



Heritage Happenings

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| 02 | 06 | 08 | 10 | 12 |
| Heritage Paper <i>The Early Days of Valens and the Valens Family</i> | Volunteer Spotlight <i>Current projects and more!</i> | Online Updates <i>Recap blog posts, Facebook, and more!</i> | Threads through the Past <i>Flamboro Train Station</i> | Message from the President <i>Plus other local society websites & our contact info</i> |

October Meeting

The Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on WWI Postcards by Jonathan Vance, Oct. 24 2024, 8:00 pm at Grace Anglican Church.

During the First World War, billions of postcards were sent to and from soldiers numbered in the billions. Those postcards that survive give us intimate glimpses into the experience of war, and help connect us to the generation that lived through those catastrophic times. Learn more about a Remembrance project that allows local students to work with postcards sent by Waterdown area soldiers over a century ago, and find out more about their community in what might have been its most traumatic time.



Heritage Paper #321

Learn more about the formation of the Valens community, conservation area, and the Valens' family history in this month's Heritage Paper.

EXPLORE FROM PAGE 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?

SEE IT NOW ON PAGE 5 >>

Treasures from the Archives

Check out what was going on in Flamborough 80, 50, and 25 years ago with past editions of the Flamborough Review.

How much has really changed?

DISCOVER ON PAGE 9 >>

HERITAGE PAPER

The Formation of a Community:

The Early Days of Valens and the Valens Family

Tess Moffat, Archives Summer Student

Seventh and final in the series under the theme “Milestones and Memories: Anniversaries in Flamborough.”

Valens Lake Conservation Area is excellent for camping, hiking, fishing, picnicking, and swimming. However, there is also an interesting history underneath the surface. In 1961, the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority purchased the land from Harry and Dorothy McNeilly; the plan was to construct a dam to assist with flood control on Spencer Creek. The project was completed in 1965 and resulted in the area flooding and forming the 200-acre Valens Lake. The land that was flooded was previously used for agriculture, and evidence can still be seen around Valens Lake, such as rock piles, fence lines, remnants of farm buildings, and two original structures, including John Valens’ home that also doubled as a post office in the early days. The cultural heritage of Valens isn’t always easy to see; however, it doesn’t mean it is not there. This paper will explore the early, formative days of Valens and the life of John Valens, highlighting how the small community has changed over the last 189 years

and has witnessed significant events in Canadian history.

In 1832, John Valens and his siblings, Robert and Jane, left Biggar, Scotland, which is right outside of Edinburgh, Ontario. Their move was part of a more significant trend for Scottish immigrants from the Lowlands;

with the economy in an abysmal state and rent continuing to rise, many risked the dangerous move to Canada rather than stay in their homeland. From 1815 to 1870, around 170,000 Scottish colonists arrived in Canada. The two brothers were trained carpenters and quickly found work in Hamilton constructing a ‘modest’ house designed by Robert Wetherdell: Dundurn Castle. The home was for Sir Allan Napier MacNab, a prominent lawyer, military man, and the Premier of the Canadas from 1854 to

1856. The construction was a three-year process that concluded in 1835. Dundurn Castle continues to stand today and is one of several excellent museums in the Hamilton area, though the Valens siblings did not see the end of the construction.

In 1834, the Valens family wanted their own space. This led them to the former Beverly Township and in the vicinity of the Kirkwall settlement, a small community settled in 1832 by Scottish immigrants. The Kirkwall Presbyterian Church, which

