



Heritage Happenings

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Heritage Paper	Treasures	Membership & Donations	Message from the President
<i>The General Store at 5 Mill Street South</i>	<i>The Archives after shelving installation and reorganization</i>	<i>Contributing to our cause</i>	<i>Plus other local society websites & our contact info</i>

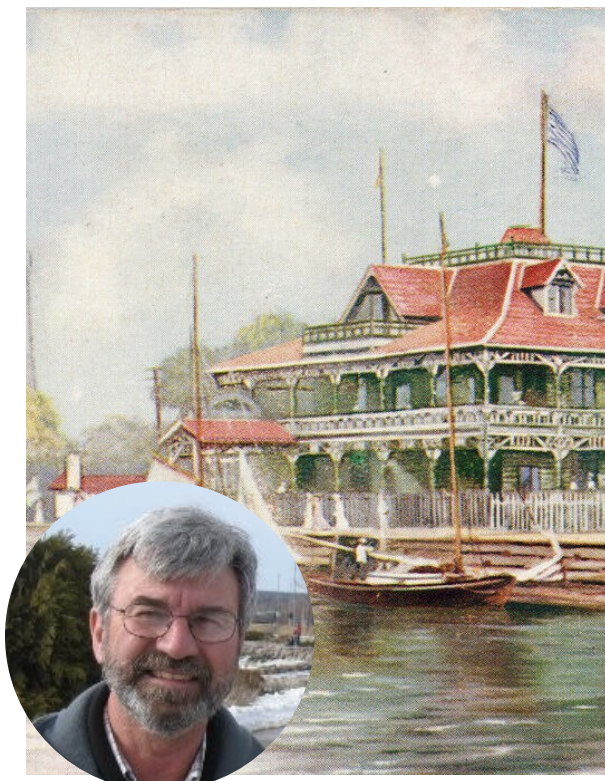
April's Monthly Meeting

The Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club by Robert Mazza, Apr. 25th at 8 PM, in person at Grace Anglican Church.

The Royal Hamilton Yacht Club was founded in 1888 by Aemilius Jarvis. When it first opened, it was located on the Burlington Canal, along the beach strip that separates the Burlington Bay from Lake Ontario. It later moved to the foot of Bay Street. Robert will share the history of the club and the events that take place there.

Used books leftover from our book fair from years ago will be available at this meeting for a nominal fee or donation. There's some great books, including some heritage publications no longer in print.

We will try to hold this as a hybrid meeting, Zoom link will be added to our website closer to the event.



Heritage Paper #318

Fifth in the series of "Milestones and Memories: Anniversaries in Flamborough". The year 2024 marks 200 years since one of the original commercial buildings that served the community in different ways was built.

Our Presence Online

We keep sharing heritage all over the place - check out what we highlighted last month in our blog and how much our followers have grown.

Membership

As time rolls on we need to keep recruiting new faces to the Society. Know of someone who might be interested?

We also continue to take donations of all sorts.

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HERITAGE PAPER

Helping the Community Since 1824: The Development of the General Store in 5 Mill Street South

Tess Moffat, Archives Summer Student

Fifth in the series under the theme “Milestones and Memories: Anniversaries in Flamborough”

When the land was first settled, several establishments were considered necessary by early pioneers, such as the church and blacksmith shop. However, one of the most significant businesses in a small town was the general store, which provided the locals with access to a wide variety of essential goods. This was a necessity for any rural community, especially if it meant they did not have to travel into the city whenever they needed supplies. Over the years, the general store has changed and either transformed into the convenience store and the corner store or completely removed from the business directory.

For Waterdown, the general store that was in 5 Mill Street South evolved into another beloved establishment: the hardware store Weeks of Waterdown. 5 Mill Street South, which is still referred to as the ‘Week’s Building’ despite the



Eager's Store with verandah and hitching posts, c. 1895 - 1900

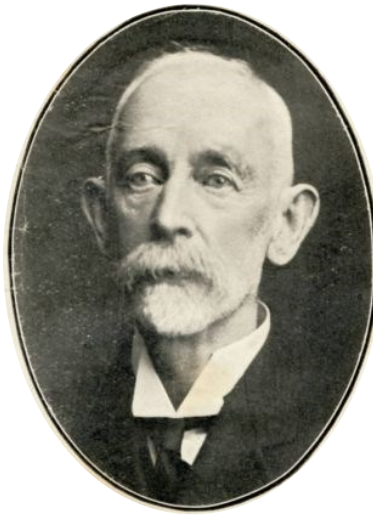
From our collection, donated by Mr. Ernie Weeks

business moving, has borne witness to the development of its community from its earliest days as a collection of settler homes to the town of Waterdown. The building is turning 200 years old and has housed several excellent businesses during this time; however, in early settler life, its multiple general stores continue to be the most influential in the area.

