



FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY



February 2025

# Heritage Happenings

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## February Meeting

*The Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society will feature a presentation on Sarah Pooley by Jane Mulkewich, the legal director for UFCW Locals 175 and 633, **Thursday Feb. 27 2025, 8:00 pm Grace Anglican Church, Waterdown***

Jane studied law at the University of Western Ontario. She has been involved in politics and has worked for the Hamilton Police Services doing anti-racism work and McMaster University doing equity work.

Jane will retell the story of local slave Sophia Pooley. Pooley was

taken from her parents in New York and brought to Upper Canada in 1778, then sold to Joseph Brant who later sold her to Samuel Hatt of Ancaster.

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

### Heritage Paper #324

This year we explore the various origins of Flamborough inhabitants. This month's Heritage Paper explores New Beginnings and Opportunity: Scottish Immigration to Flamborough.

### 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?

### Treasures from the Archives

Our latest exhibit is complete! Multiple displays in the Waterdown library explore different local photographers, their method, style, and equipment.

What photographers are featured?

EXPLORE FROM PAGE 2 >>

SEE IT NOW ON PAGE 5 >>

DISCOVER ON PAGE 9 >>

# HERITAGE PAPER

## New Beginnings and Opportunity: Scottish Immigration to Flamborough

*Tess Moffat, Archives Summer Student*

*Third in the series under the theme “Ethnic backgrounds of Flamborough.”*

The settlement of Flamborough can be traced to several groups, but one of the most significant is the Scottish. Obviously, there were several waves of immigration, but the earliest ones, namely those between 1770 and 1815 and from 1815 to the late 1830s, culminated in the establishment of the township of East Flamborough, specifically Waterdown.

These waves can be traced to several factors, especially the Clearances. In the earliest wave, around 15,000 Highlanders, mainly composed of Gaelic speakers and Roman Catholics, made their way into Canada, settling in the Maritimes and Upper Canada. After 1815, Scots from the Lowlands were the dominant group with about 170,000 crossing the Atlantic between 1815 and 1870, congregating towards pre-established Scottish communities. Unlike the Highlanders, they were typically Presbyterian English-speakers. These were gigantic waves for the young colony of Canada; according to the 1871 census, 157 of every 1,000 Canadians were of Scottish origin, and Gaelic



*“The Emigrants,” an artwork that commemorates those evicted from their ancestral homes during the Highland Clearances. Located in Helmsdale, Scotland. Artist Gerald Laing, 2003 - [scotstocanada.com](http://scotstocanada.com)*

was the third most common European language spoken in Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

What pushed these two groups from their homelands is directly tied to the Industrial Revolution. For example, many European artisans and skilled craftsmen were either given the option to leave their homeland for a young economy where there was a demand for their labour or move to the city and

work in the same factories that put them out of work for barely enough to survive. The Industrial Revolution also significantly impacted the crofting communities within Scotland, affecting traditional Scottish and Gaelic farming culture. British landlords, wanting to get every ounce of profit from their lands, hiked up the rent and enclosed open fields, hoping to convert their tenant's lands to sheep pasturage to feed the looms



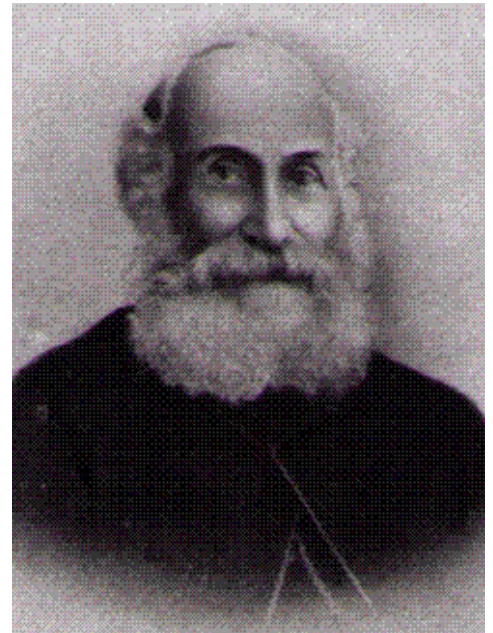
within the English factories. This led to the demise of traditional crofting communities and the mass migration of the population to either industrial centres or overseas to try their luck.

