



FLAMBOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY

Heritage Happenings



Summer 2025

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02

Heritage Paper

*The Mountsberg
General Store: Long
Gone Yet Faithfully
Recorded*

06

Volunteer Spotlight

*Current projects
and more!*

08

Treasures

*Both online
and in person*

10

Threads through the Past

*Waterdown
Grammar School -
High School*

12

Message from the President

*Plus other local
society websites &
our contact info*



Day camp at Memorial Park, July 1957 - from our collection

Summer Newsletter

After a chilly spring, summer came back in scorching style. We hope you've been able to enjoy the warm weather, but stay safe and cool when necessary.

Our first run of vintage Waterdown Centennial tees arrived and they look amazing! There's still a few available for purchase either through our website or in person at the Archives.

We are out and about in the community, ensuring new members of the community learn about us and that we remain top of mind. We have been able to host a table regularly at the Waterdown Farmer's Market at the Legion, and participated in RED Day there as well. Lyn has been busy presenting and preparing presentations to local clubs and seniors throughout the summer.

Heritage Paper #327

First in the series of "A Mercantile History: General Stores in Flamborough."

Discover the history of Mountsberg General Store and the various owners of a place for trade and community.

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

Our new exhibit is about to be opened - get ready to "Rediscover the History" of one of Flamborough's most iconic thoroughfares.

What's being revealed August 6th?

DISCOVER ON PAGE 9 >>

HERITAGE PAPER

The Mountsberg General Store: Long Gone Yet Faithfully Recorded

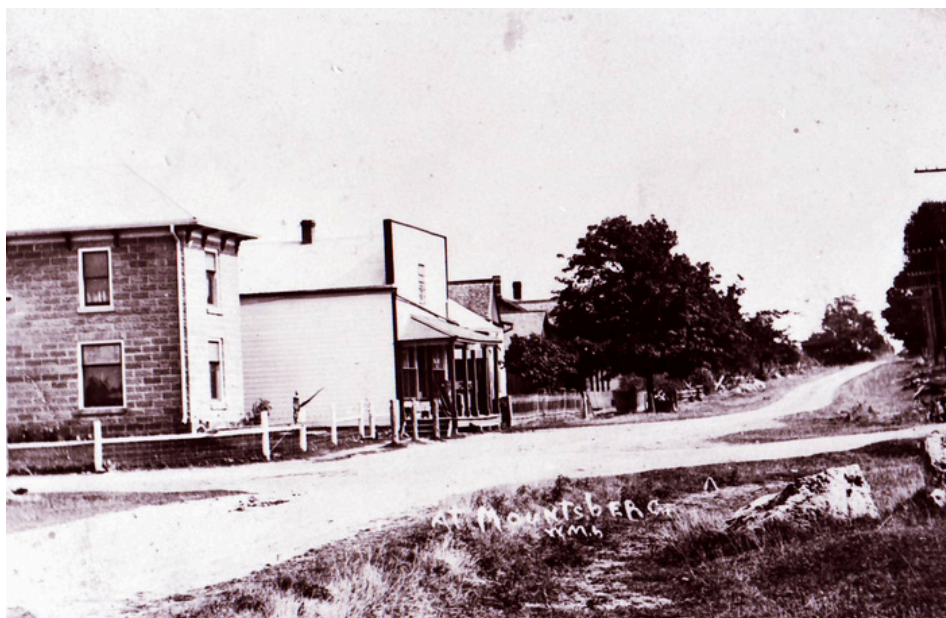
Sam Hounscome, Archives Summer Student

First in the series under the theme “A Mercantile History: General Stores in Flamborough.”

Mountsberg, situated at a far point of the former township of East Flamborough, is well-known for its conservation area—and not much beyond that to the average Flamborough resident. Retail has long since vanished from the village, but its history of its general store is emblematic in a lot of ways to the rest of the area.

In the early 1860s, James Paine built Mountsberg's first general store beside Matthew Mount's (of the eponymous Mount family) blacksmith shop, on the Mounts' land. Cash was scarce for farmers of that time, and so most transactions would be done by barter and trade. The store proprietor would journey to Hamilton markets on Saturdays to sell what he received in the barter, and purchase goods for the store. The most common goods for trade were eggs and butter, prepared and brought in by the farmers' wives.

