

FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY



February 2023

Heritage Happenings

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February's Monthly Meeting

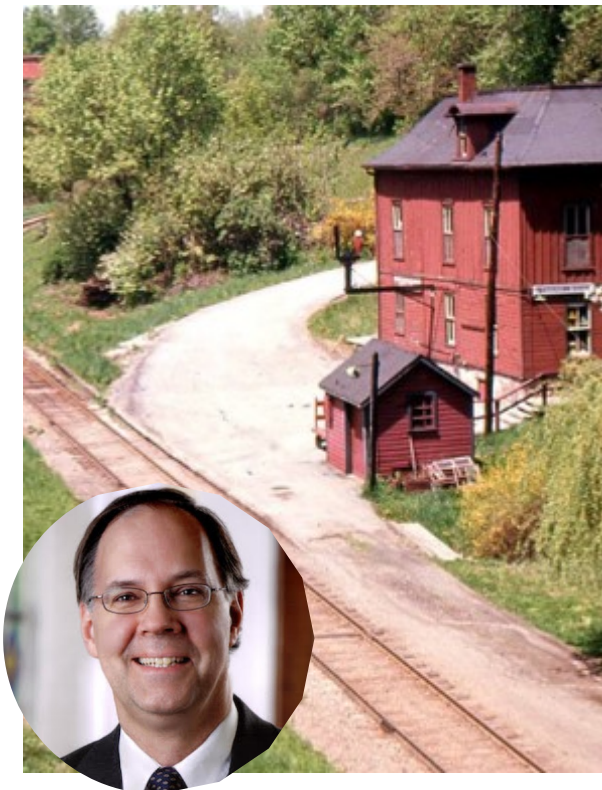
The Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on Waterdown Memories by Jonathan Vance, Feb. 22nd at 8:00PM, in person at the Waterdown Legion.

The Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on Waterdown Memories by Jonathan Vance.

Well known military historian and author, Jonathan grew up in Waterdown. He is currently Distinguished University Professor and J.B. Smallman Chair, History Department at the University of

Western Ontario. His parents, Peter and Margaret Vance, were very active in many Waterdown organizations and Peter was a prolific photographer.

Using photos and films from his fathers' collection, and his own experiences growing up in Waterdown, Jonathan will take us on a stroll down memory lane.



Heritage Paper #309

Fourth in the series of "Conspiracy, Controversy, and Celebrity: A Rich History of Flamborough". Explore An Archaeological First with 'A Case of Looting in Freelton and The Ontario Heritage Act.'

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?

Membership

We love our current members, and hope to welcome more to the Flamborough Heritage Society.

Interested in membership and what it goes toward?

EXPLORE FROM PAGE 2 >>

SEE IT NOW ON PAGE 5 >>

STARTING ON PAGE 6 >>

HERITAGE PAPER

An Archaeological First: Looting in Freelton and *The Ontario Heritage Act*

Tess Moffat, Archives Summer Student

Over the next several issues we will be publishing papers under the theme “Conspiracy, Controversy, and Celebrity: A Rich History of Flamborough”

The adage is ‘no one remembers second place’; however, there are some firsts that are not the greatest to be acknowledged for. In 1985, Gordon Jackson, George Parkin, and Gary Richer were the first to be charged under the 1974 Ontario Heritage Act, which was created to designate and protect cultural heritage sites, for looting a previously untouched Indigenous site in Freelton dating back to the 1640s. The trio looted priceless artifacts and unearthed and desecrated sixty-five bodies. Outside of the legal milestone, the site itself was of archaeological importance; before the looting, the site was believed to have been the most well-preserved site of its kind in the context of Ontario.

In 1982, George Gee relayed a rumour to William A. Fox, Paul Lennox, and William Fitzgerald about an undisturbed Freelton site. The area was surveyed, and artifacts were found in a bush lot. In April 1983, permission for



A sequence of events leading up to the looting of the Freelton village and Misner cemetery began in 1982. It had been the most intact site of its kind known to the archaeological community.

a more detailed investigation was granted by the landowners. After examining the village, it was found that the site was about 1.1 hectares and undisturbed. The site was so well-preserved that circular depressions in the ground from Indigenous food storage pits were present. A report of the discovery was made to the Ministry's Chief of Archaeology Allen Tyyska and