Despite the many targeted advertisements towards these groups, it was not just skilled craftsmen and farmers that left their homeland; businessmen also saw the potential of the young economies within the colonies and made their way overseas. To many immigrants, regardless of ethnicity, not only was Canada demanding the skills of craftsmen and labour of workers, but it also had opportunities in the way of cheap land and a booming fur and timber

trade. As well, new settlements would also require the services of trained professionals like teachers or clergymen. Essentially, Canada was a God's send for those who had nowhere else to go.

For those who could afford to go further inland to Upper Canada, Hamilton was one of the many stops they would have taken and where many would have stayed. The city had a network of communities from different ethnic enclaves that provided support for newcomers. During the early nineteenth century, Hamilton was in the middle of an economic boom and was a hub of merchant activity, importing resources for settlements and exporting mass amounts of timber, wheat, and flour. Industrial activity also increased exponentially; the building of the Burlington canal attracted a sizeable workforce and stove manufacturing became a significant industry, beginning Hamilton's association with steel. Between 1834 to 1841, the city expanded 2.5 times in population, from 1,367 to 3,414.

However, Hamilton was not for everyone. The area surrounding Hamilton, which was still predominately uncleared farming land, held tremendous appeal for those who had newly arrived; not only could settlers stake their claim to some cheap land, but they were also in the vicinity of a major industrial centre where they could trade



*Alexander Brown*  
*From our collection.*

and sell the resources and food from their property.

The first European settler to establish himself on the East Flamborough escarpment was Alexander Brown of Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. Initially employed by the Northwest Fur Company in 1793 when he was only seventeen, Brown left and moved to East Flamborough in 1805, purchasing 800 acres of land that encompassed Grindstone Creek and Smokey Hollow Falls. Brown had purchased these acres from absentee landowner Lieutenant Alexander MacDonnell, who had been granted the land for his service with the loyalist Butler's Rangers during the American Revolution. The MacDonnell Family had initially hailed from the Glengarry area but had emigrated to New York as a result of Catholic prosecution and their



*An example of a 19th century advertisement by the Canadian Pacific Railway.*

*[thecanadaguide.com](http://thecanadaguide.com)*



*'Autumn in Glencairn, Moniaive' - Oil on canvas,  
James Paterson (1854-1932), Scottish  
National Galleries of Scotland*

support of the Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

MacDonnell had no interest in the land, much to his loss, but Brown saw opportunity. After clearing some of the land, he erected a log cabin near Grindstone Creek and a small sawmill. The Brown Family has long been tied to the development of the area, as demonstrated by the name of 'Brown's Wharf,' the small shipping wharf at Burlington Bay. While some had recognized the potential of the area and had joined Brown up on the escarpment, it was not until the 1820s that the industrial village of Waterdown sprouted up after Brown had sold the majority of his land to the Griffin brothers.

The early beginnings of Waterdown points to the importance of Scottish immigration for the development of

Flamborough. Primarily, Brown had recognized the potential of the land and the opportunities it provides as an industrialist; however, the price of the land and its proximity to industrial centres for trade were certainly appealing factors as well.

Outside of specific individuals contributing to the development of East Flamborough, entire communities had also sprouted up in West Flamborough and Beverly. For example, Kirkwall, which was dubbed 'Little Scotland,' was initially settled in 1832 and was dominated by families from the Scottish border and Lowlands. In 1835, the settlement, which was agrarian while also relying on timber for an additional source of income, was considered "an oasis in the desert for the Scotch." The earliest record of the name 'Kirkwall' was in 1838 and most likely came from the Reverend Thomas Christie, a missionary from the Orkney Isles where a Kirkwall already exists. Similar to other settlers, the Scottish wanted somewhere that reminded them of home and if they could not find a place that was perfect physical reflection of their



*Aldershot, Brown's Wharf c. 1914*

*From our collection*



homeland, they transformed it into one through names.

