



FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY



November 2022

# Heritage Happenings

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## November's Monthly Meeting

*The Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on the Waterdown Inventory Project by Alissa Golden, Nov. 30th at 8:00PM, in person at the Waterdown Legion.*

Alissa is a Heritage Project Specialist with the City of Hamilton. She has more than 9 years of experience managing cultural heritage resources and has implemented a broad range of heritage cultural projects. Alissa will tell us about the Built Heritage Inventory Strategy and explain its purpose of updating the Inventory of Heritage Buildings, listing undesignated significant properties on the Municipal Heritage Register and recommending potential candidates for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.



### Heritage Paper #307

Second in the series of "Conspiracy, Controversy, and Celebrity: A Rich History of Flamborough". Discover the trial of a 1920s murder with 'The Murder of Mike Jonash - Part 2.'

### Found in the Fonds

Some pretty amazing stuff is unearthed in the Archives during research projects or when cataloguing items.

What's in the spotlight this month?

### Memorial Hall 100

Waterdown is one of the very few exceptions in Canada where a memorial hall was purpose built. We celebrated with the community with a weekend of events.

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# HERITAGE PAPER

## Flamborough Centre: The Murder of Mike Jonash - Part 2

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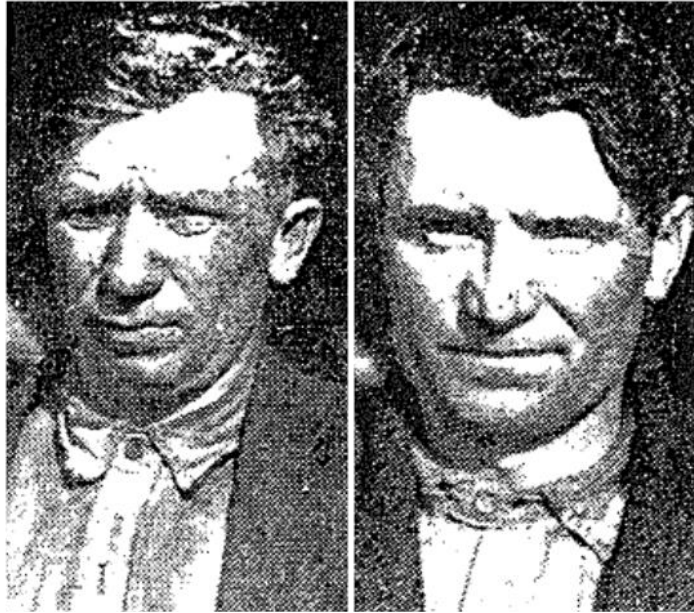
*Tess Moffat, Archives Summer Student*

***The second in the series “Conspiracy, Controversy, and Celebrity: A Rich History of Flamborough”, discover what happened at the 1928 trial.***

With the start of the trial, all the details put together by the police and the Crown prosecutor would be open to the public. The people would have access to the evidence collected by the police and hear the testimonies of every individual involved in the murder of the farmer Mike Jonash.

According to the accused, the fateful evening involved a dinner party and a keg of beer. After being criticized by his wife at the end of the night, Jonash hit her and stormed out of the house, only to trip and fall down the backstairs, crashing into the wagon parked outside. When he was discovered by his wife, Jonash was brought inside and the accused ran to their neighbour, J. McWhurter, who called Doctor D.A. Hopper of Waterdown. When the doctor arrived at the scene, Jonash had already succumbed to his injuries.

The story of a horrific accident did not hold up upon inves-



The two charged in killing Mike Jonash - Jacob Szepanek, left, and Joseph Deczuk, right. *Hamilton Spectator*, 29 Feb 1928

tigation by the police. There were discrepancies with the stories, potential motives that needed to be explored, and the evidence presented by the accused was flimsy at best. The blood splattered against the wagon looked as if it had been smeared on, bloodied tools had been discovered on the property and near the crime scene, and the victim's wounds did not line up with the proposed story. His chest was caved in, the side of his head looked as if it was

bashed with a dull object, and his face was gouged, making an accidental headfirst fall into the wagon appear to be unlikely. With the arrest of Mary Jonash, The Hamilton Spectator heard she had given her version of what happened that incriminated her brother and the hired man. The upcoming trial was when all would be revealed about that night.