In 1821, Ebenezer Culver Griffin purchased a parcel of land from Alexander Brown, one of the first permanent European settlers within the area. Brown, who owned two mills on Grindstone Creek and had constructed a small schoolhouse for his children on his property, had occupied the area since 1805, with his only neighbour being his brother-in-law James Grierson.

However, Griffin is primarily given credit for 'creating' Waterdown by surveying his property into village lots in 1830, as he wanted to construct an industrial complex that would bring settlers to the area. Griffin immediately erected two buildings around 1824: the British North American House, or the American House as it is known today and the general store. These businesses were personally and economically beneficial for those living there. Flamborough did receive traffic, primarily through Dundas Street, and a hotel and general store along a busy road would bring in some revenue, a standard business practice during this time. The development of the area would also bring attention to the settlement, hopefully attracting immigrants looking for a place to settle down.

5 Mill Street South was owned and operated by the Griffin Family, before the surveying of the area into village lots. The store mainly dealt with groceries and sold some hardware. Between 1820 and 1830, the community had grown a little with the addition of Leander Hooper. However, the following decade saw the village truly expand and develop. As his milling industry showed more and more promise, Griffin sold the hotel and the



James E. Eager

*From our collection,
Waterdown Women's Institute*

general store, leading to Daniel Cummins taking over the business in 1839. The building also housed another vital establishment for the developing town of Waterdown. A year after the purchase was finalized, the Cummins General Store received permission to house the first Waterdown Post Office, which resided at 5 Mill Street South from 1841 to 1857/58 when it moved to its new location at 31 Main Street South. Typically, general stores acted as a place where the community could socialize and discuss news. Outside of being a business, the general store was a central hub for the local population. For travellers and farmers passing through, downtown Waterdown was the perfect place to pick up supplies or spend a night, leading to its increased popularity. The gen-

eral store was a necessity for the rapidly growing Waterdown. Still, it also benefited the increased number of people that were traversing through Flamborough, culminating in a strong reputation of the community and annual trips to the Waterdown landmark.

In 1873, the general store was purchased by Joseph C. Eager, who had moved to Waterdown in the 1860s and initially operated a general store within Nelson Township. After he died in 1893, the general store was operated by his son, James. When the Eagers first arrived in Waterdown, this was a period of rapid expansion and industrial development within the town. The Eager General Store still included necessities, such as groceries, but much had changed since the Griffin Family owned the business. The store had expanded to include boots, shoes, and millinery, providing the locals with access to more than farm or life-sustaining essentials; after all, the general store filled every need and want of the population. The Eager General Store continued to have an excellent reputation within the area due to its extensive stock and the warm customer service of the owners. By no means was the Eager General Store the only one of its kind in Waterdown; at the



Weeks General Store, 17 Dec 1960 - from the left, George Weeks, Mrs. George Weeks, Dorothy Weeks and Ernie Weeks.

Bruce Murdoch Collection, HPL Local History & Archives

corner of Dundas and John, there was O.B. Griffin's general store, and Alfred Dale operated a meat and grocery store. However, the Eager General Store received the most foot traffic, partly due to its wide selection. This draw would eventually hit a snag with the First World War and the rationing of sugar and other goods; however, this did not affect the success of the store's operations.

After James Eager died in 1921, his family sold the business in 1924 to George Weeks, the previous owner of a hardware store in Oakville. The general store business model was

kept by the Weeks family, who were also faced with the difficult challenge of maintaining the legacy left behind by the Eager family. Wanting to keep that reputation of a diverse and wide selection, the store was expanded, later occupying the adjacent buildings to form the Weeks Block. Weeks of Waterdown operated as a general store throughout the 1930s and 1940s, even relying on a credit system, especially during the Great Depression. While the store struggled during these times, Weeks of Waterdown pulled through. The store sold anything and everything, including clothes, fab-

rics, hardware, shoes, local goods and products, cheese that was aged in the basement, and small appliances and machinery. The store also offered delivery and repair services. Weeks of Waterdown have maintained its reputation of having an excellent stock and fantastic service that left a positive impression on people.

