the line. Orangeville is a town that has looked after its heritage buildings in the downtown area very well and is a scenic attraction in its own right with lots to see. Since the dismantling of the CPR station in Brampton over two years ago, it seemed almost out of sight and mind to restore it. The time has come to look into the feasibility of rebuilding the station where it was constructed nearly 100 years ago. We could also check out the chances of an excursion train to make some use of the station. Are we dreaming too out loud? Nothing was ever accomplished without a dream in the first place. We need your input and ideas.

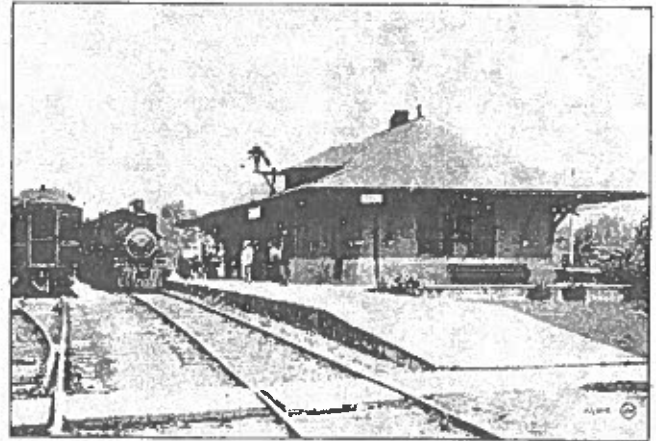
Gerry Clarkson is the chair of the S.O.S. (Save Our Station) committee and is very approachable. Let your dream be heard "out loud".

BHS Meetings every third Thursday 7-15 p.m.  
Heart Lake Presbyterian Church  
25 Ruth Street, Brampton

Think globally, act Historically

Bunny

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A CENTURY MAKES:



CPR station ... then.

Photo courtesy of the Peel Archives.



CPR station ... now.

Photo courtesy of Heather Gunter

The prime motivation for many of us to join the BHS came from the demolition of the CPR railway station. The BHS has revived that spirit with the formation of the "Save Our Station" committee.



Paul Hunt takes the cake!!! Happy Birthday, Paul!

## BHS HAPPENINGS: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

January 18

"Canada's Newspaper Legend J. Douglas MacFarlane" with author Richard MacFarlane gave us the "good ol' days" when newspapers reigned and fought for lead stories. Son of "JDM", Richard researched and narrated his father's fifty-year career from the WWII Canadian army newspaper, "The Maple Leaf", through editorial years at Toronto newspapers: *Globe and Mail*, *Star*, *Telegram*, and *Sun*, in his recently published book.



Richard MacFarlane with Rowena Cooper

Richard's presentation included displays, slides and commentary, and Russell Cooper, "Tely cub reporter" anecdotes. Canada's Newspaper Legend, published by ECW Press (416.694.3348), is a colourful biography of a legendary journalist.



Stop the presses! Richard MacFarlane signs copies of his book.

February 15

"Heritage of Caledon" featured Heather Broadbent. Broadbent (no relation), former Caledon Resource Officer, outlined the 1974 Ontario Heritage Act that enabled municipalities to use legislation in their official plans and initiate heritage policies. Although "extremely inadequate", the act did prepare the way for subsequent acts (conservation, environmental, cemeteries etc.) to be passed.



Two Heathers: Broadbent of Caledon and Gunter of the BHS

We were treated to a series of heritage-designated sites from Caledon, including a stone fence and even some orange trees. Heather's presentation was well received by demolition-weary Bramptonians who yearn for a supportive City Council.

Heather revealed that incentives to developers - you got a free house, restore it and get more money - sometimes work. But she cautioned that a building once-removed loses its context and is a "subdivision of last resort". She advised us to know the acts and see reason first. Caledon welcomes heritage designation as an economic resource. And Brampton?????