The trial commenced on March 30th, 1928 in the Ontario Supreme Court in the presence

of Chief Justice Meredith. **Argue** Martin represented Jacob Sczepanek, the hired man, and O.M. Walsh was the attorney for Joseph Deczuk, the victim's brother-in-law. The Crown Attorney was G.W. Ballard. Jurors included Pringle Morley, D. White, James McCready, L. Binkley, W. Mayhew, E. Glover, Ray Roland, J. Martin, C. Eaton, W.P. Mitchell, C. Goodwin, and E. Douglish.

William Pinch, the crime scene photographer, was called by the Crown to identify photographs of the house and Jonash; as well, E. McKay, who had drawn the blueprints of the house for the police, was called in to identify his work. The Crown then called Doctor Hopper and Doctor Deadman, who carried out the autopsy. Doctor Hopper confirmed what he had witnessed, including arriving at the scene, the smell of whiskey from the victim, and how Sczepanek had a scratch on his face. As well, he corroborated the autopsy report from Doctor Deadman. According to Doctor Deadman, there were numerous bruises, abrasions, and wounds found on the victim that indicated a violent attack. As well, he believed that death could have occurred from three major injuries, including the fracture of the skull leading to the brain

hemorrhaging, a ruptured kidney, or a punctured lung as a result of broken ribs.

The next witness was of great interest to the court. Mary Jonash testified to what had occurred that night. During the dinner, Jonash attempted to discuss with his brother-in-law the debts he owed him. Deczuk allegedly told the victim not to talk about it. A quarrel then occurred when Jonash brought up Deczuk's debts to him. Mrs. Jonash attempted to stop the two but was slapped by her husband and told to be quiet. The quarrel continued between the door that separated the two households.

**“There were numerous bruises, abrasions, and wounds found on the victim that indicated a violent attack.”**

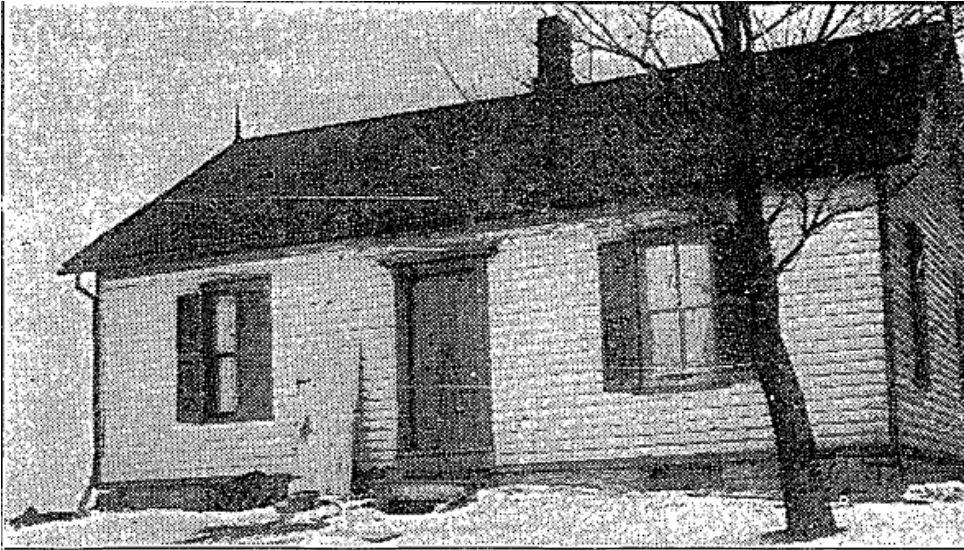
Mrs. Jonash began crying but was struck with a strap and told to go outside. Later, her husband ordered her inside where she passed Mrs. Deczuk heading towards Mike Jonash. She stayed in the house for half an hour before going outside and witnessing Jonash being jumped on by Sczepanek while her brother stood beside them. The two ran off when she screamed and she went back inside, telling her son Henry that his father was on the

ground by the wagon. When she returned to aid her husband, Deczuk was beating Jonash with a piece of wood while Sczepanek and her sister-in-law stood by the water pump. She tried to drag her husband in by herself before Sczepanek assisted her. Later, the men told Mrs. Jonash not to say a word. It was determined during the cross-examination that Jonash had indeed instigated the fighting, but, according to his wife, he was not drunk and, despite hitting her with the strap, was a good husband.