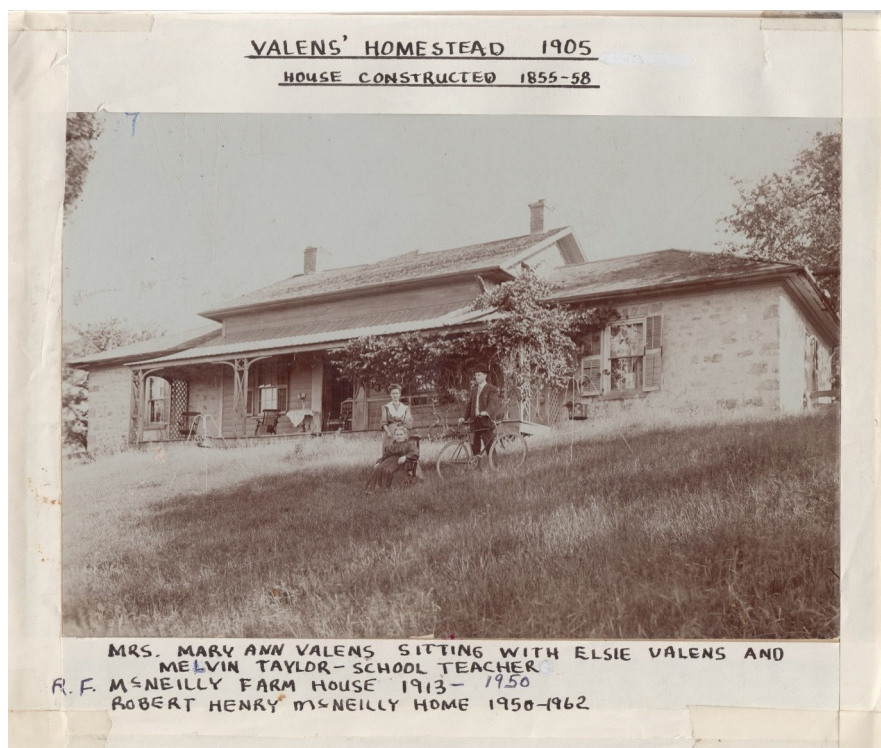


1875 Land Directory, with what is now Valens Conservation Area in red. Photo credit to Conservation Hamilton.

was in a log home at the time, received new members for its congregation. It was common for immigrants to settle in or near communities composed of similar ethnic groups. The church also provided means for people to feel connected to their European culture in a foreign land and their new settlement and neighbours.

Wanting to claim some land for his family, John Valens ventured into the Beverly Swamp; however, he was not alone. Andrew McKnight and his sons acted as pilots for new settlers, guiding them through the dangerous Beverly Swamp that was filled to the brim with rattlesnakes, mosquitos, and blackflies. McKnight was known to be extremely helpful and giving, especially with new settlers; after guiding the Valens family through the Beverly Swamp to their property, he helped them clear their first acre of land. McKnight originally hailed from Ireland and was an active member of the Kirkwall church. 'Captain McKnight' organized and commanded a troop of volunteers during the 1837 Mackenzie Rebellion, an unsuccessful uprising in Upper Canada concerning democratic reform and the end of privileged oligarchic rule.

After making his way through the Beverly Swamp, John Valens settled on his land on the Ninth Concession on the corner of what is now known as Valens Road. He



From our collection, Photo Number 5160.

initially constructed a large log cabin for his siblings and himself, dubbing the home 'Burnside' due to the proximity of the nearby creek or burn. The settlement was initially dubbed 'Valens Corners' after the Valens family; however, the name was soon changed to just 'Valens.' By 1839, the community rapidly expanded to an astonishing population of twenty-nine.

Outside of agriculture, Valens was an area of industrial development. John Valens is accredited with bringing the first-grain threshing machine into the settlement. The threshing machine was invented in 1796 by the Scottish engineer Andrew Meikle and represented the early mechanization of agriculture. When he first arrived in the area, John Valens recognized the potential of a

sawmill on his land. Constructing a small dam, which was built 400 feet away from the one today at Valens Lake, John Valens established a water-operated sawmill with a drag saw. The area was heavily timbered, and several other homesteads also had sawmills as a result. The products from the Valens mill were either sold and exported in Hamilton or used in the area for local construction projects, such as barns. Unfortunately, the mill burned down at an undisclosed date. The second Valens mill was built on the Robson family farm and steam operated, a relatively new development in industrial practices. William Robson was the brother-in-law of John and Robert Valens, having married Jane around 1837. The second mill continued to be a success,

producing barrels and baskets, sawing lumber, and grinding grain for feed and flour. The rise of milling during the industrial revolution, which dates from the 1780s to the 1860s in the context of Canada, reflects broader patterns seen in Europe, especially increased mechanization, capitalism, and technological developments. Unfortunately, the mill burnt down around 1897 and was not rebuilt, leaving behind its charred remains that can still be seen today in the conservation area. Other industrial exploits include lime production for plaster and masonry. The 'limiest' stones were placed within a hand stone kiln with an axe grate for four days under intense heat. These limestone kilns were located at the Bickle, Fletcher, and Leslie farms.