### With Palette and Pen

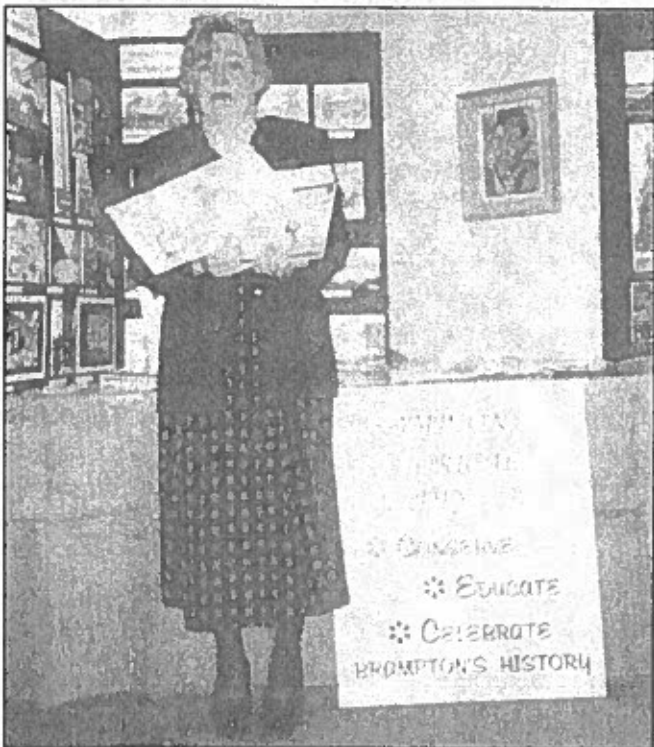
Albert Seaman, well-known local artist and essayist, has enthusiastically served our community in various capacities and cultural activities for many years. He is probably best known for his efforts in illustrating, editing and producing the book "Heritage Brampton - 1978". An engineering background promoted a penchant for accuracy, which is reflected in his style of art and research into historical matters. Albert recently donated over fifty of his Heritage Brampton Prints (1979) to the BHS. They are for sale, \$10 each or 3 for \$25. Albert is one of our few members who formerly belonged to the Peel County Historical Society. We appreciate Albert's gifts: his artistic talents and donated prints. His web site [www.axxent.ca/~alseam](http://www.axxent.ca/~alseam) will link eventually with the BHS web site.

Treats à la Kay Drew following our presentations are a big hit. Ymmmm...delicious! Thank you, Joan.

**Peel Heritage Complex Struts History  
February 18**



Shaylene Clarke finds the last copies of "From This Year Hence" for Sharron Peet at the Brampton Heritage Board booth.



Lydia Robertson (no relation) after a recent shopping trip at the BHS boutique during Heritage Day.



"We've got you covered!" Linda Rokosh (Brampton Quilters' Guild) with Odesia, Simon, and C.J. Howlett.



Dream weavers: Jennifer Shaughnessy instructs daughter Meara and Aurora Curtis on large and small looms.

**March 3, "Antiques Road Show" - Premier Event**

What did Ward Brownridge do at Historic Bovaird House?

Ward lorded over the hordes and pored over their hoards; some people were floored, others roared with accord as values soared.

**BUDDING SPRING EVENTS**

**March 15, Researching Heritage Homes** presented by Diane Allengame-Kuster, Registrar of the Peel Heritage Complex. Guaranteed to ward off the Ides of March (shades of Shakespeare). Your house and your lot - find out where it all began.

**April 19, "I Remember Sunnyside" with Mike Filey**  
The return of popular historian, Mike Filey ... in good weather! Come early for the best seats. Mike's latest book, *Now And Then* will be on sale (\$40.00) after his presentation.

**May 15, Restoring Heritage Homes with George Duncan.** All the way from Richmond Hill comes the expert on old homes for an encore event, sequel to his previous talk on Early 19th Century Architecture.

**Saturday, June 2, Walking Tour of Brampton**  
Tour guide Andrew de Groot gives us a sole-searching tour of historical downtown Brampton, everything from the well-heeled to the downtrodden.

## A TAVERN IN THE TOWN

Our masthead tells the lore of early Brampton, how it was named originally as Buffy's Corners. However, as we delve into the history of Brampton, we find that there are often conflicting stories. We try to find the real beginnings of our Brampton and end up chasing an elusive Buffy.

We discover the first mention of Buffy in The Historical Atlas of Peel County published by Walker and Miles in 1877.