The neighbour gave his testimony and stated that both accused had awoken him and claimed they needed a doctor because Jonash drank ‘poisoned alcohol’ and fell down the stairs. McWhurter claimed to have never seen the victim drunk. He also knew of a quarrel at the house in which Sczepanek was accused by Jonash of giving Mrs. Deczuk his family's food.

Stanley Jonash, the brother of the victim who was watching the farm in the absence of Mrs. Jonash, cleaned out the stove in Deczuk's part of the house and found pants buttons. Chief James Clark testified about what they found that night, including the pine club and the state of the wagon, and confirmed where the buttons had been discov-





*The farm house occupied by the Jonash and Deczuk families.*

ered. Earl Bradshaw of the Toronto Shirt and Overall Company identified them as overall buttons that would be impossible to be cut off as they would have been riveted on.

It was then time for the defence's evidence. Sczepanek was the first witness to be called and he had a much different story compared to his initial description of events. After the keg of beer was drunk, a quarrel started and both the Deczuk family and Sczepanek retreated to their respective corners of the house. Jonash and his wife continued to fight, and he struck her. Deczuk emerged wanting a fight, but Sczepanek brought him outside to cool down before they both returned to the house. Mary and Mike Jonash came out of the house, but Jonash ordered her back in. The Deczucs came from their side of the house and threw Mike to the ground, strik-

ing him several times with a brick before Deczuk began jumping on his brother-in-law. Sczepanek did not witness this occurring. Mrs. Jonash came out of the house, causing her brother and his wife to run, but they returned. When Sczepanek attempted to aid his employer, Mrs. Deczuk grabbed him by the hair, and they were engrossed in a struggle while Deczuk began beating Jonash with a stick. Mrs. Jonash emerged again from the house screaming, "you've killed him." Sczepanek helped her bring Jonash into the house and went to alert the neighbour. Deczuk, having changed his clothes and wiped his face with a cloth, attempted to stop him before deciding to go with him. Deczuk begged his sister not to say a word about what had transpired.

Sczepanek confirmed that everyone in the house was

drunk and Mike Jonash was in a nasty mood that night. He explained that he had carried Jonash in by his head and he avoided blood on his clothes by holding his employer's head away from him. Sczepanek had also alerted Chief Clark about the buttons in the oven.

The next witness was Deczuk. Deczuk claimed the quarrel was between Jonash and his wife and resulted in Jonash striking Mary. Deczuk attempted to defend his sister but was also struck and verbally assaulted. The Deczuk clan retreated to their side of the house when Deczuk heard his sister yell. His wife convinced him to go and see what was happening. He thought the fight would end, but he was alerted to another noise from outside and ventured out through the backdoor. After Mary was ordered inside, Sczepanek told Deczuk he thought Jonash was going to kill her. Jonash then confronted the hired man and struck him. Deczuk took a stick and bashed Jonash on the legs, sending him to the ground. Sczepanek then jumped on Jonash until Mrs. Jonash came out, sending the two men running. Later, Sczepanek approached him in the house and brought up going to the city to seek help for Jonash, but Deczuk mentioned going to the doc-

tor. Deczuk confirmed he did not see Jonash being brought into the kitchen after what transpired, and he could not confirm whether Jonash was dead when he retreated inside. Deczuk claimed his only part in the murder was hitting Jonash on the legs with a stick and Sczepanek was the only one who had fatally wounded Jonash. When cross-examined, he maintained that he was on good terms with his sister and he had never seen Jonash so angry that night and was unsure of the cause.

Mrs. Deczuk confirmed there had been quarrelling about owed money when she left the party. She had not seen any fighting. Mrs. Deczuk claimed Sczepanek had threatened to stab Jonash with a fork during an old quarrel when Sczepanek was accused of giving her food. After the events occurred, Sczepanek allegedly asked Deczuk for ten dollars so he could run away. According to Mrs. Deczuk, Sczepanek admitted to meeting Jonash in the woodshed and throwing him down the stairs, starting the fight.