Archaeological Survey of Ontario Data Base Co-ordinator Donna McNeil on April 22nd. In early May, the site was surveyed to produce a contour map that included middens, storage pits, and current property lines. Artifact recovery rates were superb, and the middens were noted as being rich in artifacts. From what was uncovered, archaeologists involved in the excavation

believed the site was possibly from about 1640 AD. The next steps for the site would involve protection. An easement agreement was in the works from 1983 to the beginning of September 1984. During this time, the Freelton village had been Borden registered, but, considering the site's importance and vulnerability, any information concerning the Freelton village was restricted. This was done to ensure that the Freelton Village site would remain unharmed from looters. However, on September 13th, 1984, Fox was notified by the landowners the site had been pillaged.

During a trip to check on the site, the son of the landowners had noticed extensive digging. On the 14th, a visit to the Freelton Village site confirmed the report. Tyyska was notified and the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police were called. Of the four neighbouring farms, only one of the neighbours seemed to have any knowledge of the looting. The damage from the looting was documented and mapped out. Undocumented midden deposits had been unearthed, and small shovel holes, possibly from metal detector activity, were scattered throughout. Police investigations continued into early October. Detective Sergeant Don Craith of Dundas

was hesitant to pursue the case because of the legally untested nature of the 1974 Ontario Heritage Act. Despite these hesitations, there were already suspicions surrounding the identities of the looters. Allen Tweedle of Strabane had witnessed the looters using metal detectors, and Fitzgerald was requested to call George Parkin to learn who had looted the village. Suspicion primarily surrounded Gary Richer, Gordon Jackson, and George Parkin. Information from an associate of Richer's led to a stakeout of the site, but the looters did not appear. Warrants were obtained on October 16th to search the homes of the trio.

Fox was notified by the landowners the site had been pillaged.

Richer admitted to looting and pointed out areas where the three had visited. Richer identified a previously unknown cemetery that had been disturbed by the trio with sixty-five bodies being desecrated. Testimonies were also extracted from Parkin and Johnson. The police were able to recover the stolen artifacts and seized the trio's metal detectors. The archaeologists were shocked at the extent of



Council for the defense, B. De Rubis, Esq. (sketch by Janie Fox)

the damage; the looters had stolen over 700 artifacts from the Freelton village, including eighty-nine complete iron axes, and over 8,800 artifacts from the Misner cemetery. To determine the damage to the site and prevent future looting, a salvage project was carried out at the location from October to November. The newly discovered cemetery was also evaluated. It was determined that the looters had destroyed a quarter of the cemetery. There was no way of telling what the looted graves looked



***Genoa Frilled Rim Sherds from the Freelton Site,
possibly indicating the presence of Wenro Refugees at the site.
Sourced from Ontario Archaeology.***

like before, and evidence would suggest that Richer, Jackson, and Parkin had dug through several large communal graves and individual internments, obliterating graves, bodies, and artifacts. Prior to the damage, the site would have been one of the most well-preserved sites of its kind in Ontario. The 1985 trial would not only be important for the future of archaeological conservation through the first conviction under The Ontario Heritage Act, but, as pointed out by the prosecution, it would also be vital for the protection of Indigenous Peoples and their history and spiritual beliefs.

The evidence against Richer, Jackson, and Parkin was overwhelming; not only had they confessed to the crime, but the