*"Mr Wm. Buffy is generally credited with being the father of the town, he having built a tavern, which was the first building of any pretensions in the place, and in fact it is said that it was the first building of any kind."*

What do the Archives at the Peel Heritage Complex have to offer? One of the leading newspapers of the day was the *Brampton Conservator*. In a 1901 article, Mr. James Nelson, a resident for over sixty years, looked back on the Brampton of 1840 that he experienced as a youngster. Here is an excerpt from that article:

"Coming from Londonderry, Ireland in 1840, he (Mr. Nelson) found Brampton, a village of four houses. As a boy, he drove the oxen in clearing the land where the post office now stands (now O'Malley's downtown). The Etobicoke was then a spring creek used for drinking water and Mr. Nelson recalls being sent down to spear fish for dinner as a welcome change from salt pork, fresh meat being unattainable. Wild pigeons were also shot in great numbers. At the time the mails were carried to Brampton from Streetsville and Cooksville. Meadowvale, Churchville, and Derry West were then enterprizing (sic) business places much larger than Brampton. In or about the year 1844, John Holmes came from King's Corners, then called Derry West [located at the current Derry Road and Highway 10] and built a tannery on the hill where R. Ashley's pump factory is located now. He conducted a thriving business there for many years.

George Wright built the steam mill directly opposite on the hill where the English Church stands, in 1850. It was operated by him until destroyed by fire in 1870. He then sold the ground to the Episcopal Methodists who built their church thereon shortly after."

James Nelson recalls four houses in the village of Brampton in 1840. There is no mention of a Buffy or a tavern.

Next comes the William Perkins Bull Collection.

In Chapter XVII, titled "Confederation And The County Town", we find our Buffy. Read on:

"When, in 1821, John Elliott of Brampton, Cumberlandshire, brought his brave young bride to the "Brampton Four Corners" the Etobicoke creek pushed lustily through cedar swamps, which were at least six feet lower than streets and sidewalks of today, and merged on all sides into dense woodlands. Ten years later, when the *Colonial Advocate* printed bills of sale for John's cleared village lots, the people of neat, bright, bustling, self-important Streetsville ridiculed the project town-site as a 'beaver meadow', and a 'frog pond'. Even in 1840, James Nelson found only four houses and Buffy's tavern. Five years later there were less than one hundred residents.

Business began with the store, distillery, chopping-mill, and potashery of John Scott, J.P. who placed his millstones vertically, not in the usual horizontal fashion. 'Squire' was, in 1834, the only magistrate south of Caledon in the 'new Settlements' and the next year married Mr. Thomas Brown, aged seventy-two, to Miss Jane More, aged sixty-seven, a 'happy couple' with 'only one tooth' betwixt them."

Time for a visit to Archivist Rowena Cooper for the real facts, "just the facts, Ma'am." Turns out she "beat us to the punch" (par for the course) and had researched William Buffy years ago, having discovered the same conflicts we have outlined above.

Rowena turned over her evidence to us and we now turn it over to you ...

### Will the Real William Buffey Please Stand?

Rowena Cooper

When staff at the Archives recommend that researchers use certain areas of our holdings to search for their ancestors we do so from experience. For this column, just to prove that we do swallow our own medicine at times, I decided to try to find one of the most elusive characters in the history of Brampton - William Buffey (sic). In most of our local history books Buffey is depicted as building an inn approximately where Queen and Main streets cross, in about 1834. The only evidence to support this appears in John Lynch's 1873-74 Directory for the county of Peel. Lynch writes "The late William Buffy was sometimes considered the father of Brampton as a village. About the

year 1834 he built a pretty respectable tavern on the corner where Mr. Clark's grocery now stands, and in this house was for some time transacted much of the business of Brampton." The 1837 Directory for the home district has a William Buffey living at Lot 5, 1 Con. W.H.S..

The Brampton inn was not well documented; the William Perkins Bull collection (R.P.A. 93.0028 M) contains a great deal of information about innkeepers but nothing about Buffey in Brampton. The pioneer cemetery in Brampton contains the grave of Mary, wife of William V. Buffey who died in 1843 aged 21 years. The Region of Peel archives has a handbill (R.P.A. 82.0123) issued by William Buffey as clerk of the Township of Chinguacousy announcing a meeting of pathmasters to take place at Buffey's Tavern Edmonton [Snelgrove today] in 1848.

I began to suspect that there were two William Buffeys when the arithmetic concerning ages did not add up! The 1851 census for Chinguacousy Ward 1 gave me William Buffey age 28 a carpenter, his wife Agnes age 20 and their son Thomas age 1. If William Buffey was 28 in 1851 that made him 14 in 1837 - too young to run an inn. My suspicions were confirmed on checking the land and property records for Lot 17, 1 Con. E.H.S. (R.P.A. 90.0097 RG 14); there were several transactions between William Buffey, Yeoman of Caledon Township and William Vernon Buffey of Chinguacousy Township. On checking the index to the 1859 Tremaine map of the County of Peel I found William Buffey and his wife Sarah on Lot 14, Con. 5 W.H.S. In the 1851 census he is described as a farmer, they are both aged 53 years.