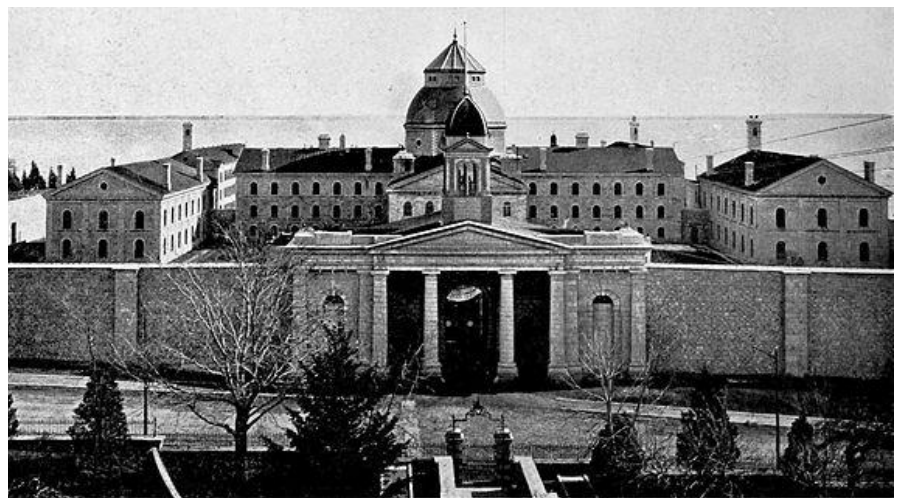
The defence's final witness was E. Turner of the Dominion Glass Works, who worked under Deczuk and claimed Deczuk was a peaceful and industrious man. This concluded the trial.

After one hour of delibera-

tion, the jury returned with a verdict of manslaughter, believing the men had both killed Jonash. The jury believed they did not have a deliberate plan, but the murder was a result of a rash and impulsive decision urged on by the heat of passion. Self-defence as well as attempting to protect Mrs. Jonash had been argued as potential motives for both men, but it was pointed out by the prosecution that both had blamed each other for what had occurred as opposed to admitting their roles and neither one raised a hand previously when Jonash struck his wife, voiding both defences. Walsh argued to delay sentencing, but his request was denied, and the accused were sentenced to life in prison at Kingston penitentiary. However, the sentence was not unchangeable, and an

appeal could occur.

Unfortunately, that is all the detail that could be found about the Jonash murder, and there is no information about the fate of Mrs. Jonash, Mrs. Deczuk, or the two killers. According to the jury, there was reasonable doubt that only one or neither of the men committed the crime. Despite the sentence, Sczepanek maintained he was held down by Mrs. Deczuk and played no part. The public was given an open and shut case about what had occurred that dreadful February evening and the lack of information about what happened afterwards could indicate the charges stuck. With each witness sticking to their own version of events that implicated everyone but themselves, they ensured the truth would continue to be obscured.



**Kingston Penitentiary, c. 1901.** Constructed from 1833-34, it was one of the oldest prisons in continuous use in the world at the time of its closure - *"Souvenir views of the city of Kingston Ontario, Canada, and the Thousand Islands, River St. Lawrence"*



## Current Projects

**All of our work is accomplished through our volunteers. You may wonder what exactly volunteers are doing - we're glad you asked!**

Our high school co-op student Samantha Hounscome has completed revising "...from West Flamborough's Storied Past" as well as Cecil Hamilton's "The Story of Strabane" for republication. This included adding a table of contents and indexes to both. After proofing and editing, these books will be ready; we're hoping in time for the holiday season. Have a history buff on your list? Gift them with a membership and one of our many publications, available to ship or local pickup at the Flamborough Archives.

Speaking of the archives, our volunteers continue to catalogue and organize the shelves so that items are easily accessible and we free up some much needed space. Our archivist Lyn continues to field inquiries, including one from the Stoney Creek Historical Society with regards to our online cataloguing system.

We've updated the display cabinets in the Waterdown Library with



panels printed by the Dundas Museum & Archives. We've used their printer before for our large exhibit display, and these new panels give all our varied display cabinets a cohesive appearance. Be sure to stop by and have a look!

Memorial Hall 100, a celebration of one hundred years since Waterdown's Community Memorial Hall was constructed, was held the weekend of November 11 - 13. Friday's opening ceremony was emceed by our very own Kim Hirst and Meghan Martin. Garry Spears spoke for the Waterdown Legion, Judi Partridge and Jason Thorne represented the City. Following

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

*Our volunteers' love of local history, time spent and dedication to helping the Society is always appreciated. Here we highlight just a small sampling of their work.*



the opening ceremony was a showing of Peter Jackson's "They Shall Not Grow Old" - a graphic documentary that used WWI footage and interviews of veterans.