Mail was also often the responsibility of the store-



Mountsberg Store, 1909. *The Mountsberg Heritage*

keeper in small communities. Prior to the establishment of an official post office, residents of Mountsberg had to travel into Dundas for mail, and were forced to go weeks or months between visits due to the length of the journey. As nearby post offices were built (Waterdown in 1841, Carlisle in 1848, and Campbellville, Freelon, and Puslinch by the mid 1850s) residents would then choose the nearest to them as their mailing address. This was Carlisle for the majority of Mountsberg residents. M.M. Crooker was Mountsberg's first official

postmaster from 1863-1869, but by some arrangement, seemed to work from the Carlisle Post Office. Other men were appointed as postmaster concurrently as him, such as James Freed in 1865, Joseph H. Smith from 1866-1868, and James Paine from 1868-1872.

Mountsberg's industry was growing in the mid-1860s, with two sawmills, an edge tool and agricultural implement factory, and shingle manufacturers. During this time, a J.C. Crooker was closely associated with James Paine at the Mountsberg general

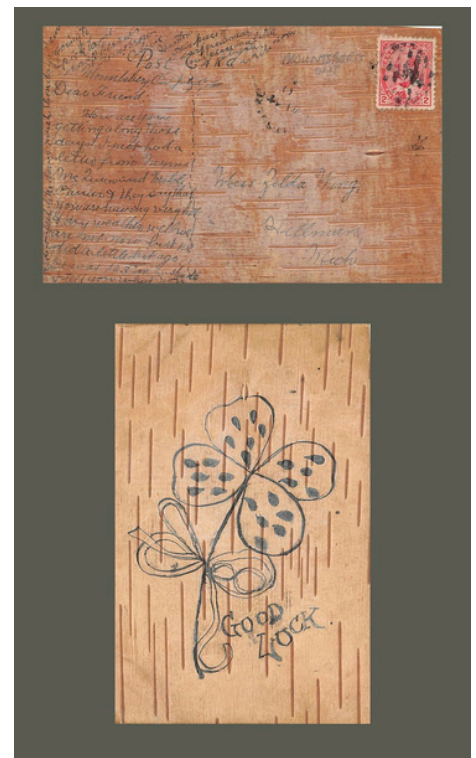
store. This is likely to be John M. Cummins Crooker, who kept a general store in Carlisle from around 1864-1871, but a cousin named John Cummins Crooker was also living in East Flamborough at this time. J.M.C. Crooker was rarely recorded with both of his middle names, leaving distinguishing the two difficult to do with certainty.

The Paine family acquired ownership of the land the store was on around 1867, when the Mount brothers Charles and Matthew moved away from Mountsberg. The store was sold to William Emmons in December 1872. He also replaced James Paine as postmaster. Emmons' ownership of the store was brief—only a year—and was bought out by the business partnership of William Laking and Oron Thompson. Thompson was the one who actually operated the store and also served as postmaster. The two had a successful partnership in Mountsberg's lumber industry until 1874: the trees that would be quality lumber had all been cut. Thompson sold his interests to Laking and later left Mountsberg. Laking, on the other hand, expanded his business instead: he bought a grist mill in Freulton, took over the

management of three other sawmills, and purchased more lumber mills farther north. He was on the East Flamborough Council from 1884-1889. Later in his life he ended up in Haliburton County and then back in Hamilton, and died a successful businessman in 1931, in Florida.

With the dissolution of Laking & Thompson and the factors that led to its end still plaguing Mountsberg, the community had shrunk significantly in the mid-1870s. City and County Directories of this time simply list Mountsberg as the name of a post office in East Flamborough, with only entries for the postmaster, general merchant, and occasionally a blacksmith or farmer or two.