William Buffey Sr. purchased Lot 14, Con. 5 W.H.S. Caledon Township in 1843, the same year that his daughter-in-law died in Brampton. From 1845 to 1858 frequent land transactions involving Buffey and his son took place. It appears that by 1858 the son was in some financial trouble and the father was endeavouring to assist him. In 1860 Frederick William Jarvis (as Sheriff) forced sale of Lot 14 and the 1861 census lists William and Sarah Buffey as innkeepers Lot 10, 1 Con. W.H.S. Caledon Township. William and Sarah's other son George is listed as a "flunkey", the only time I have seen the expression used on this side of the Atlantic (Oxford Dictionary definition of Flunkey is a "liveried servant").

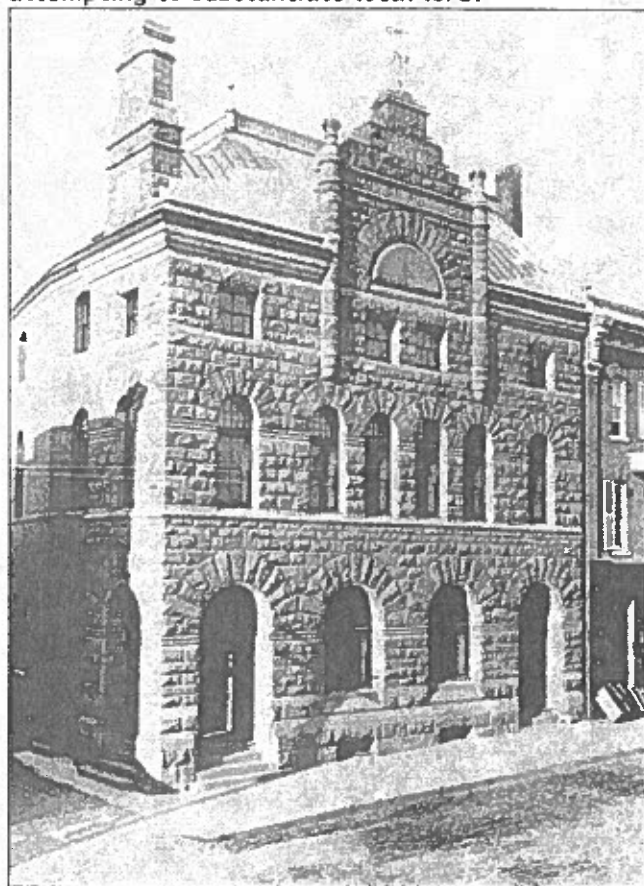
In 1862 George Buffey married Sarah A. Chambers, daughter of Phillip Chambers and in 1863 Allen Maxwell sold 1 acre of Lot 10, 1 Con. W.H.S.

Caledon Township, including "Buffey's Tavern Stand" to Sarah on condition that the land never pass into her husband's possession. Of William Buffey and his wife Sarah there is no mention and I could find no other record of William Vernon Buffey, his wife Agnes or their children, Thomas (b.1851), William Vernon (b.1853), George Johnson (b.1855).

What had happened to Buffey's Inn in Edmonton? We know it was there in 1848 because of the above mentioned handbill but the Assessment Roll for 1854 lists property assessed at 81/2d - hardly the amount one would expect for an inn.

Some of the questionnaires in the Bull Collection on Temperance have the Buffey family moving to Orangeville. They certainly disappeared from Caledon after 1864. I could find no mention of them in cemetery records for Caledon even though we know that William Buffey Sr. was deceased by 1873.

In summary, it would appear that there were two men named William Buffey; three inns owned by the family; and several hours of research attempting to substantiate local lore.



James Nelson's meadow was located near the location of the pre-clock towered Post Office and maybe one of three sites of Buffey's Tavern.

*Photo courtesy of the Peel Archives*



Stately Alder Lea, the 1860's home of Kenneth Chisholm, overlooks skaters on the rink at Gage Park. Photo courtesy of La Galerie Duchesne

### Alder Lea Goes to Court

Readers of Buffy's Corner are familiar with Alder Lea, a focus of many articles. Recently Pam Douglas brought Alder Lea's past, present and precarious future to Bramptonians (*Brampton Guardian*, February 28, 2001).