Saturday was an afternoon of musical performances, as well as an evening of trivia. We wrapped up on Sunday with coffee and muffins and a final chance to check out the displays and activities in the lower level.

Thanks to all the community partners that made this event a success, including the Waterdown BIA, Waterdown Legion, Waterdown District Lions Club, Village Theatre, and Rotary Club of Waterdown.



*"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."* – **Edward Everett Hale**

## CONTRIBUTING TO OUR CAUSE

## MEMBERSHIP

*It takes a lot to preserve history, and your membership is a big part of that. Thanks to all our members!*

- 1 Members have priority, being sent the latest news first
- 2 Your membership helps support Heritage Society projects
- 3 Be part of one of the most active Heritage Societies in Ontario

Thanks to everyone who continues their membership with us. Membership runs from September to August annually, and helps support us by funding our operating costs. Members receive this newsletter as well as priority at our monthly meetings, back live in person after being held by Zoom for the last few years.

We think society membership is pretty amazing - we encourage all our current members to recruit more people, whether you gift a membership to someone special or just let your friends, family, and colleagues know about us.



## DONATIONS

We receive a lot of donations of heritage documents, photographs, and items throughout the year. If you have something you think we may like, please let us know! You don't have to permanently donate an item - pieces can be on loan to the Archives for as long as you feel comfortable or copied and returned to you.

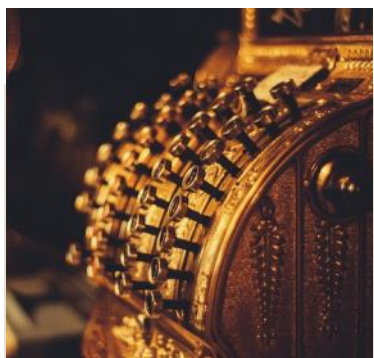
To be able to properly catalogue and store all these treasures takes not only an investment of time but also money. Acid free envelopes and boxes, sleeves to store negatives,

blank cards to use in the card catalogue are just a few of our expenses.

We're still raising funds for our shelf system update - space is currently at a premium in the Archives. While memberships, book sales and grants help us with our day-to-day expenditures, donations from members like you greatly support our mission.

Please help us preserve our local history by donating today. Tax receipts are issued for donations \$25 and up.

Thank you so much for your support.





# OUR PRESENCE ONLINE

*We encourage all of our members to follow, subscribe, share and overall enjoy our online activities. See you all online!*

## OUR FOLLOWERS



**3,571**



**523**



**67**



**25**

We're constantly posting new content - tap follow and drop a comment to say hi!



**Obituary notices from Flamborough.** 1858-1872 was the most popular blog post in October.

## E-Commerce

We continue to sell our publications and memberships through our online shop. Hoping to be kept in mind for the weeks leading up to the holiday season.

Keep a close eye on our website and socials for updates, and as always:

*Thanks to all for your support!*

October was a busy month for us on the web. We not only share images and information but are busy trawling for information all over cyberspace.

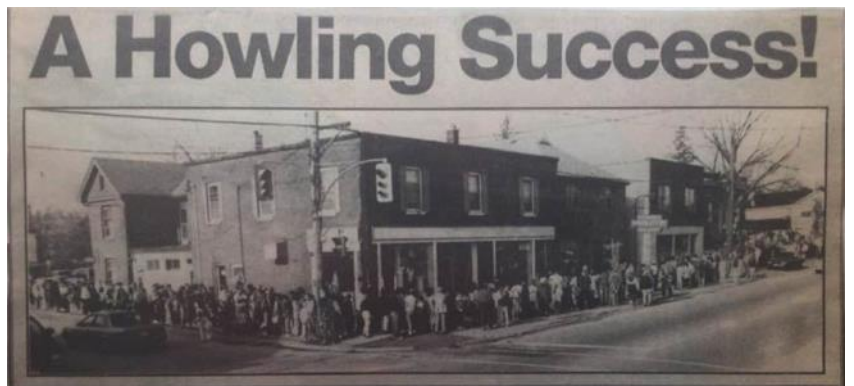
We were often promoting the Memorial Hall 100 celebration, which received a lot of positive attention.

