

# HERITAGE HAPPENINGS



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>September News</i>	1
<i>Heritage Paper—Fall Fair in Waterdown</i>	2
<i>Treasures from the Archives</i>	4
<i>The Sky Woman Creation Story</i>	5
<i>Smokey Hollow</i>	6
<i>President's Message</i>	8
<i>Local Society Websites</i>	8

The Society is grateful for donations made in the memory of Shirley Fellowes. Memorial donations can be made to society@flamboroughhistory.com.

### WEFHS Board 2020-2021

The position of Treasurer remains open. Please contact us if you are interested—or know of someone who is.

#### Phone

905-540-5161

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society@

FlamboroughHistory.com

## HISTORY ONLINE

There's no doubt about it, Waterdown's population continues to grow at an exponential rate. As new residents swell the numbers of the village, they bring with them an interest in learning more about the history of their new home. And the Flamborough Heritage Society is rising to the challenge. Although we have had to curtail the Society's usual public activities and access to the Archives office to ensure the safety of patrons and staff during the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, we have seized the opportunity to take history to the community in some creative ways.

### Website

In addition to news and information about Society activities and our Archives collection, the flamboroughhistory.com website contains a growing catalogue of heritage papers, From the Vault pieces, vignettes and "Flamborough Fast Facts." We are updating the site regularly—be sure to check out the options under the **Articles** tab and visit often!

### YouTube

We have our own YouTube channel featuring short videos that highlight places and stories of Flamborough's past. Recent posts include "Then and Now" pieces on 142 Main St. North and the Freelon General Store, as well as "A Letter to Waterdown," which brings to life the words of a young woman in England writing to her brother in 1916 as he prepares to serve in the war.



### Social Media

Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram allow us to make our content available to, and to interact with local history fans, both near and far. Visit our pages to find unique historical photos, Society news, and fun videos of local events and places. Comments and reactions to our posts allow us to find even more stories from our past, and we are active in several FB groups, such as Waterdown Memories, where we continually learn new details about our heritage.

See you online!

## Waterdown Fall Fair

HERITAGE PAPER #291

The Flamborough and Waterdown Agricultural Society held its first fair in 1882 on the Broadbent property (now the Mary Hopkins Public School grounds). The neighbouring Anglican Church barn and drive shed were used to house some of the displays and grants from East Flamborough Township Council for \$50 and Waterdown Council for \$25 supplied the money for costs and prizes. William Attridge served as Treasurer and Secretary.

Notes from Jack Gallin on the 1914 Fair show that there were many classes for horses, including draft, general purpose, market, carriage, and roadster horses, along with classes for cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, and vegetables and fruits. There were also prizes for culinary arts and crafts.

The Agricultural Society had to find a new location for the fair in 1918. The fair was held in Fred McMonies' field and a 40' x 80' tent was rented from Sopers. A concert was held at the Roller Rink on Dundas Street each night of the fair and on the Saturday of the fair weekend there was a dance to

conclude the festivities. This year also saw the introduction of the School Fair. In 1921, the fair was held in the Drill Hall and prizes were awarded for the largest family and the heaviest family.

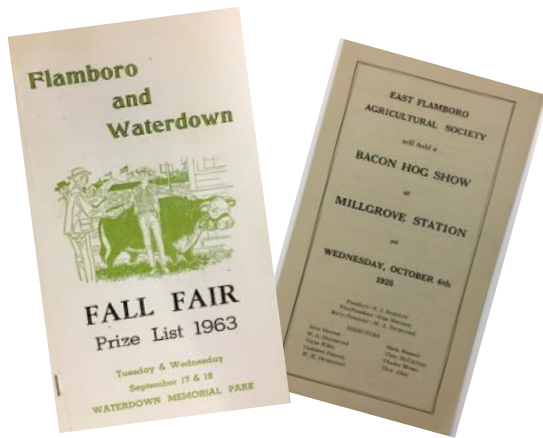
The fair did not run during the difficult years of the Depression and the Second World War, and did not return as an annual event until the 1940s.

The Fair Board was re-organized in 1943 by Charles Binkley, Walker Drummond, Howard Gallagher, and Archie Gunby. In 1947, a committee was appointed with W.H. Drummond as president to re-establish the fair as an annual event. Directors from East and West Flamborough and Waterdown were appointed and grants that year included \$500 from Wentworth County, \$150 from West Flamborough, \$250 from East Flamborough and \$100 from Waterdown. A total of \$864.65 was paid out in prize monies. The same year the organization was formally recognized by the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies' Head Office in Toronto as an accredited fall fair.