The general store business model ended with the Weeks family. After the Second World War, Ernest 'Ernie' Weeks and his brother Irving took over the business, allowing their parents to retire. By the time the business was purchased in 1972 by George Smith, it was simply a hardware store. During this time, specialized services and stores began to pop up around Waterdown, leading to less demand for specific items like groceries and appliances. This was a natural occurrence. As the town grew and modernized, new businesses and larger chains flocked to Waterdown, going to where they were needed.

Despite that being the end of the 'folksy' and nostalgic general store in Waterdown, 5 Mill Street South still represents the town's development, especially as it is one of the oldest buildings in the area. Initially constructed by E.C. Griffin to attract

travellers passing through and potential settlers, the general store was designed to assist with any domestic, industrial, or agricultural need a customer might have. As the town grew, so did the store and its reputation, culminating in it being a well-stocked, central hub for people to socialize and receive mail while they shopped for anything and everything. It maintained a rural and small-town identity. As Waterdown developed into a primarily suburban community that was primarily dominated by the big box store or more spe-

cialized businesses, the general store was no longer needed, even if they were a staple of the community.



The Weeks Block as of April 2022 - G. Wetherall photo

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



3,843



624



64



37

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



Our most recent blog posts covered markers, monuments, mausoleums, inscriptions & funerary art.

E-Commerce

Check out our wares online - we've got something for everyone. Be it a book or a membership, purchasing from our online store supports us as a society and ensures we can preserve local history.

Once again, and as always:

Thanks to all for your support!

Treasures from the Archives



Panoramic view of the Flamborough Archives as of April 18th, 2024.

Our archives may not have been the usual hive of activity due to closures and the effects of the cyber attack on the City of Hamilton, but we finally have a new shelf added to our system allowing for more room and organization of the collection.

Over the years generous donations have allowed us to reach our goal of funding this new shelf.



A reorganized space makes finding items easier

Preparation for the installation of the shelf included shifting furniture around in our space. With this there is more efficiency of movement - for example, the microfilm of local newspapers are now right beside our microfilm reading computer.

We were also able to reorganize the shelves. Materials are now grouped together in one space, such as archival storage materials and uncatalogued items. We are now able to give more breathing room to growing parts of our collection, such as materials related to Beverly Township and local Indigenous history. Our vertical files have moved from their cramped quarters in a filing cabinet to a shelf section of their

own, easily accessible and with room to grow.

There's definitely things to be sorted out in terms of permanent homes for items that make sense, but we'll soon get used to our space once again. Visitors now feel surrounded by our collection, instead of the majority of it being behind our long desk. We also hope our current active volunteers enjoy the new shelf, and that it makes their research and work within the archives much easier.

Thank you to everyone who made this possible. No matter how you contributed to this project, it will allow us to preserve history far into our future as a heritage society.



"Giving is not just about making a donation, it's about making a difference."

– Kathy Calvin

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!

Thanks to everyone who renewed 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 enjoying our monthly meetings on numerous different subjects.

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



Beverly Township, members of 4H horticultural club

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.

We are always in need of funds. While memberships, book sales and grants help us with our day-to-day expenditures, donations from both members like you as well as non-

members greatly support our mission.

We've updated our website to make it even easier to donate and see what we're raising funds for. We're also exploring other platforms to make donation fast, easy and accessible.

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Our newsletter is a little slimmer this month - the effects of the cyber attack on the City of Hamilton has had us adapt at the Archives. Our phone was out until the end of March, and though we have some internet access it's extremely slow. Most of our files including our cataloguing system are not accessible. No date has been given for the restoration of computer services but we remain hopeful.



We had to say goodbye to our annual book fair in 2020, and with the installation of our new shelf in the Archives we've discovered quite the collection of used books. These books, which include heritage publications, will be available for a nominal fee or donation at our public meeting this month. If you're a book lover or know someone who is, it will be a great opportunity to pick up some amazing titles.

Remember the meeting this month is our Annual General Meeting. We're always looking for new members, directors, and ideas. Make sure to let us know and remain active as members of our Heritage Society.

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.

The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society- www.hamiltonheritage.ca

The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society -

Head of the Lake Historical Society

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

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