We reminisced with our followers regarding the Rotary Haunted

House - photographer Ken Bosveld climbed on top of a van to capture the shot.

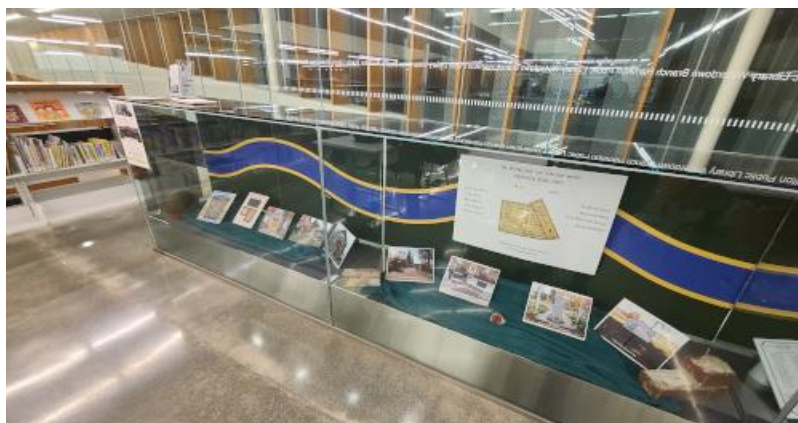
Pastoral images of Westover landscapes and a hay harvest in Dundas were also shared - there were many comments and reactions to both.

Don't be a stranger - be sure to share with us or our content wherever we are online.





# Treasures from the Archives



**The latest exhibit** highlights how Flamborough remembers those that served.

**We're highlighting** Flamborough Memorials in our latest exhibit, displayed in the Waterdown branch of the Hamilton Public Library.

There are many examples throughout Flamborough, from cenotaphs to memorial

halls and parks.

MaryAnn and Jamie Slagter put together a wonderful collection of images and artifacts for this exhibit, including a helmet, bricks from Waterdown's Memorial Hall, and a map of the memorials across Flamborough.

## FOUND IN THE FONDS

November is a time we remember, with numerous conflicts in our history where Canadians have participated.

Within our postcard collection are some examples of British Recruitment posters in

WWI, as well as an example of a patriotic poetry postcard to be sent home.

Some of these recruitment postcards were illustrated by Joyce Dennys, who not only illustrated posters in WWI but flourished as

an illustrator of the works of others and contributed humorous illustrations to magazines.

"She had the ability, during both World Wars, to capture the spirit of the times. The vivacity and gently mocking humour of her wartime illustrations and letters have







each proved as attractive to later generations as to her contemporary readers." (Alison Bailey).

Joyce also served as a VAD nurse in Budleigh Salterton and Exeter.



### ARCHIVES ACTIVITY - OCTOBER

	<b>VISITORS</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>CALLS</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>E-MESSAGES</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>ACQUISITIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>VOLUNTEER HOURS</b>	<b>259</b>

# THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

## Military Resources

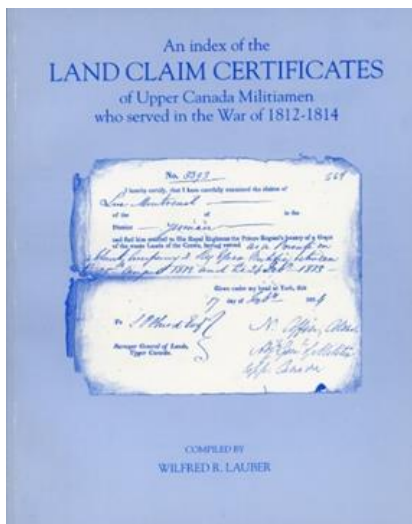
Lyn Lunsted, Archivist

The Flamborough Archives is a small community Archive, and as such, we don't always follow the archival 'rules'. We are totally volunteer run, so in order for our volunteers to find the material, it is filed by subject rather than by Record Groups. We also try to be a resource for students, genealogists and local historians, so our holdings include a lot of books and other publications about various subjects. Our Military section is quite eclectic and you might find items that you don't expect.

These are some of the publications we have in our collection.