In 1949, the fair was held at Memorial Park on Hamilton Street North, with exhibits housed in tents erected for the event. By 1966, the largest crowd of



Entrants line up to show their cows in the fair ring during a fair in the early 1960s.



Prize Lists from the Waterdown Fall Fair.

over 6,000 people attended the fair, now a two-day event with over 150 exhibitors in many classes. A new addition was the Art tent where old pastimes such as whittling and stuffed toys were exhibited, along with "modern hobbies" of ceramic, mosaic, etched aluminum, copper tooling and liquid embroidery. Young people participated in the school exhibits and the junior horse show. This was the organization's most successful fall fair, but sadly attendance decreased during the following years of the 1960s even though the area township councils provided grants to maintain and improve the operations of the fair.

The final Flamboro and Waterdown Fall fair was held at Memorial Park on 11 and 12 September, 1970. The announcement in the *Hamilton Spectator* on 1 April 1971 that there would be no fair in 1971 garnered little reaction from local residents regarding the loss of the annual event — a comment that the face of Waterdown and East Flamborough Township was changing.

The Flamborough Archives collection includes many donated papers, and records and photographs relating to the Flamboro & Waterdown Agricultural Society and the annual Fall Fairs. Included in this collection are items of correspondence, minutes, newspaper clippings and other ephemera from 1954-1970. Many of the minutes relate to the Women's

Division and the categories they exhibited at the fair, together with their prize lists and sponsors. Correspondence shows the challenges faced by the fair and changes made during the years.

Copies of the official Prize Lists for many years of the Fair show the programmes, rules and prize lists for the many competitions and exhibits. They also reflect the community through the advertisements of the businesses who supported the fair. There are also lists of the Presidents, Secretaries and honorees of the Society, which show the involvement of many Waterdown residents over the years of the Fair.



Above: Unloading apples at a fair in the early 1960s. Below: youngsters help with setup in 1957.





## Treasures from the Archives



Matchbooks allowed a business to put their advertising right into the pockets of their customers. The Archives collection includes several samples of matches produced by local restaurants throughout the years, courtesy of the estate of Peter Vance.



### Keep FIRE at Bay with GYPROC

Fire seldom visits houses having Gyproc Wallboard ceilings, partitions, walls and sheathing. On the contrary Gyproc has saved many homes.

This pioneer Canadian fire-safe gypsum board has a new Ivory coloured finish this year that makes decoration unnecessary (when panelled). It is just the thing to use for making extra rooms in the cellar or attic. Quickly erected, inexpensive, structurally strong, Gyproc Wallboard gives permanent fire protection.

#### The NEW IVORY GYPROC Fireproof Wallboard

For sale by Fred Thomas—Waterdown, On.

*Flamborough Review ad—October 1930*

## FLAMBOROUGH HEADLINES—50 YEARS AGO IN OCTOBER

- ♦ The green movement was well underway in Waterdown, with the formation of the Citizens Against Pollution (CAP) environmental group. CAP offered household tips for reducing waste such as: don't buy products in non-returnable containers; return extra coat hangers to the cleaners; don't use coloured facial tissues or toilet paper; take along shopping bags when you go to the grocery store and accept only as many bags as you need at home. – *The Waterdown Review, October 15, 1970*
- ♦ The Department of Agriculture's health of animals division investigated after a rabid male beagle was captured by the Hamilton SPCA in Strabane in September. One goat, thought to have been bitten by the dog, remained in quarantine, while a cat and two dogs that had been in a fight with the beagle had to be destroyed. – *The Waterdown Review, October 15, 1970*
- ♦ The Millgrove Library advised that they "now carry a full rack of pocket books in almost every category available" as well as many new books on topics ranging from crafts to detective stories, science fiction titles and sight-saving books, magazines and records. *The Waterdown Review, October 15, 1970*
- ♦ The Waterdown detachment of the OPP investigated 16 accidents during the week of October 18-24, 1970. In total, nine people were injured, and damage was estimated at \$14,115. Officers logged more than 8,450 miles during the 776 hours on duty for the week in which they charged 75 people with traffic violations and issued 28 warnings. The OPP also investigated two thefts, three break, entry and theft incidents, one threatening, five willful damage complaints, one assault, one trespassing and one "indiscriminate shooting." – *The Waterdown Review, October 29, 1970*

## Indigenous History in Canada

Storytelling is a central part of the Indigenous identity, used to transmit the history of the land and cultural knowledge from one generation to the next and educate on how to behave properly and provide guidance on how to live and engage with the world. While some stories are based on personal observations, accounts of places and experiences and evolve over time to reflect the needs of and relevancy to the population, others, known as creation or teaching stories, remain unchanged over time. These sacred stories embody the complex worldviews associated with a particular Indigenous culture. Following is a shortened version of the Sky Woman creation story, which is shared by the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples and could often take weeks or even years to tell.