From October 1874 to March 1889, Charles Revell owned and kept the general store, taking over the position of postmaster in 1876. His son, Levi Revell, kept the store for 10 months then sold it to Benjamin Johnson in December. Levi continued in the grocery business in Hamilton. During Johnson's stint as storekeeper, the position of postmaster was moved out of the store and into first William Foster's home and then E. Mount's home. It was also during this



An example of a birch bark postcard from Mountsberg, 1911

Images from eBay

time that Mountsberg began receiving daily mail instead of only three times per week, after a letter-writing campaign from its residents.

The daughter of Benjamin Johnson, Charity Linn, owned the store after her father, and rented it out to various proprietors. These included Jake Maddaugh (postmaster from September 1897 to May 1899) and George Hinton (postmaster from 1902-1906). Hinton purchased the store in time to rent it to Richard Hewins, his brother-in-law, in January 1906. The general store owners up until this point lived in rooms at the back of the store. Richard

Hewins instead built a neighbouring concrete-block home, that had direct access into the store, in 1907. This is the surviving building of 2056 Mountsberg Road. The now extra rooms at the back were converted into more storage and were integrated into use for the store.

During the later part of Hewins' ownership, George Hinton returned and rented the shop for a short time, and bought it back in 1910. A reminiscence of it in this 1908-1910 era was recorded and preserved, giving a glimpse into the physicality of the store at the time.

The store was 100 feet southeast of the village intersection, facing southwest, and built of wood. A squared façade with the name of the storekeeper and village partially hid the building's forward gable. There were two large windows, made up of many panes of glass, on each side of the double doors. The windows were purposeful to let sunlight in rather than view a display, though of course one could look in to see inside. The inside was lit by coal oil bracket lamps hung on the square structural posts but these only did so much, so most of the shopping would be done during the daytime. The covered stoop was four

steps up, to be just the right height for someone climbing off of a buggy or wagon, and hitching posts were along the front to tie horses to. In bad weather, at the back of the building, there was an open shed structure to shelter the animals.

The front step was the meeting place for the men of the village during the warm months and there were long benches at the front of each window for them to meander at. They'd chat and gossip while their wives, dressed up in their second-best outfits and of course adorned with a hat, bartered for goods. When one entered, they'd be hit with the strong smells of cheese, spice, leather, cloth, and more, from the sheer variety of goods crammed within.

In the center of the shop was an A-frame shelf unit, storing the gift and novelty items. Goods like fancy china pieces for weddings or birthdays, pin trays, hair receivers, vases, and cake plates were here, among other more commonplace items.

Groceries were on the right, and this would be where the women went first, to trade their weeks' worth of butter and eggs. The storekeeper would tally the goods then whisk them into the cold cellar, and the women could begin their shopping. Shelves



*Interior of Weaver's Store in
Waterdown*

From our collection

lined the entire wall and were full of cans and packages. There was a shelf for patent medicines, remedies, cures, and drugs. On the counter would be a wheel of cheese, and next to that, the weigh scales. Candies such as jawbreakers, liquorish whips, and chocolate animals were in a rounded glass case on the front end of the grocery counter.

On the left-hand side of the store was the dry goods. The counter was piled with overalls and straw hats, and pails, milk pans, brooms, rope, nails, and barn hardware were a little farther back. A matching glass case in look and location to the candy case held notions: sewing items like buttons and thread, fancy braid, and combs and brushes. The shelves behind the dry goods counter stretched towards the ceiling,

stacked with bolts of cloth, underwear, and a miscellany of games, books, school supplies, and paper. The stairway to the cold cellar was at this back left-hand corner. In the center of the back wall was a door that led to more storerooms—which were previously the living area for the store's proprietors. Behind the A-frame shelf was the iron wood stove, with two benches and few chairs. In the winter-time, this would be quite a social area for the village. If one huddled to the stove too closely, the scent of singed wool would unpleasantly add to the aroma of the store.

In the right-hand-side back corner behind the seating by the stove, was the post office, consisting of a stand-up desk and a slanting lid under a small window. A stack of sorting boxes, faced with glass, was what held each residents' mail and also separated this part of the store from the social area around the stove.