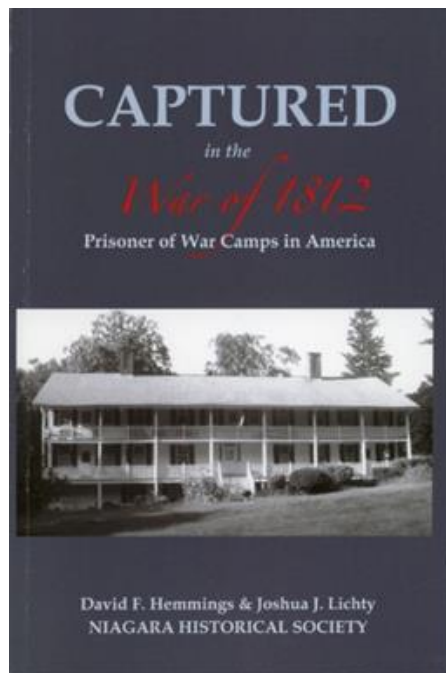
### Early Conflicts

- '50 Faces of War: 50 key individuals who had a part in defending Canada against American Invasion'. Legion Magazine

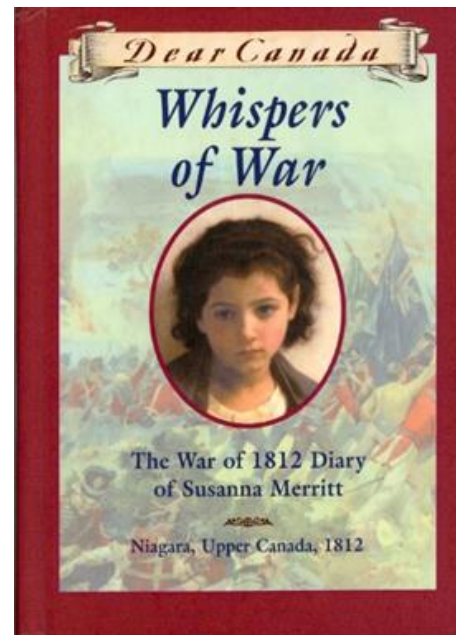


'The Gore District Militia of 1821-1824-1830 and 1838' by H.H. Robertson

'Loyalist Regiments'. Flamborough Archives



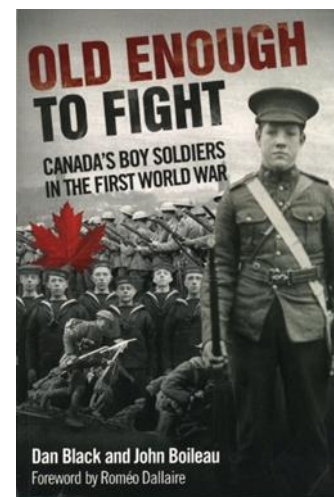
- 'Old Forts of the Great Lakes: Sentinels in the Wilderness' by James P. Barry
- 'Rolls of the Provincial (Loyalist) Corps, Canadian Command American Revolutionary Period' by Mary Beacock Fryer and Lieutenant-Colonel William A. Smy, C.D.
- 'The War of 1812' by Victor Suthren



- 'War of 1812' Volumes 1 & 2 by Hamilton Historical Board

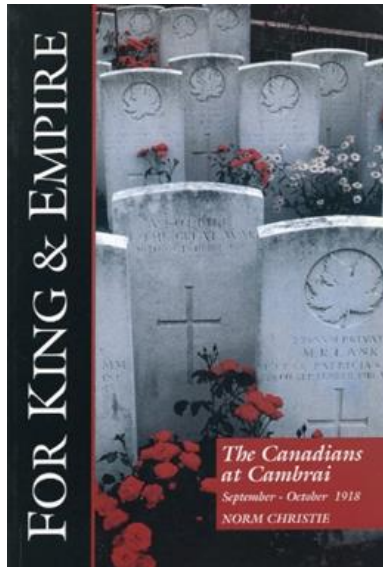
### World War I

- 'The C.E.F. Roll of Honour' Compiled by Edward H. Wigley
- 'Canadian Airmen and the First World War'. S.F. Wise