For many leaving Scotland as a result of the Clearances and even well after, they wished for a place ripe with opportunities. At least for some, they were able to find the security within the confines of Flamborough where they could either join or establish their own community, bringing a piece of their homeland across the pond, even if it was just a feeling.



*Kirkwall School, July 1986 - From our collection.*

## FOUND IN THE FONDS

The Flamborough Archives recently had a framed cushion cover donated, which has dozens of names hand embroidered on it. The cushion cover was made by Mrs. Charlie Sheppard of Rock Chapel in 1915. Each person paid .10¢ or .15¢ to have their name embroidered in the outer quadrants. To have your name in the middle, in red, cost .25¢. The project raised \$25.00 for the Rock Chapel United Church Sunday School in 1915.

Some of the family names are still recognizable today. Some are hard to decipher from a modern eye, but our best guesses are as follows. From the middle section: C. King,

Mrs. F. Bogle, Dr. Mac Clenahan, H. Bearens, Mr. Patrick, Mrs. Smuck, Eleanor King, Dr. D. A. Hopper, O. B. Griffin, C. Rymal, J. Ewart Wilson, J. King, Arthur Warden, S. Frank Smith, J & Mrs. Tilly, Roy, David, Fred, Alice, Alec & Grace, C. B. Patterson, Cecil King, Mr. Snapes, Miss Gunby, Rev. & Mrs. Stringfield, Mrs. Yule.

The outer quadrants are a bit harder to make out but are full of surnames familiar to us as the local heritage society. Sheppard, Blagden, Kitchen, Chapple, Lyons, Davidson, Newell, Tapp, Sawell, Elwood, Poole, Dent,



Allen, Carson, and so many more we just don't have room!

While there's not a lot of documented history on this sort of textile fundraising, it was a way of local women to practice embroidery, explore new motifs, and contribute to the community all at the same time.

## 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.*



Lots of research has been happening in the archives. So many inquiries have been coming in it's been hard to keep up with cataloguing items. What's come across the archivist's desk? Extensive research was done for queries from Cultural Heritage Planners for three properties in Flamborough. Research

was requested for family histories, photos of past businesses, additions to a local cemetery, history of specific buildings, and information regarding old by-laws.

All that and 8 boxes of material from Waterdown District High School were donated to the archives.

Our other volunteers have been busy with projects, exhibits, and ensuring membership is up to date. Thanks to Claudia,

Emelia, and Bob for all their hard work.

We've been invited again by the Museum of Hope to participate in days at the Farmer's Market. The Library has asked us to create a Scavenger Hunt for April. Waterdown Village [BIA] has reached out for source material for an artist to create 'wraps' for four planters on Dundas Street.

It can be overwhelming at times but we're glad to be busy!



*"If you don't believe one person can make a difference, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."*

**- Anita Roddick**



## 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



Cast of \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ - Photo 2876

**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



**3,906**



**626**



**64**



**41**

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



Our biweekly blog posts continue with articles "From the Vault".

## 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.

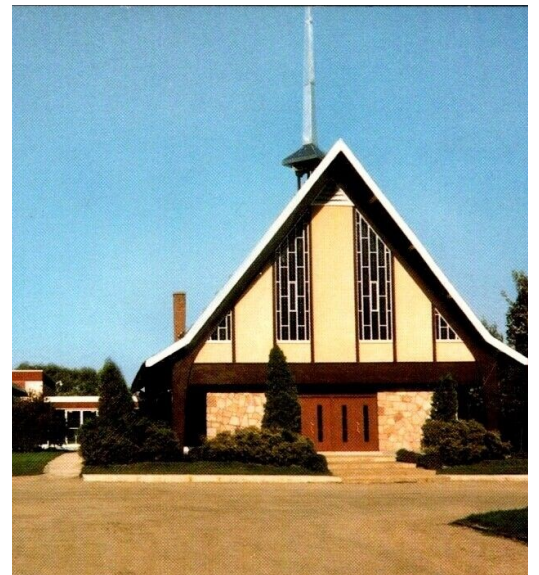
Once again, and as always:

*Thanks to all for your support!*

**M**eghan has been trying to catch up on posting our previous meetings to YouTube. Each one takes about an hour or two to edit, so we hope our followers appreciate the effort. For now, subtitles will be autogenerated although we love to make sure our content is accessible to all. Our social media is definitely on theme for the season, with views of snow from times past. We've

experienced quite the snowfall here in and around Flamborough this year, so the images shared were quite popular as they were relatable to the modern day.

Big thanks to our followers who are willing to share more info and photos in the comments. Collaborating with the hundreds of folk that interact with our posts clarifies info and makes solving questions a lot easier.





# Treasures from the Archives

**The popular idiom**, “A picture is worth a thousand words” is an everyday part of the society as well as research into local history. As photography was developed and became more accessible to the everyday person, a lot of local views were captured. These images would show local businesses, forms of transport, people in and around the community, and so much more. There are a lot of photos we have in our collection that if you take a closer look, they reveal more about not only the subject of the picture but also a peek into the culture and everyday life of the captured time period.



Our displays in this current exhibit, “*Heritage in Focus: Three Photographic Narratives*,” include info, photographs and objects relating to three prominent photographers of Flamborough’s history. William (Will) Reid (1888-1956), was a photographer who created a visual record of life in Waterdown in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Without Will’s photographs, little would be known about life in Waterdown during his lifetime. Sylvester Main had many jobs



through his life, after learning photography in 1895 his love of photography blossomed and he took many photos of the Sheffield area from 1898 to the 1920s. Peter Vance was a lifelong resident of Waterdown and a descendent of one of the founding families. Peter was a passionate film photographer, building his own home dark room though he did eventually move to digital photography later on.

Come down and visit - there’s quite a range of objects from various eras and wonderfully researched, designed, and displayed information boards.



## ARCHIVES ACTIVITY - JANUARY

|   |                         |            |
|---|-------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>VISITORS</b>         | <b>35</b>  |
|  | <b>CALLS</b>            | <b>6</b>   |
|  | <b>E-MESSAGES</b>       | <b>149</b> |
|  | <b>ITEMS CATALOGUED</b> | <b>10</b>  |
|  | <b>ACQUISITIONS</b>     | <b>14</b>  |
|  | <b>VOLUNTEER HOURS</b>  | <b>218</b> |

# THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

## The Kirk Family

*Lyn Lunsted, Archivist*

One of two iconic pubs in Waterdown, The Kirk House, now the Royal Coachman, has had very few owners through the years. Still referred to as 'The Kirk' by long-time residents, the building has undergone very little external change and retained much of the original features.

The original grant of land to Alexander McDonnell in 1797 passed through ownership to Alexander Brown, and Ebenezer Griffin. In 1862 it was purchased by Thomas English and became the location for his carriage works. It was sold in 1868 to William Heisse who was a hotel keeper but no name appeared until 1875 when he was listed as the proprietor of the Right House Hotel. It was later owned by Samuel Green, and an article in the Hamilton Spectator February 23, 1888 stated that 'Green's Hotel, Waterdown has been sold to Patrick Kirk of Freelton for \$3,500'. Ownership of the business remained with the Kirk family for over 75 years, until 1966.

Henry Kirk, a widower, emigrated to Canada from Ireland in 1852 with his children Julia, Joseph, Michael, Patrick and Owen. In the 1861 Census, they are all living in East Flamborough and by 1868, Henry, Patrick are listed as tenants on lot 7 on the 8<sup>th</sup> Concession, with Joseph next door on lot 8.