George Bogle was the next owner of the store after George Hinton. He was postmaster from 1916 until the post office was closed and replaced by rural mail delivery from Campbellville in 1927. He rented the store out to Charles and Myrna



Living history at Westfield - Hai Hai, YouTube

Bryant from 1928-1930. The store was torn down in 1931, though the Bryants operated a store out of their home next door for a little while longer. In 1933, they stopped doing that, too, and retail business disappeared from the four corners in Mountsberg.

FOUND IN THE FONDS

We are in possession of something truly special, thanks to the generosity of Terry Watson: copies of a comprehensive survey of the entire village of Waterdown, registered with land titles in 1973.

This isn't just any old map; it's the first detailed survey since the original 1854 rendering. Imagine the stories these lines and measurements could tell. For over a century, the village grew and shifted, its boundaries perhaps



blurring in places, its properties changing hands. And then, in 1973, a new official snapshot was taken, meticulously documenting every corner of Waterdown. These documents offer a fascinating glimpse into the

village's evolution, allowing us to compare the old with the new and trace the visible changes in our community's landscape.

A real treasure for anyone interested in Waterdown's built heritage!

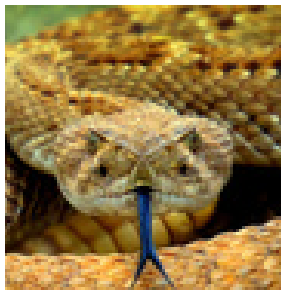
Current Projects

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 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.



Research was done for a variety of topics/people, including but not limited to: early reports of rattlesnakes in Flamborough, Duff's Cemetery, the haunted house at 219 Dundas Street, the Campbell family of Mountsberg, the Groat Family, KKK activity in Waterdown, Jewels for Jesus camp, ambulance history, the Rasberry family and Royal Mail contract, the start



of the Waterdown minor baseball association, and research and photos for Waterdown Village Heritage Art Walk planters on Dundas Street. Before taking a break for the summer, Bob Thomas and Bob Lalonde feel that they have finished researching Flamborough's WWI veterans. Bob Lalonde is now working on a History of Scouting in

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

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

Waterdown, while Bob Thomas will start on WWII veterans in the fall.

We are dealing with an issue with our Archives computer, as we currently cannot save files to the computer. We are hoping this is sorted out as soon as possible.

Thanks to all our volunteers for your hard work - enjoy the summer!



"The question is whether or not you choose to disturb the world around you, or if you choose to let it go on as if you had never arrived."

– Ann Patchett

CONTRIBUTING TO OUR CAUSE

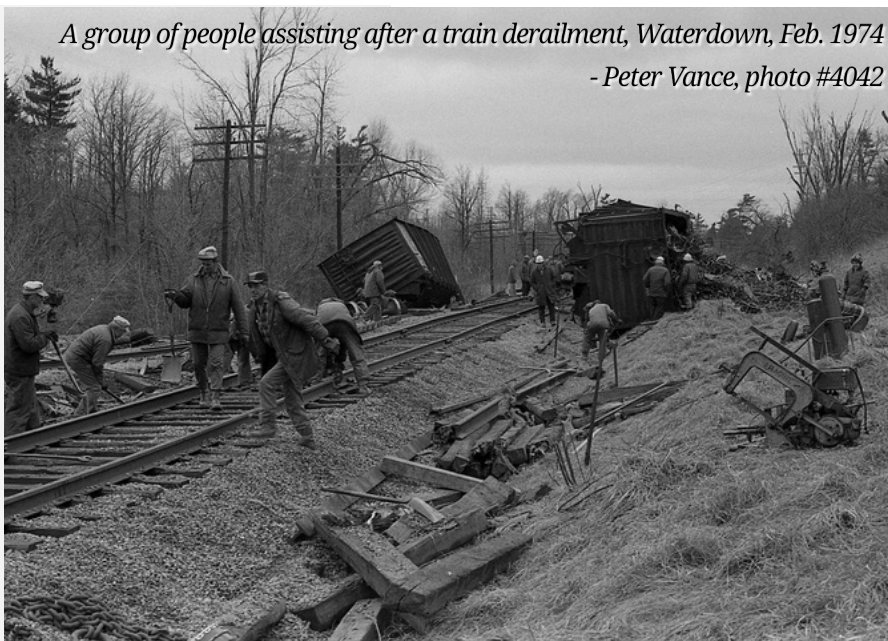
MEMBERSHIP

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



A group of people assisting after a train derailment, Waterdown, Feb. 1974

- Peter Vance, photo #4042

DONATIONS



We receive a lot of donations of heritage documents, photographs, and items. If you have something you think we'd 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 expenditures, donations from both members and 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



3,921



639



65



43

We love posting new content — tap follow and drop a comment to say hi!