### The Sky Woman Creation Story

A long time ago and before Turtle Island was formed, there was an island that floated in the sky, and this is where the Sky people lived. One day Sky Woman was hungry and went out to look for something to eat. She hoped she would find berries or plants that would suit her craving. She found a good tree and began digging around to find some roots. This tree was a good tree. In fact it was very special, and it was called the Tree of Life.

As Sky Woman was digging, she noticed that the hole under the Tree of Life opened up into a vast open space. She was warned by the animals around her to stop digging. This was not a place to find food, and if she kept digging, she was certain to fall through the hole. But Sky Woman was extremely hungry, and she did not know this at the time, but she was pregnant with twins. Her hunger did not allow her to listen to the animals' warnings, and she kept digging. Soon the hole was big enough for her to fit through. She was so mesmerized by the swirling darkness and shimmering lights that as she leaned in to take a better look, she fell through the hole.



Down, down, down Sky Woman fell into another world. The water creatures in this other world looked up at the hole in their sky and saw Sky Woman falling down towards them. The creatures worried that her fall might upset the balance of water in their world, so they decided it would be wise to catch her. A heated discussion ensued about who would catch this strange falling woman and how they would catch her. In the end, the geese were chosen to catch her fall. The geese joined wings and caught Sky Woman in a soft feathery net. Now that the catching part had been taken care of, the creatures realized that Sky Woman needed a place to go or she would drown. She was not a water creature, nor could she fly. Everyone decided that she needed a spot to stand, and that the best thing for her would be land.

So, one of the smallest water creatures dove down into the vast waters and came back with a bit of earth. The turtle offered to have the earth placed on top of her back, and when it was, it grew bigger and bigger until it became the whole world. Sky Woman then had her twin boys, and they went about the business of creating everything in the world we know today.

## THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

By Lyn Lunsted

### Smokey Hollow

At the south end of the Waterdown village core, Mill Street winds its way down under a railway bridge into a picturesque valley, across a creek and up the other side to the 'brow' of the Niagara Escarpment. Many people pay no attention to the scenery as they hurry down the hill to Burlington, the GO station or Hwy. 403 and don't even realize that there is a waterfall.

COVID - 19 has changed some of this perception as more people are home and have discovered the joy of walking and hiking. The little park on the side of the road contains an entry point to the Bruce Trail and now, no matter the time of day or day of the week, the tiny parking lot is full. People may take the time to read the historical plaque which describes the origin of the name "Smokey Hollow" but that barely touches on the importance of the 'Hollow' to the area, nor does it document how this park came to be.

The power of Grindstone Creek was harnessed by many mills to saw lumber and grind grain. By the mid 1800s this was an industrial complex that supplied all the flour for the Maritime provinces. Two major areas in the hollow were developed: the main valley floor that is beside and east of the Great falls, and the portion of Waterdown Road that is nestled east of



the Grindstone Creek. A small portion of land north of the road was home to a variety of mills - woolen mills, carding mills, basket factories, flour mills and

foundries. These were owned and run by men who were influential and built the village of Waterdown - Cummer, Griffin, Lottridge, Slater, Dean, and Howland.

Sir William Pearce Howland purchased property in 1860 and constructed a four storey stone flour mill and barrel factory at the south end of the hollow. In addition to owning several mills in the area, he was also Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Minister of Finance, Postmaster General, Finance Minister and a member of the Privy Council. He was the delegate representing Upper Canada in London and promoted Confederation. He was the only American born 'Father of Confederation'.

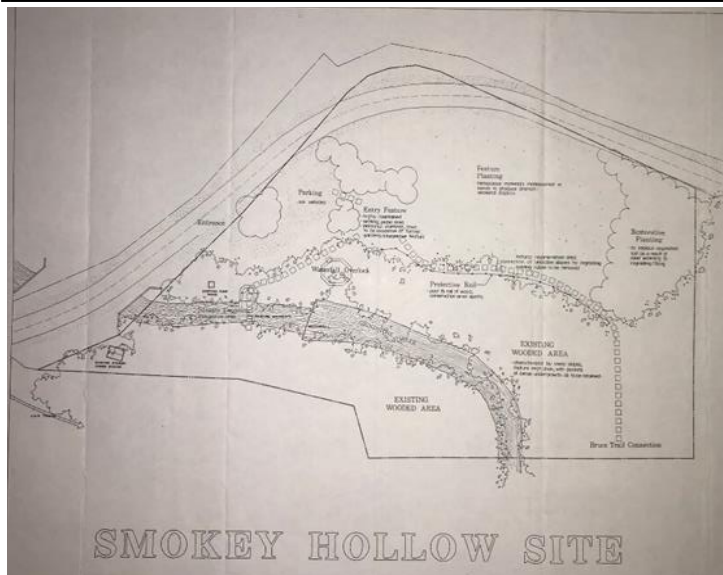
By 1912, there was nothing left of this busy and prosperous area. Most of the mills had burned down over time. The Howland Mill burned in 1910. The railway came through the area in 1912 and changed the landscape of the valley forever.