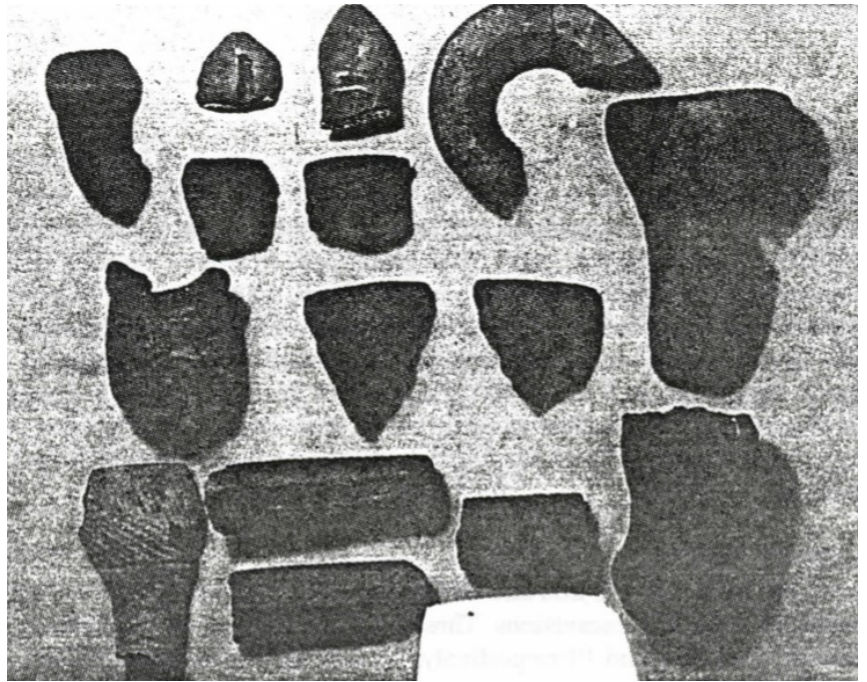
artifacts recovered by the police matched with what was taken from the site. On the fifteenth of April 1985, pleas of guilty were entered into the court with several hours of testimony to determine the severity of the sentence. Michael Bader of the Crown Law Office represented the province, Justice of the Peace R. Robins resided over the court, and Mr. De Rubeis was the counsel for the defendants. Considering this would be the first time someone would be charged under The Ontario Heritage Act of 1974, there was no legal precedent for sentencing; as a result, no stone was to be left unturned during the trial.

After a lengthy legal battle, a verdict was reached by the court. It was decided by the

court, considering the lack of a license and the disregard for the history and individuals on the site through the destruction of graves and stealing of artifacts, the trio were knowingly not following archaeological standards of practice. Gordon Jackson, a former member of the Ontario Archaeological Society with a lifelong interest in artifacts, was determined by the court to have known what he did was wrong and was in violation of The Ontario Heritage Act and the archaeological standards of practice. He was fined \$7000. George Parkin, described as a second-generation looter, ended up in a similar boat. He was known to have an interest in artifacts and previously had a license for excavation. The court determined he would have had enough knowledge to realize the implications of his actions and how they violated The Ontario Heritage Act and archaeological standards of practice. He was also fined \$7000. Gary Richer, as a result of his disability pension, was given a lighter fine. Considering his function in the crime, it was determined by the court that he would be capable to perform eight hundred hours of community service as well as pay a \$700 fine within two years.

While being a horrifying example of looting and having ter-

rible implications for the understanding and preservation of the Freelon Village site, the outcome of the trial indicated a step forward for archaeological conservation. Being first at something is a very common goal for most; while being the first to be convicted underneath a new legal act would not be a desirable goal, the 1985 Freelon Village trial represented a positive first for Ontario archaeology.



Pipe fragments from the Freelon Site.

Sourced from the Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society.

FOUND IN THE FONDS

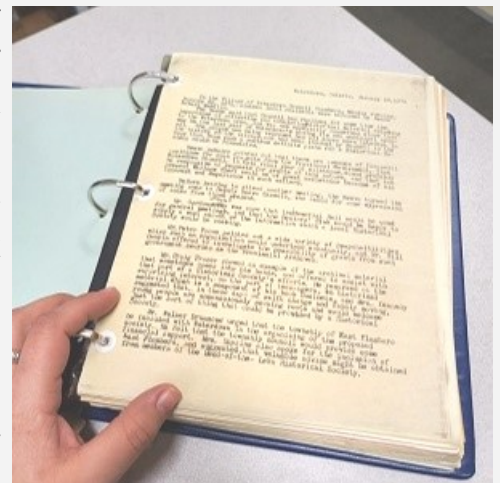
Beginnings don't have to be glamorous, and we are lucky to have documentation of the genesis of what would become the Waterdown - East Flamborough Heritage Society, known colloquially as the Flamborough Heritage Society. In this our 50th year, we hope to celebrate our origins, our achievements, and look forward to what the Heritage Society will do in the future.

The first meeting minutes highlighted the importance of collecting and tabulating historical material of the area. This was important at the time as the three townships of Beverly, East and West Flamborough became joined in one entity. Reeve Robert

McNairn was especially concerned as it "may be the last year of Waterdown having its own municipal council."

A number of concerned citizens were present at the first meeting; Robert McNairn, Lyle Caswell, Walker Drummond, Craig Fraser, William Donkin, Mrs. Ivan Sheppard, Ruth Hopkins, Mrs. Allan Kennedy, Gordon MacKay, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Wallace, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Vance, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Maycock, and Mr. & Mrs. Keith Harvey.