The Valens family also underwent personal changes. In 1842, John Valens married his wife, Elsbeth Alexander. Also, his siblings from Scotland had found their way over to Beverly, and his brother Robert later moved to Lucknow in Bruce Country around 1874. In 1894, John Valens died and was buried at Kirkwall Presbyterian Church with his wife.

Valens was a small farming community with only two additional shops in the nineteenth century: a blacksmith and a general store with a post office. The records are scarce regarding dates, but as early as 1885, Wil-



Valens Lake Postcard from the Archives' holdings.

liam Cook operated the general store and post office. In 1912, the post office moved into the Valens homestead and was managed by John Valens' eldest daughter Mary Ann. This arrangement only lasted a year due to the creation of free rural mail delivery, a system that began on October 10th, 1908, with Ancaster and Hamilton. Initially, those out in the country would either have to travel to the local post office or pay substantial fees for delivery. However, a more modern delivery system was developed through the hard work of George Wilcox and Joseph Armstrong.

The community of Valens has an interesting past tied to more significant events in Ontario and Canadian history. However, its present identity is commonly associated with the conservation area, especially since many of its historical buildings have been torn down. Thankfully, their cultural heritage can still be found

scattered throughout the community. As expressed earlier, several ruins can be discovered around Valens Lake, and multiple historic homes remain. For those who want more, a log house that was moved from Lot 35, formerly Taylor Cook's farm, to the conservation area and is now an agricultural museum, highlighting the early beginnings of the community. Even if one cannot always see the history of a community, it still exists, even if it is hiding below the surface.



*The Cook Cabin, now located at Valens Conservation Area.
Photo Credit to Conservation Hamilton.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FORTINOS WATERDOWN!

This past June marked a significant anniversary of this grocery giant in Flamborough. The original supermarket in that location on Hamilton Street North was the Quebec-based Maxi brand,. Lasting only a year, parent company Provigo closed all six Ontario Maxi stores in 1999. Loblaws

Corp, revamped the Maxi into a Fortinos hoping to have better brand recognition. Since opening day on June 28, 1999, Fortino's has changed and expanded to keep up with the needs of a rapidly changing community.

Cheers to 25 years, Fortinos!



Fortinos, Waterdown, 2019.

Photo Credit to Google Maps.

FOUND IN THE FONDS

A neat found treasure is a Reid family recipe book of family remedies and food. Chloroform and cake all in the same book! The third recipe in the book, (liniment, containing vinegar, salt, and turpentine, among other ingredients) is one of the very few with a date, that being 1852. A clipping tucked into the back of the book is likely from 1907, judging from the historical events it references.

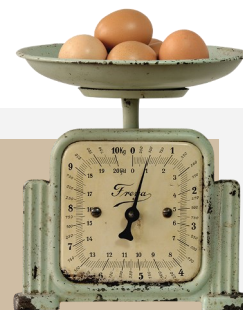
"Chocolate Pie:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| * 1 coffee cup milk | * 3/4 cup sugar |
| * 2 tbsps grated chocolate | * Yolkes 3 eggs |

Heat the milk and chocolate together when it begins to melt together, put in the eggs and sugar after beating them to a cream. Bake with under crust and frost top as for Lemon Pie."

"Recipe for Rheumatism

- * 2 ounces oil of spike
- * 2 ounces British oil
- * 2 ounces oil of hemlock
- * 1 ounce camphor gum
- * 2 ounces liquid of opodeldoc
- * 1 gill of beef's gall
- * 1 quart of brandy



Directions: Rub once a day freely. Take three drops twice a day."

****Please do not attempt to make or use this remedy.****

Current Projects

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

We've been a part of this community for over 50 years now, and our volunteers enable us to remain active and relevant in a changing world.

If you love Flamborough, history or research, there are always volunteer opportunities with the society. Build on an existing personal passion or discover a new one. You'd be surprised with how a commitment of a small part of your time can help our society in a big way.

We are always applying for grants for our projects, but not all of the applications are successful. The application process is also a large investment of time and effort. Should you have ideas for fundraising or a way to help, we'd love to hear from you.



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.



It's that time of year again - the Flamborough Heritage Society's scarecrow has taken up residency at the front of the Waterdown branch of the Hamilton Public Library for the Waterdown Village Scarecrow Walk. Thanks to Keri, Kim and Meghan for setting up the scene - a

little hint at what we have in store for next year.

While we had to say goodbye to our summer students, and some of our volunteers took time off or vacationed during September, the Archives might have appeared quiet to some. However there were several donations that had to be coordinated,

family histories to research and record, information provided to Hamilton Spectator reporters, and extensive research on a variety of topics.