Over the next decades, the valley was the site of a private home with expansive gardens but it too eventually burned to the ground. By the 1980s the area was an unattractive overgrown wilderness and was littered with garbage.

In March 1989 a group of Waterdown residents formed the 'Save Smokey Hollow' committee. The objective was to restore the natural and scenic qualities of Smokey Hollow and to ensure that its historical importance was remembered and understood by future generations.





This was an extremely ambitious undertaking. It would need to be a multi-year plan and would involve many different entities. The roughly 4 acre site was owned by the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth but was considered part of the Town of Flamborough, which included the Village of Waterdown. Funding would be required to do the grading and landscaping that was proposed in a landscape plan by Frank Basciano. Mill Street South/Waterdown Road was due for roadwork and the Region would have to incorporate the proposed park into this road realignment. Grindstone Creek watershed is part of the Halton Region Conservation Authority and a CPR line ran right through the middle of the proposed park. The committee also contacted the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and the Bruce Trail Association as the Bruce Trail also goes through this area.



The highlight of the space was to be a large viewing platform.

Over the next five years, the committee dealt with consultants, environmental assessment engineers, lawyers, various granting agencies and representatives from conservation authorities and multiple levels of government. Donations were received from the Waterdown Rotary Club for construction of the viewing platform and various fundraisers were held, the most memorable being a raffle for a painting of the Great Falls down by local artist Brian Darcy.



When it was finished, the Halton Region Conservation Authority agreed to maintain Smokey Hollow in perpetuity. Many people contributed time, sweat and money to create a space dedicated to the impressive history of the area and to preserve it for future generations. It was officially opened in September 1994.



Memorial benches and trees have been planted through the years which contribute to the peaceful beauty of what was once a busy, industrial, smoke-filled valley.

**The Flamborough  
Heritage Society**

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**Instagram:** @flamborougharchives

**Twitter:** @FlamboroHistory

**YouTube:** Flamborough Archives &  
Heritage Society

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Corrie Giles

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Acting Treasurer: Lyn Lunsted

Past-President:

Nathan Tidridge

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Bailey Cripps

Brenda Jefferies, Newsletter

Mary Beth Kennedy

Meghan Martin

Keri Raphael

Kim Hirst

Lyn Lunsted, Archivist



## NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

As we continue to navigate through these unusual times, the Flamborough Heritage Society Board of Directors continues to meet virtually to discuss how we can keep spreading our local history within the community.

Since in-person gatherings are out of the question, we are working to find the best way to present virtual public meetings and we hope to have something in place soon.

In the meantime, we are making sure that more and more of our information is available online all the time, so please share our messages and articles on your social media pages.

Chris Rivait

## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

In an effort to bring local history to residents, the Flamborough Heritage Society is exploring online options for our regular public meetings. Please take a few minutes to let us know if you are interested in attending an online meeting through a platform such as Zoom or Google Meets.

Email us at [society@flamboroughhistory.com](mailto:society@flamboroughhistory.com)

## AREA SOCIETY WEBSITES

The **Ancaster Township Historical Society** -

[www.ancasterhistory.ca](http://www.ancasterhistory.ca)

The **Burlington Historical Society** -

[www.burlingtonhistorical.ca](http://www.burlingtonhistorical.ca)

The **Dundas Valley Historical Society** -

[www.dundashistory.ca](http://www.dundashistory.ca)

The **Grimsby Historical Society** -

[GrimsbyHistoricalSociety.com](http://GrimsbyHistoricalSociety.com)

The **Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society**-

[www.hamiltonheritage.ca](http://www.hamiltonheritage.ca)

The **Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society** -

[HeadoftheLakeHistoricalSociety.com](http://HeadoftheLakeHistoricalSociety.com)

The **United Empire Loyalists' Association of  
Canada, Hamilton Branch** - [www.uel.com](http://www.uel.com)

The **West Lincoln Historical Society** - [www.wlhs.info](http://www.wlhs.info)