Mrs. Kennedy suggested that "in these days of swift change and family moving, young people are unconsciously seeking roots and would welcome just the sort of



The first meeting minutes, January 29, 1973

thing provided by a Historical Society."

A small committee was pushed and pulled together to form the groundwork for a properly organized and functioning society.

Current Projects

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

While our day to day tasks can seem overwhelming and never-ending, especially to newcomers to the Society, every one of them works toward our greater goal of preserving and sharing local history.

Our cataloguing system continues to be a magnificent asset. Comparing the amount of items catalogued from just a year ago shows the difference it's making. Over twenty times the amount is being catalogued with help from volunteer Sue. This not only helps our archivist but other volunteers or visitors wanting to find specific items in our collection.

We are also pinning down dates and events for our 50th anniversary. Nothing is set in stone yet, but be sure to check in on our website and socials where we'll be sharing the latest news.

It seems 2023 is quite the year for anniversaries, and we hope to highlight other mainstays of the community.



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.

Our displays in the Waterdown library have gotten a refresh. The one close to the main desk is now decked out with Valentine's Day themed items and facts. It includes dance cards and a Victorian valentine belonging to branch manager Amy.

Our main case in the upper level living room is now the home of our latest exhibit, "Village Theatre:

50 Years". The first play performed only had a budget of \$130 and two months' rehearsal. Village Theatre will display our Memorial Hall exhibit during their April production.

The Archives is a hive of activity with volunteers working on or completing various projects. As the donation of copies of the Flamborough Review had duplicates, our former archivist Sylvia has been clipping items of interest for the vertical files. Bob Lalonde

has completed a family history of the Lingen family, and Bob Thomas is close to completing the files for WWI veterans.

While we don't know if we'll return to our Book Fairs at this point, we have begun to sell used books in the archives to further fund projects and supplies. Looking for some new reading material? Visit and see what we have on hand.



"Unless someone like you cares an awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

— Theodore Geisel, AKA Dr. Seuss

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!

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. Student membership is \$10, single \$20, and family \$30. Sign up or renew online or in person at the Archives.

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.

- 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

Inaugural meeting of Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society, 6 April 1973.



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.

Our most recent expenses include backgrounds for our display cabinets, a projector used in our monthly meetings, and we're planning on installing a service club sign at the

east entrance of Waterdown to bring attention to the society.

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 FOLLOWERS



3,600



534



66



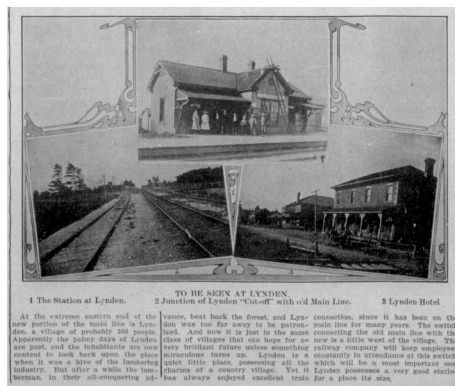
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A white lace wedding dress is hanging on a dark hanger against a wall with a decorative border. The dress features intricate lace detailing on the bodice and sleeves.