Our blog posts featured settlements in Flamborough, including Black's Corners.

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.

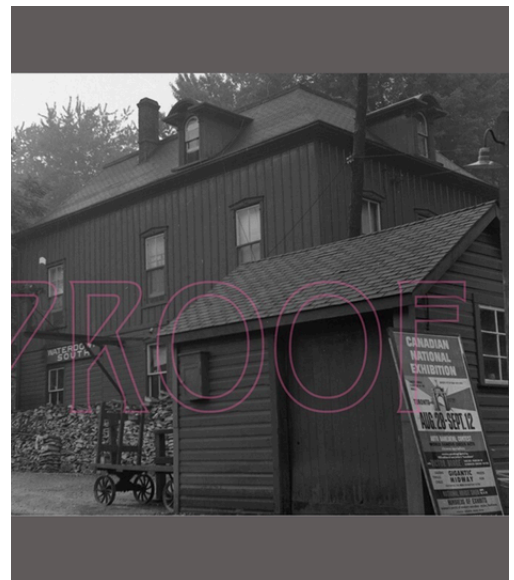
Once again, and as always:
Thanks to all for your support!

Our summer online was once again fairly laid back. We won the Gold award in CommunityVotes Flamborough 2025 under their Museums category.

While social media doesn't allow us to share news article links, we're finding screenshots of Lyn's and other heritage articles in Flamborough Today are quite popular and start conversation in the comments.

We also continue to try to find bits of Flamborough's heritage online in places like eBay. One photo that had been listed for sale was a different view of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Waterdown South railway station. Popular with our followers, some recalled the loss of the station due to fire.

We will continue to share bits of history online when we can - hope you're following us!



Treasures from the Archives



Get ready to "Rediscover the History" of one of Flamborough's most iconic thoroughfares. We're thrilled to announce an upcoming display dedicated to Dundas Street, a project spearheaded by our very own volunteer MaryAnn Slagter and brought to life with the fantastic help of Canada Summer Jobs student, Sam Hounsome.

Dundas Street, often known historically as "The Governor's Road," is far more than just a road that goes through Waterdown. Proposed by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793, it was initially conceived as a vital military link, connecting Lake Ontario to points west like the Thames River. This strategic vision also aimed to encourage settlement in Upper Canada and deter American expansion. Waterdown itself owes much of its early growth to its location along this significant route, with land grants offered to military personnel who helped open the road.



Over the centuries, Dundas Street has witnessed incredible transformation. From a rough military path to a bustling commercial artery, it has been the backbone of settlement and trade. You'll discover how businesses, homes, and communities sprung up along its path, shaping the very fabric of our village. The exhibit will highlight the evolution of this historic road, revealing how it fostered industrial growth in places like Smokey Hollow and how it continues to be a central part of Waterdown's identity today.

Don't miss this illuminating journey through time! The "Dundas Street: Rediscover the History" display will be available for viewing at the Waterdown branch of the Hamilton Public Library, starting August 6th. Come and uncover the fascinating past of this legendary road!



ARCHIVES ACTIVITY: APR - JUN

	VISITORS	108
	CALLS	18
	E-MESSAGES	377
	ITEMS CATALOGUED	156
	ACQUISITIONS	18
	VOLUNTEER HOURS	553

THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

Waterdown Grammar School – Waterdown District High School: How has Waterdown's Only High School Changed?

*Ryan McCracken, Archives summer student and Co-Author of
"A History of Waterdown District High School"*

Education in Waterdown is nearly as old as the village itself, beginning in 1815 with small schools like the private Waterdown School constructed by Alexander Brown (Waterdown's first settler) where the American House now stands. Mary Hopkins was first to teach in the schoolhouse. Students in this period would only come from Waterdown itself, commuting by walking or through carriage.