On April 2, the Ontario Conservation Review Board will determine whether Alder Lea, number 1 on Brampton's Inventory of Heritage Resources, will remain considered "significant and worthy of designation" or whether it can be allowed to be sacrificed to the developers.

Brampton City Council had gone to bat for Alder Lea and voted to apply for a designation last year.

While we await the results of the April 2 appeal with cautious optimism for continued designation, we have a degree of concern.

First of all, with Alder Lea's top ranking on the list of Heritage Resources - in a City perhaps slightly lacking such treasures - to witness the possibility of its demolition is unnerving.

More importantly, though, even with designation, this will only cause a determined developer's designs for demolition to be delayed by 270 days.

In short, if the appeal of designation succeeds, then the top-ranked Heritage Resource can be lost forever. If the appeal fails, then the building still might be lost forever, less 270 days.

Regardless of the outcome of the hearing, we will be alert to developments (no pun intended) involving our Heritage Resources.

We hope that the actions of City Council signal its future direction on heritage conservation.

### 1857 "Plan of the Town of Brampton" Map!

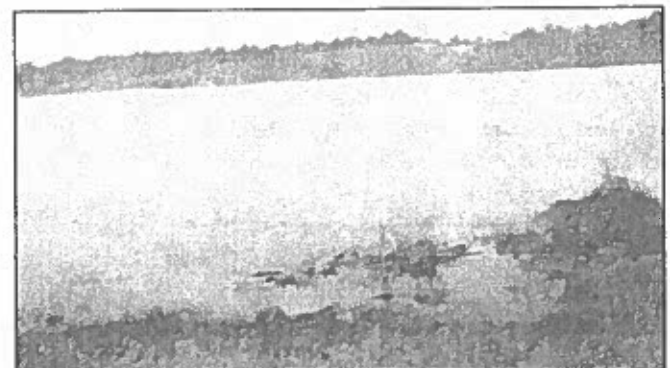
The Ontario Trillium Foundation (an agency of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation) has given a grant to the BHS to restore and preserve The Map. Dorset Conservation Inc. will restore The Map to museum standards, and stabilize it, enabling us to use it in programs and activities for the community.

Kenneth Lockwood of Dorset, in his first interim report to the BHS board stated, "I am pleased with the results of the testing undertaken over the past week(s). Tests and observations confirm that the treatment can go ahead as planned and produce results which will enhance the stability and appearance of this splendid map." The conservator's seven tests examined the printing inks, hand painted areas, varnish layer, its sensitivity of water stained areas, the adhesive layer between the canvas and the paper, the replacement of the canvas and finally, the primary paper support during the drying phase of the treatment. The fifteen steps of the conservation treatment can now commence.

### A Century of Floods



The 1941 flood; floods were so pervasive that the First Nations avoided settling in the area.



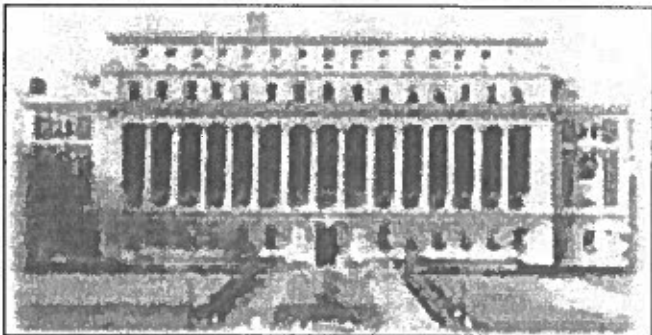
Dick Smith's pond lay just south of the CNR tracks between James and Centre Streets. Smith cut the ice that froze during the winter and sold it during the summer. The pond is no more because of the diversion.

Photos courtesy of Bob Post



## Historic Moments in Time

Historians wear many hats and welcome historical challenges. BHS member Rowena Cooper is Chair of the Friends of the Archives of Ontario and recently travelled to New York City with newly appointed Ontario Archivist, Miriam McTiernan, to repatriate the Anthony B. Hawke papers at Columbia University's Butler Library.



The Butler did it! In the Library, with the records from Canada. But Rowena got them back! The Anthony B. Hawke papers were returned to their rightful home after almost a century away.