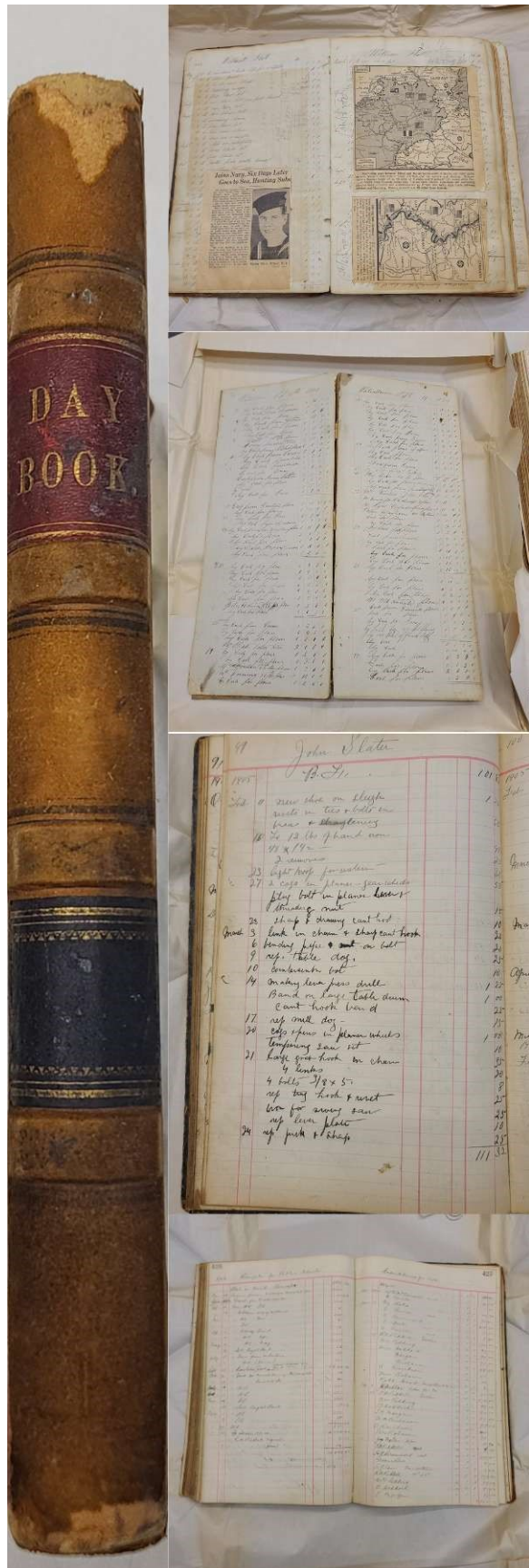
E-Commerce

Thanks to all for your support!

A black and white photograph of a road scene. On the left, a white car is parked near a utility pole. In the center, a dark car is parked. On the right, a dark car is parked. A person is standing near the car on the right. The background shows a hilly landscape and bare trees.



Treasures from the Archives



Wrapped up in paper and string and stacked on a shelf in the archives are an array of ledgers from varying eras. What's the story behind these relics, and what can their records tell us?

Account books and other business records are preserved because of their association with an individual or the early years of a community. Frequently, they hold the only non-governmental record of the lives of ordinary people.

The first example is Metzger's Ledger 1851-1951. The range of 100 years baffled the editor at first, until the string was untied and an associated note was discovered. Turns out this early ledger book from was repurposed by some young female descendants as a scrapbook. Overtop records from the 1850s they pasted the current goings on about the war, sports scores, the latest local news, deaths of the commu-

nity, and wrote a diary on the blank pages complete with weather highlights. Visitors to the home would sign the ledger at Christmas. It was certainly interesting to see the juxtaposition of mid-19th and mid-20th century topics within one ledger.




Next is the William Horning Mill Book for Waterdown Mill from the mid nineteenth century. Entries from September 1854 have a four column system on the right, which rather than cash amounts represented quantities of different grains. One entry was for 200 pounds of flour.

The George Gilmer Carriage Works ledger

shows the expenditures that John Slater had from business in lumber supply. Repairs to existing equipment as well as purchases of parts brought his account to a total of \$111.32 in March of 1905.

The Financial Ledger of Waterdown Public School SS#3 Jan 1915-Dec 1932 gave an insight into wages at the time and where the school budget was coming from. In 1923, a schoolmistress made just over half of what their male counterparts were making. The school received money from village taxes, legislative taxes and odds and ends such as the sale of an outhouse for \$5.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITY - JANUARY

	VISITORS	28
	CALLS	5
	E-MESSAGES	41
	ITEMS CATALOGUED	82
	ACQUISITIONS	13
	VOLUNTEER HOURS	231

THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

Theatre in Waterdown

Lyn Lunsted, Archivist

Our latest display celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Village Theatre but live theatre was alive and well in the village long before that.



The earliest record we have is of a production put on in the Roller Rink in May 1922, the day before the great fire. The photo is labelled 'Waterdown Minstrels 1922'. Although this type of production is not socially acceptable today, it was a common type of musical production in the 1920's and shows us a snapshot of social history – be it good or bad. After Memorial Hall was built in 1922, the stage was put to good use. In 1923, the church groups

took to the stage, putting on musical concerts and other forms of entertainment.



This photo shows the cast of a production of 'The District School at Blueberry Corners' done by the Ladies Bible Class of the Waterdown Methodist Church in 1923.