Our display committee is also working hard with help from our Archivist to prepare for the next exhibit - stay tuned for more soon!



"You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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



*Orkney School, S.S. #3 Former Beverly Township, 1913.
From our collection, Photo #5961.*

DONATIONS

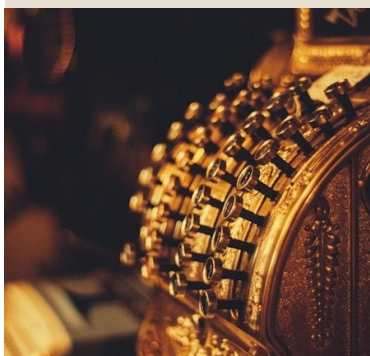
We receive a lot of donations of heritage documents, photographs, and items throughout the year. If you have something you think we may like, please let us know! You don't have to permanently donate an item—pieces can be on loan to the Archives for as long as you wish or copied and returned to you.

We are always in need of funds. While memberships, book sales and grants help us with our day-to-day expendi-

tures, 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.



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



3,879



625



65



38

We're always online - tap follow and drop a comment to say hi!



Our blog posts featured interesting buildings and schools throughout Flamborough.

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!

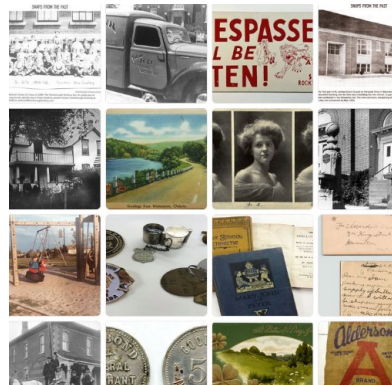
Our social posts have petered out for a few reasons. There are some images and things found both on our shelves and across the web, but in order to share them it takes time to research and properly represent them.

Our regular Friday blog posts 'From the Vault' will continue, but we're putting a temporary stop to our older Heritage Happenings articles being posted. Again, tran-

scription of these articles takes an investment of time that we're prioritizing elsewhere with other projects and research requests.

Last month's meeting has been uploaded to our YouTube channel, and at the request of the speaker will be removed December 20th.

We hope that you can explore older posts and photos we've shared over the years - there's a lot!



Treasures from the Archives

A Hallowe'en Message

Help to beat Hitler by doing no property damage or causing any extra expense to any one. You can have a lot of fun without inconveniencing your neighbour

Don't Do Anything for which you may be Sorry.

INVEST ALL YOUR SPARE DOLLARS IN THE SEVENTH VICTORY LOAN. BUY A BOND.

Wm. Gunby, Reeve.

80 years ago: *Waterdown Review, October 1944.*

| | Objective | To-Date |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| East Flamboro | \$205,000.00 | \$29,000.00 |
| West Flamboro | \$210,000.00 | \$37,450.00 |
| Waterdown | \$120,000.00 | \$11,700.00 |

Ottawa Oct 25 2 day Loan totals 145,530,100, Same period last loan 131,276,000. Loan officials encouraged by individual sales

80 years ago: *"Victory Loan Campaign Opens Successfully." Waterdown Review, October 1944.*

"Housing Costs Need Some Controls."

"Imagine paying monthly payments around \$500, besides paying for fuel and upkeep of a house."

50 years ago: *Flamborough Review 1974.*

Joe Swirski beaten behind plaza

Waterdown Village Plaza co-owner/operator Joe Swirski is in serious condition with extensive head injuries following a beating which occurred behind the plaza early Monday evening.

A Regional Police officer patrolling behind the Hamilton St. plaza shortly after 9:30 p.m. discovered Swirski, 58, lying behind the laundromat. He was taken to Hamilton General Hospital, where he remains unconscious.

Inspector Roy Davidson of the Dundas/Flamborough station said that the weapon used in the beating has not been found, and police are continuing to search for the motive. Robbery has been ruled out since Mr. Swirski's wallet was not touched.