*Photo courtesy of [www.columbia.edu](http://www.columbia.edu)*

The Anthony B. Hawke collection consists of twenty-three volumes of records from the Toronto Emigration Office, dating from 1831 to 1892.

It includes official correspondence documenting the names of people and families arriving in Toronto, the date and port of arrival, the method of travel, the country of origin, the destination, the type of assistance received once in Ontario and the type of opportunities for employment.

Since the documents are most fragile, they have been microfilmed and are available for use at the Archives of Ontario and through interlibrary loan.

Rowena Cooper described her trip to New York's Columbia University in *Héritage/Legacy*, December 2000, published by the Friends of the Archives:

Friday, 10 November 2000, is a day that both Miriam McTiernan and I will always remember. We were off to New York City to meet Dr. Jean Ashton at the Butler Library, Columbia University, and to officially receive the Anthony B. Hawke papers on behalf of the Friends.

Of course, the inevitable happened and our flight, due to leave at 8 a.m. for LaGuardia, was delayed because of runway construction there.

We eventually reached New York City at 11 a.m. and took a taxi to Columbia University. Our driver darted from lane to lane, cutting other drivers off, all the while talking on the telephone.

Eventually one driver retaliated, and in true New York fashion, drew up along side us and threatened to shoot our cab driver, using language that I thought only happened in the movies.

Slightly shaken, we arrived at Columbia University in time to relax over lunch before our meeting with Dr. Ashton and her associate, Bernard Crystal.

The Butler Library is a marvellous facility and we were most impressed by what we had seen. The Anthony B. Hawke letter books were waiting for us in the Rare Book Reading Room and we were able to see for ourselves just how important a collection it is for researchers in Ontario.

Columbia University purchased the collection in 1901, and since that time only a few scholars, all Canadian, have examined them. It was for this reason that Dr. Ashton decided to allow the Friends to purchase them.

Having taken our leave of Dr. Ashton and Mr. Crystal, we were faced with the unenviable task of getting back to LaGuardia. As on our first trip, we drew a most unusual driver, one who not only wove in and out of traffic but laughed hysterically all the time, while doing it. Then he roundly abused an officer at the Triborough Bridge for holding up our traffic line to give directions to motorists who were lost. We were very glad to get back to staid Ontario.

We were only able to purchase this collection due to the support of the members of the Friends of the Archives of Ontario who made donations and attended education workshops at the Archives.

This is the first of what we hope will be many donations. I hope that many of you will be able to visit the Archives to see for yourselves what has been purchased."

Archives of Ontario Location:  
77 Grenville Street, Toronto ON M5S 1B3

Bibliography:

Web site for the Archives of Ontario  
[www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

Web site for Friends of the Archives of Ontario  
[www.archivesontariofriends.com](http://www.archivesontariofriends.com)

BHS Meetings every third Thursday, 7:15 p.m.  
Heart Lake Presbyterian Church  
25 Ruth Street, Brampton  
Admission free to members, others: \$5

## The Tunnels at Dales

By Albert Post

Not much remains of the Dale Estate empire today but it was a formidable part of the local economy in days gone by. The Dale family and their successors built one of the largest horticultural operations in the British Empire. Others more capable than I will recount the story of this special industry in Brampton.

I would prefer to recount my boyhood days exploring and stealthily navigating through the various tunnels that connected the vast Dale Greenhouses and other supporting buildings and services that made up the Dale complex.

As a boy I thought these tunnels were built simply to facilitate employees going from one part of the enterprise to another, but as an adult one can easily see several reasons for their existence.

I suppose the foremost reason was for the placement of steam pipelines and the constant maintenance to these lines which carried steam from the main boiler houses underground to each and every greenhouse, support building, and even several residences of the Dale family. The tunnels were about 6-8 feet wide and 7- 8 feet high.

They were built of concrete and provided an access route for steam pipes and probably some electronic systems. I recall an earthen floor and one could easily locate the tunnels in wintertime because the snow first melted above them.

There were a few places on Main Street North where steam lines went under the road to heat a house or a building of some sort. And in winter there was often a harsh bump you would notice in your car (more likely your bicycle) when you crossed over the line.

We lived on English Street and went to Central Public School on Alexander Street. On cold winter days we entered the greenhouse west of Isabella Street near English, scampered through that section of glass houses to the first tunnel entrance about 400 feet west of Isabella Street (where present-day Vodden Street is). Then we ran through the tunnel eastward to the main boiler house at Vodden and Main Streets to surface. We then entered another tunnel that took us eastward under Main Street behind the present day Colour Your World wallpaper store.