The above photo is of the production of 'Land of Promise', a musical production produced on February 27, 1924 by the Knox Church Choir. This

is believed to be a play that was originally produced on Broadway in 1913, so it was quite an undertaking for a small village amateur production. The article in the local paper quoted some of the lines that were memorable: "If I go back home to-night and find my yard full of tin cans again, I'll --, I'll --", and "This is the worst blow that has fallen me in twenty years". One has to wonder why those in particular struck a chord. However, the production was such a success that it was taken on the road, and performed again in Nelson and Strabane later in March 1924.

With a population of about 800 at the time, these types of social events undoubtedly had the participation of most families in the village of Waterdown.

The Methodist Choir of Carlisle used Memorial Hall to put on a play called “The New Minister” in April 1924, which revolved around ‘the girls and their parents in his new charge being anxious to provide him with a new life partner.’

During the 1930s the local paper ran articles detailing the multiple weeks of rehearsals required for the high school productions which were held in Memorial Hall. The April 29, 1935 production of “Pattie” promised ‘peppy dances, beautiful girls and good singers’. The play was a smash success and the ‘hall wasn’t big enough’.

Also held in April 1935 was a 4 Act Musical Comedy Drama entitled ‘Mandy’s Triumph’, produced under the auspices of the Waterdown Women’s Institute. The cast consisted of a well-to-do farmer, his wife and children, friends, a cook named Mandy who one assumes must have played a large role based on the

title of the play. There were also ‘several sailors in minor parts.’ Dancing from 10:30 – 1:00 followed the play.

There were other theatrical productions staged during the next few decades but no true theatre group. A letter to the Waterdown Review published on January 12, 1972 invited people to get involved in ‘a new creative group activity’ by becoming part of an amateur theatre group and bringing ‘live theatre back to Waterdown’. A group of 15 people met on February 12, 1972, forming the Waterdown Amateur Theatre Group.

The group decided to learn more about theatre through workshops and spent several sessions learning about play readings, role playing, stage movement, voice projection and set design, before embarking on their own production.

‘The Cage’ by Mario Fratti was chosen as their first production, put on at Easter 1973. Directed by

Mike Rae, it had a cast of 8 and a budget of \$130 – and sold out performances. The review in the Hamilton Spectator state that ‘all parts were well done’ and that ‘death comes to any little theatre group that relies on familiar plays The Waterdown Amateur Theatre Group has had a good birth.’

Although Memorial Hall was built with a stage, over the years it became evident that it was not constructed to standards needed for more complex play needs, such as movable sets and lighting. A review of Winnie-the-Pooh in 1977 noted that ‘Memorial Hall is a quaint facility with a stage built so high its only conceivable use is as Mount Olympus should the players ever decide to do a Greek tragedy. Lighting must be jerry-rigged and the acoustics are a touch bizarre.’

We wish Village Theatre many more years of fantastic entertainment.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

We're in the midst of celebrating our 50th anniversary. While it's business as usual at the Flamborough Archives, our public meetings and our online presence, we hope to augment our regular schedule with exciting ways of commemorating. We've been campaigning via social media for folks to share their memories of Flamborough, with hopes to take those stories and turn them into a new publication in time for this fall.



By many measures 50 years is not a long time. Many of our research requests and projects bring us back a couple hundred years, or have us delving into family histories that go back much further. The archives shelves fill, more information is discovered, and research continues, yet our objective remains the same.

Incredible people and a consistent vision has helped us steer a course allowing the Society to grow, prosper, and serve the community. Thanks to all of those who have given their time, talent, and resources to bring us to this landmark anniversary.

We look forward to a number of planned events, displays, and exhibits to celebrate. Make sure to check in often on our website and our social sites for the latest news and updates.

Chris Rivait, President

AREA HERITAGE WEBSITES

The Ancaster Township Historical Society - www.ancasterhistory.ca

The Burlington Historical Society - www.burlingtonhistorical.ca.

The Dundas Valley Historical Society - www.dundashistory.ca

The Grimsby Historical Society - [Grimsby Historical Society](http://GrimsbyHistoricalSociety).

The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society- 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

The West Lincoln Historical Society - www.wlhs.info

Waterdown Mill Street Heritage -

www.waterdownmillstreetheritage.ca

THE FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY

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