40 years ago: *Flamborough Review, 1984*

Welcome to the FAIR

Rockton's World Fair
Come and enjoy the fun
October 5, 6, 7 and 8

Rural Fairs began at livestock exhibitions, and that remains true to this day at the Rockton World Fair, where there will be daily competitions for sheep, beef and dairy cattle, horses and riders. At 10 a.m. on Saturday you will be able to enjoy the Dairy Calf Club Show as well as the Western Horse Show. At noon there will be the Junior Horse Show and at 12:30 the Beef Show. The parade of decorated floats at 2:30 and at 3:15 there will be a Sheep Dog Demonstration. There are poultry events, getting 200 plus many others interesting activities.

J. B. MARLATT FUNERAL HOME
195 KING STREET, SUDBURY
627-7452

World's Greatest Outhouse Race
The world's greatest outhouse competition and race will take place on Friday evening at 7:30. According to a spokesman for the fair, this race, which will probably see many thrills and spills, will have area fairs, businesses, service clubs and schools on the run. If you want to start the weekend laughing, be sure to see this event!

MARSHALL - ALDERSON
MILLGROVE
688-5512

4-H Members Poultry Show
This will be a very interesting event, and each member will have to show 2 birds, which he or she has raised from a day old chick. Members will also have to answer questions to the judges about their birds. Be sure to see this show and Club Exhibition in the Junior Building.

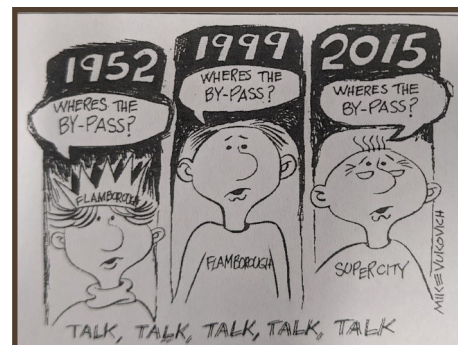
MILLGROVE WAREHOUSE
6th CONCESSION E.F.
689-6137

40 years ago: *Flamborough Review, 1984.*

"\$250 000 price tag puts arena expansion on hold.

Expansion of the Beverly Community Centre to better facilitate Senior 'A' hockey has been dropped—at the request of the Senior 'A' team."

40 years ago: *Flamborough Review, October 1984.*



25 years ago: *Flamborough Review, October 1999.*

"Poll supports Wentworth.

'Overwhelming' 78 per cent favour 'City of Wentworth over Hamilton 'supercity'."

25 years ago: *Flamborough Review, 1999.*

Looking through old issues of the Review is a blast from the past. Metroland's bankruptcy and subsequent death of the Flamborough Review is tragic, and Fall/Winter of 2023 will forever be a gap in community news in Flamborough.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITY - SEPTEMBER

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------|
|  | VISITORS | 41 |
|  | CALLS | 8 |
|  | E-MESSAGES | 136 |
|  | ITEMS CATALOGUED | 50 |
|  | ACQUISITIONS | 10 |
|  | VOLUNTEER HOURS | 194 |

THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

Early life in Carlisle, after the railway was built

Lyn Lunsted, Archivist

At the height of the railway boom, dozens of railway lines snaked their way across Southern Ontario but there was no direct link between Hamilton, Guelph and Lake Huron until 1912. In 1910 the South Ontario Pacific Company received permission to build the line between Guelph Junction and Hamilton, via Waterdown. The line was leased to the Canadian Pacific Railway for 999 years and two stations were built. The station on Parkside Drive was called Waterdown North, and the other built on the 9th Concession (Carlisle Road) near Carlisle, was called Flamboro Station.

The two stations were built according to Canadian Pacific Railway Standards No. 5 Station, but with larger freight room space. On the ground floor there was a waiting room, a ladies waiting room, office and freight room in the public space, and a kitchen and living room for the station master. Upstairs were four small bedrooms.

For over four decades, the train was an important transportation link between Hamilton and Guelph. The schedule of four trains northbound and five trains southbound per day was adjusted so that students could take it to school in Waterdown and



Flamboro Station, c. 1912

Hamilton. Farmers took their produce to the Hamilton Farmers Market and many people used it to commute to work.

Among the people who took the train was Stella (Cairns) Attridge. Her stories of this time tell how important the train was to people in East Flamborough, and Carlisle.

In September 1916 five students from Carlisle caught the 7:25 a.m. train to Hamilton, attending Waterdown High School, returning by the 5 o'clock train. This went on for several years. In today's systems of communication and travel, young people find it very difficult to realize the conditions of transportation at that time.

The coming of the railway was of great interest to our father, Billy Cairns, as he was known as a Drover—buying livestock from the farmer and shipping it to the City markets.