If we hadn't been caught by a Dale official by this time, we could surface again near the main shipping department at the east end of Rosedale

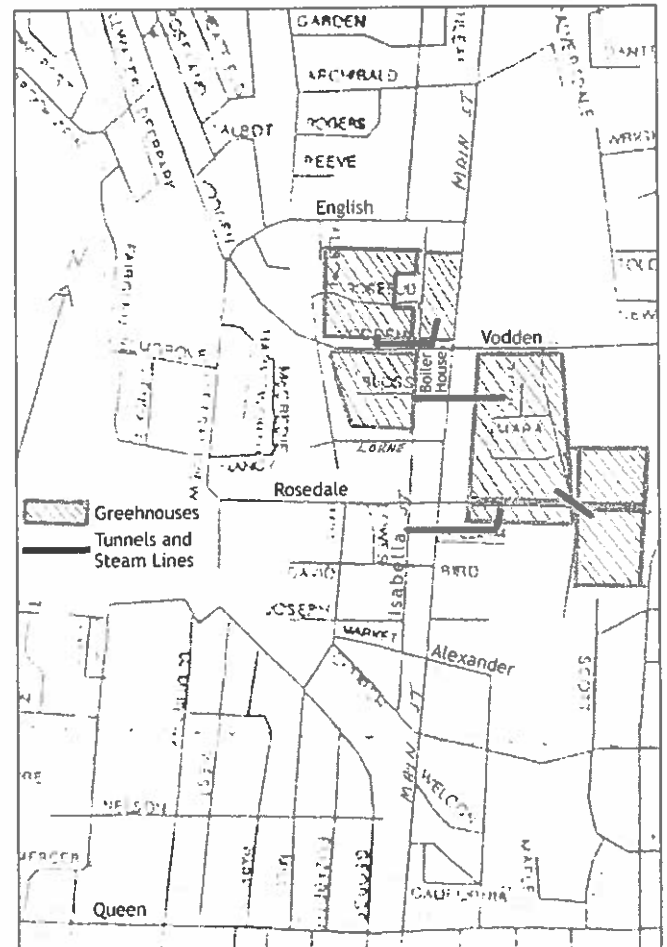
Avenue. Down again under east Rosedale and under some greenhouses in the flats of the Etobicoke Creek and from there it was a short run to the Central Public School yard.

Of course we were not supposed to do this as a way of getting to school but it was an adrenaline-pumping rush to see how often you could go through and get away with it!!

There were lights placed at some distance apart; it was not at all well lit. Often pranks were played by turning the lights off to scare some of the other kids. Now and again some of us got hurt by bumping into overhead pipe hangers in the rush to avoid being caught. Never thought of liability in those days!

The tunnels were used as a pedestrian way for staff and on some occasions I recall seeing fresh flowers being carried or pushed on a cart, they were certainly not wheelchair-accessible.

I have drawn a little sketch as an overlay on a city street map to show where these tunnels must have been. There may have been others but I doubt it because we kids would have surely found them.



Cartography comes courtesy of Albert Post

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### Historic Bovaird House

#### Mothers' Day Teas

Sunday, May 6 & 13, noon - 4 p.m.

#### 'Brampton in Bloom' Garden Tour/Plant Sale

Sunday, June 10, 10:00 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SE corner Kennedy Road and Bovaird Drive, Brampton

Info: 905.874.2804, [bovairdhouse@hotmail.com](mailto:bovairdhouse@hotmail.com)

### Halton - Peel Branch Ontario Genealogical Society

#### "Tecumseh" portrayed by speaker David Morris

Sunday, March 25, 2:00 p.m.

Chinguacousy Branch - Brampton Public Library

150 Central Park Drive, Brampton

Info: call Dorothy Kew, 905.631.9060

#### Region V Colloquium hosted by the Halton-Peel Branch:

Crossings: Borders and Oceans

April 21, 2001, 8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Maple Grove United Church, 346 Maple Grove, Oakville

Register by April 1, 2001; \$30.00 including lunch

Info: call Jane Watt, 905.813.7977

### Friends of the Schoolhouse

#### Ian Bell Concert

Folk Songs and Instruments from the past. Tickets \$10.

Sunday, April 8, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#### Queen Victoria Fête

Spend a day at the schoolhouse and celebrate our past.