*Patrick and Ellen Kirk. C. 1865*

The history in Waterdown follows the lineage of Patrick. At the age of 21, on February 28, 1865 Patrick married Ellen Hennesey who had been born in County Waterford in Ireland. She was almost three years older than he was. In 1876 Patrick and his family are living on lot 8, 9<sup>th</sup> concession in Carlisle. The 1881 Census finds the family living in Hal-



*Rear: James, Thomas, William  
Front: John, Margaret, Catherine, Ellen, Mary Kirk*

ton County, Nassagaweya Township and by then they have seven children: Joseph William (aka William Joseph), Margaret, Michael James, twins Frances Catherine and Mary Elsie, Thomas Matthew, and John Henry.

An article in the Dundas Banner in 1908 states that 'Twenty years ago Mr. John H. Kirk removed to Waterdown from Freelton with his father. They demolished the little frame house which then stood at the corner of Dundas and Main Streets and erected on the site the commodious and substantial brick structure known as The Kirk House'. Other sources indicate the original structure was enlarged with a kitchen and pantry at the rear, and four rooms at the front. It's un-



certain whether Henry lived with John and his family in Waterdown or if he was just helping out. In the 1871 census, Henry is living alone back in Carlisle.

Over the next six years, the Kirk House began to build a reputation as being a good place to stay and to have a good meal. When Patrick died on February 19, 1894 of stomach cancer, he was lauded as being 'a progressive man, well-liked by the villagers and conducted the hotel in a first-class manner'. Ownership of the hotel passed to his son, John Henry Kirk and his wife Annie Isabella Organ.



*John Henry Kirk*

For the next 50 years, John Kirk and the Kirk House were fixtures in the Village of Waterdown. The large lot once held barns and stables to the north, and featured a stream

and gardens. The Bell Telephone office was destroyed in the fire of 1922 and it was installed in the Kirk House until 1931.



*John Henry Kirk in the gardens at the rear of the Kirk House*

He was active in St. Thomas church and was a member of the Knights of Columbus. He took a deep interest in community affairs. John died December 1, 1944 and ownership of the hotel passed to his son.

John and Annie had two children – Mary Agnes born May 23, 1895 and John Leo born November 18, 1897. John had grown up living in the hotel and was familiar with the operation. He had enlisted on May 9, 1918 and was stationed in Vancouver as a Gunner, never leaving Canada. He had pleuri-

sy during his service and continued to suffer from ill health for the rest of his life. He died March 5, 1947.

His sister Mary had officially taken over running the hotel the previous year although she had been the unofficial manager for many years due to her brother's ill health, and she continued to run it for the next 20 years before selling it in 1966. She lived in rooms above the pub until 1982 when she moved to Mount Nemo Lodge.



*Mary Kirk, 1951*

*Photo credit: HPL Local History & Archives, Bruce Murdoch Collection*

She died March 23, 1985 and was greatly missed by many friends and relatives. John and Mary and their parents are buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Burlington.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

We certainly had the full experience of winter over the last week. We hope that our members were able to remain safe and find a place to move the large amounts of snow away from walkways, driveways, and places of emergency access. It's amazing how a community can come together to help each other in times like this, and kudos to the snow plow operators and snow removal specialists that worked long hours to clear snow.



Speaking of digging out from under a large volume of stuff, our volunteers have been hard at work with projects and inquiries. In order to ensure we can keep providing help we need more people to volunteer. What an amazing way to give back to the community - no matter your skill set we can find your niche in the society. We hope our longstanding members are spreading the word to ensure we continue in our success at preserving history, and we will continue to market ourselves and be present in the community so that the next generation can reap the benefits of years of our hard work.

Looking forward to our next program for the year, "Sarah Pooley," February 27th at Grace Anglican Church. The more the merrier - we'll see you there.

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

P.O. Box 1044

163 Dundas Street East

Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0

Phone: 905-540-5161

Society E-mail:

[society@FlamboroughHistory.com](mailto:society@FlamboroughHistory.com)

Archives E-mail:

[archives@FlamboroughHistory.com](mailto:archives@FlamboroughHistory.com)

Website: [FlamboroughHistory.com](http://FlamboroughHistory.com)



Facebook: @flamboroughhistory

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Twitter: @FlamboroHistory

YouTube: Flamborough Archives  
& Heritage Society

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