Up until this time, he shipped from Campbellville and Puslinch stations, on the main line to Toronto Stock Yards. Now he could ship from Flamboro Station (right at home) to Hamilton as well as Toronto which was a great advantage.

One Monday a month he shipped hog to Robert John Duffy & Son Packers in Hamilton, A rather interesting comment about the payment for this livestock: our father would never pay by cheque, always cash. In fact until he died at aged 80 in 1939 he never paid for any item by cheque.



Hamilton Farmer's Market.

How did he get his cash? No bank was closer than Waterdown so he banked with the Molson Bank in Hamilton, York Street branch at the market. Mr. Wheatley was the manager. After the advent of the railway I went to Hamilton Saturday morning to the bank, by train, to get his cash, then home by the afternoon train. One Saturday noon Mr. Wheatley said to me "Stella, what are you doing this afternoon?" "Going to the show" "Take good care of this envelope as there is \$7,000 cash in it".

Then came the advent of the bank in the village. The Standard Bank of Canada bought the Molson Bank and opened a branch in Carlisle. Daddy's cash troubles were over. The bank manager went to the Station's shipping yards paying all of the farmers in cash. What a relief, and as Daddy said "What a service".

This system of payment was continued for all shipments of livestock from the Flamboro Station when my father was involved.



Bennett Grist Mill.

In later years coal was shipped to the station by car

load, then delivered to private homes by the dealer. Shipments of vegetables such as potatoes and turnips became accepted business, being shipped out by the car load to the markets.

Spencer Bennett operated the grist mill nearby (Progreston), using the station yards for shipments of grain and flour.

Only people who lived through this era can realize the advantages the railway made to country areas. Trucking and great highways had not yet arrived. '.

Further memories of the importance of the station to the nearby residents comes from her sister, Winnifred (Cairns) Green:

'What a blessing the station was to our community. Our oldest son Bill went on the train to Waterdown High School along with several others. One time, some men with a stretcher carried Mr. James Livingstone, a really huge man, to the station to go to the hospital in Hamilton—no ambulances then. Mrs. Robinson and I took the train to Hamilton for our vocal lessons from Miss Stella Carey. Then I can't forget my wedding trip, from Flamboro Station in 1915. Herb & Edith Bennett drove us over to the station with a team of lovely horses and 2 seated sleigh with a few guests hanging on, bells ringing and signs fasted to Howard's (my husband) coat, then on the seat "Just Married". After the station opened, how



Winnifred (Cairns) Green with a photo of her sister Edith (Cairns) Bennett

wonderful it was to see the lovely wives bringing their market baskets full of eggs, butter, fruit etc. to go by train into Hamilton Market.'



Today, nothing remains of the once busy station except a bit of the outline of the foundation walls. There is a railway hotbox detector and other equipment standing where cattle were penned and produce stacked ready to be shipped to markets near and far. The eager voices of students and housewives waiting in a once busy station, are silent.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

We're excited to once again host Dr. Jonathan Vance as a speaker for October's monthly meeting. Jonathan is always a crowd favourite and we're looking forward to seeing how postcards from the First World War can give us insight into how soldiers and their community left behind experienced a war. Not only that, but how examining these postcards can connect us to people that lived in our community nearly 100 years ago.



It's scarecrow season again - we hope our readership not only check out our submission to the Waterdown Village's 8th Annual Scarecrow Walk but all the other participant's creations as well.

As mentioned in my last letter the photography exhibit and photo contest are soon to be shared with everyone. Projects like this take a lot of man hours to make successful - there's a lot going on behind the scenes. Make sure we can continue to be a part of the community by giving your time whenever possible - we've been here for 50 years, it's up to you to keep us going.

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

THE FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1044

163 Dundas Street East

Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0

Phone: 905-540-5161

Society E-mail:

society@FlamboroughHistory.com

Archives E-mail:

archives@FlamboroughHistory.com

Website: FlamboroughHistory.com



Facebook: @flamboroughhistory

Instagram: @flamborougharchives

Twitter: @FlamboroHistory

YouTube: Flamborough Archives
& Heritage Society

OFFICERS 2024-2025

President: Chris Rivait
Vice President: Meghan Martin
Secretary: Sue McNally
Treasurer: Lyn Lunsted
Past President: Nathan Tidridge

BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Hirst
Keri Raphael

Lyn Lunsted, Archivist