Saturday, May 26, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

#### Strawberry Social

Join your friends in the Atrium for a fun lunch hour.

Tuesday, June 26, 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Info: 905.459.9158

#### Visit the Schoolhouse

On the 2nd Sunday of every month the Old Britannia Schoolhouse will be open from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Esquimaux Historical Society

#### Their Stories!

Share in the history of local pioneers.

Wednesday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown.

#### John Newton

Jean Somerville recounts the life of her ancestor John Newton, postmaster and chief Limehouse entrepreneur.

Wednesday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown.

### Milton Historical Society

#### The History of Sarah Street

Jim Dills gives a street-smart presentation.

Thursday, March 15

Coffee at 7:30 p.m.; presentation at 8:00 p.m.

Hugh Foster Hall (next to the Town Hall)

#### Houses of South Carolina, Williamsburg and Jamestown

Marcia Waldie homes in on The South.

Thursday, April 19

Coffee at 7:30 p.m.; presentation at 8:00 p.m.

Hugh Foster Hall (next to the Town Hall)

#### A Walking Tour of Downtown Milton

Jim Dills presents the town named after the Poet.

Thursday, May 17

Coffee at 7:30 p.m.; presentation at 8:00 p.m.

Hugh Foster Hall (next to the Town Hall)

### Streetsville Historical Society

#### Hybrid Day Lillies

Speaker Sandy Carlton gives a blooming talk.

Thursday, April 5, 8:00 p.m.

Old Town Hall, Streetsville.

Info: 905.858.0070

Did you renew your membership for 2001?  
It's easy! Just send us the form on page 11.



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BHS Meetings every third Thursday, 7:15 p.m.  
Heart Lake Presbyterian Church  
25 Ruth Street, Brampton  
Admission free to members, others \$5.

Ask not what the BHS can do for you, but what you can do for the BHS.

*John F. Buffy*



## KEE NOTES FROM FRED

By Fred Kee

Since this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are aware that the way of life has changed in many ways.

The quantity of snow that we had this winter did remind me of the early years at home on the farm. It was not uncommon that the ground was frozen early November and by early December, snow was here to stay. By Christmas, the long lane at the farm was heavy with snow and overnight the tracks would drift in so that the first person out in the morning would have to shovel or leave the car out the night before. However, if you did that, it probably wouldn't start the next morning.

Our school had hot water heating by 1936, so the caretaker had to be sure that he had a good coal fire at night. Many times he would have to walk from Highway #10 to the First Line East (Kennedy Road) in the morning to make sure the heat was on.

Highways were always ploughed but township roads were done by contract, and since there weren't any school buses, ploughing wasn't a priority. Even the Railroad had trouble keeping the line open.

If my memory serves me right, the passenger train went north to Orangeville and Owen Sound at seven in the evening and came back down at nine the next morning. The other passenger train went up at eleven in the morning and returned by nine in the evening.

The freight trains travelled in "off hours" compared to the passenger trains and normally the train that went up one day came back the next.

During the mid-thirties, my father, being a horse dealer, imported carloads of horses from western Canada. These always arrived at the Canadian Pacific freight yard early in the morning. I well remember being there between five and six a.m. to unload them loose and drive them out onto Nelson Street then Denison Avenue then north to the farm. I was always on horseback to lead the way while the rest of the helpers followed to make sure that any strays found their way. Normally there were about twenty workhorses in the load. However, sometimes there were a couple of cow ponies to make up the load.

The demand for horses at the time was good, since the farmer didn't have money for gas for a tractor, and that didn't change until the Second World War. Then jobs became plentiful and help on the farm was scarce. Father always had ten or twenty workhorses since he had a 200-acre farm, and all the work was done by horse power.

Today the farm is a housing development, complete with schools parkland and streets with sidewalks.

The lower portion of the farm, from the railway on the east to McLaughlin Road on the west is known as Williams Parkway.

The steam whistle on the train is silent, as is the Dale Estate whistle that used to blow at seven, twelve and five as well as signal the firemen when their services were needed.

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Application for membership in the **BRAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY** (bramhis@home.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Household Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a Household Membership fee of \$20 for a full year or \$10 for a half year

I wish to enclose an additional donation to the Society of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail cheque or money order to:  
Brampton Historical Society  
c/o Peter Murphy, 32 Wellington St. East  
Brampton, ON L6W 1Y4  
American money accepted at par