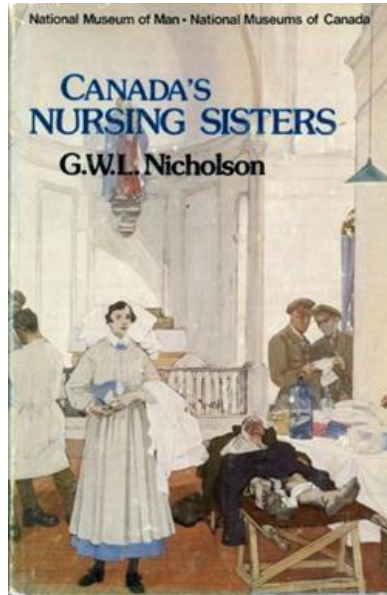


- 'Officers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who died overseas 1914 – 1919' by N.M. Christie
- 'A Township at War' by Jonathan Vance



## World War II

'Canadian Military Atlas: Four centuries of conflict from New France to Kosovo'. By Mark Zuehlke

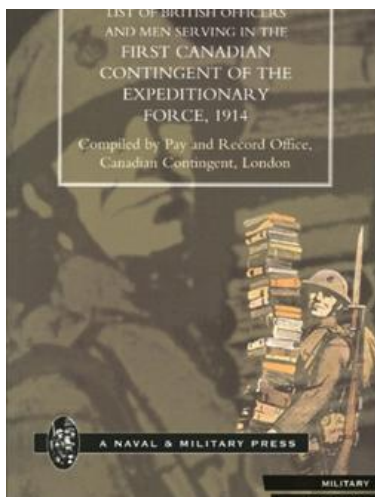


## General Resources, postcard and photographs

- 'A Call to the Colours: tracing your Canadian Military Ancestors' by Kenneth G. Cox
- 'A Guide to Military History on the Internet' by Simon Fowler

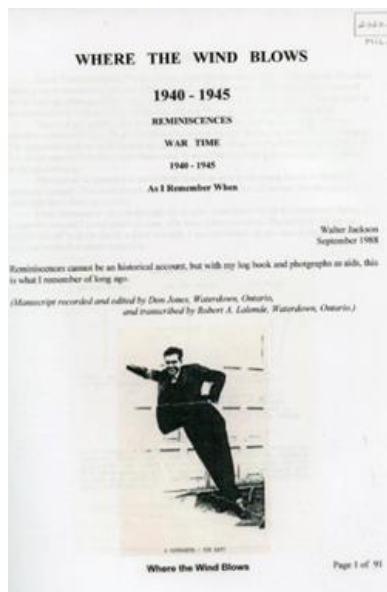
We have a small collection of military postcards and photographs. We also have binders of clippings from the local newspaper relating to World War II. If you are looking for information on military history, check out our resources!

- 'University of Toronto' Roll of Service, 1914 – 1918'
- 'Winged Sentries: a history of Canadian Military Aviation' by John Gordon



'Index to Overseas Deaths of Ontario Servicemen and Servicewomen 1939 – 1947' by Bruce Thornley

'True Canadian Heroes in the air' by Arthur Bishop





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Another year draws to a close, and most of you will be in the midst of preparations for this festive season. This special time of year gives us all a break from our busy schedules, and provides us with time to enjoy the company of family and friends.



This time of year also lets us pause to look back and reflect on how the year progressed. These reminiscences help us distinguish our strengths, and how we can champion and increase awareness of the Society within the community as a whole.

This year was a busy one for the Society, its members, and its volunteers. It has been said that the most precious gift to give is your time - it certainly is a limited resource. Thanks to those that contributed what they could. We value your support and look forward to a new year with exciting new ventures.

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy holiday season, and the best for the coming year.

Chris Rivait, President

### AREA HERITAGE 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 - [Grimsby Historical Society](http://GrimsbyHistoricalSociety).

The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society- [www.hamiltonheritage.ca](http://www.hamiltonheritage.ca)

The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society -

[Head of the Lake Historical Society](http://HeadoftheLakeHistoricalSociety)

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)

Waterdown Mill Street Heritage -

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

### THE FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY

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Facebook: @flamboroughhistory

Instagram: @flamborougharchives

Twitter: @FlamboroHistory

YouTube: Flamborough Archives  
& Heritage Society

### OFFICERS 2022—2023

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Secretary: Sue McNally

Treasurer: Lyn Lunsted

Past President: Nathan Tidridge

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Garth Wetherall

Lyn Lunsted, Archivist