Waterdown's Grammar School was constructed near the old industrial core of Smokey Hollow in 1857. With its first Headmaster being one Donald Ban MacLennan. The term "Grammar School" was the old provincial legal term to denote what we today would call a High School, while elementary Schools were called "Common Schools." The School Building consisted of two buildings, each of two floors. The ground floor were dedicated to Waterdown Common school while the top was dedicated to the Waterdown Grammar School.

The Grammar School was considered an important and elite institution for its time, some would come from across the province to attend.



*Waterdown Common and Grammar School
Flamborough Archives*

Many students coming from throughout East Flamborough took the Train to attend. Behind the showings of the Grammar school's sterling reputation lay many flaws and issues. Cracks began to show starting in 1910 with complaints from students. The building was heated by box stoves that had to be manually fed with firewood to keep the school heated in cold winter months. Beside a starting load done by staff in the morning, students had to keep the heat on themselves. However, the school lacked ventilation, so the building was filled with smoke and overheated. Inspectors deemed the stairway that Grammar School students used a fire hazard. The building never passed inspection.

In 1922, the building was closed as Common students were moved to the new public school, (Mary Hopkin's) as a new high school was under construction at 262 Dundas Street East at a price of \$70,000. Only a small portion of the Grammar School remains as Scout Hall in Sealy Park. Students were forced to attend a variety of locations for School including Grace Anglican Church, Flamborough Township Hall, and most importantly the top floor of Mary Hopkin's.

The new Waterdown and East Flamboro High School opened January 27th, 1928 and served as the home of the school until 1992. After the Second World War, the idea of School offices staff was implemented, with office secretaries and Vice Principals. Expansions to School infrastructure came with the explosion of immigration and suburban expansion in Flamborough

following the Second World War. In 1953, the board dropped the East Flamboro part of the name, causing outcry among the large portion of East Flamboro residents attending the school.



The 262 Dundas Street East Waterdown District High School, during the 1960s.

As school population exploded, it became clear that the current build was not suited for the number of students. On November 15th, 1967 a new addition was opened for the school with new classrooms, a Gymnasium and staff facilities. The addition made life far easier on student and staff alike, but quickly the same problem that has seemingly plagued Waterdown's only High School resurfaced, disrepair. Black mold had been spotted across the school, various school amenities were damaged, and still the school could not fit its own population well. The School soon took on the name Ramshackle High, a movement to protest the disrepair and bring it to the board's attention. Mr. James White, Principal of the School called the school Ramshackle in a 1976 Hamilton Spectator Article. White stated the school was over occupied at 630 despite the listed capacity of 720, which Mr. White called "a paper figure."



*A Controversial Red Sweatshirt depicting the Ramshackle High Symbol from 1970-1976
Flamborough Archives*

Controversy around Ramshackle continued alongside numerous renovations until it was the project of building a new school was decided in 1989. The funding provided was originally approved at 13.5 Million, with promise of 25 classrooms, a lecture hall seating 145, a Cafeteria in the school's center, a child care center and rumors of a swimming pool (the swimming pool never came to pass). The child care center remains in use by the community as the Waterdown District Children's Center. Construction began at the site of 215 Parkside Drive in January of 1991 under supervision of Principal Bob Bruce. The land on which the first section of the school sits was the Waterdown Golf Club from 1930 to 1945.

In March of 1991 board officials, the new schools Architect and Contractor, teachers, parents, students, and future students gathered for a Sod turning ceremony at the site of the new school. Almost everyone present had their turn with the shovel including future students Julie Buckle and Chris Simpson of Flamborough Centre and Balaclava respectively. In June of 2004, the High School celebrated its 150th Anniversary. It was a giant event bringing former Alumni from around the province.

The School continued to face issues regarding space in the 2000s, as school and community population spiked once more, a series of portables were added to the school as talks of annexing the nearby Allan A. Greenleaf elementary school began in 2008. Instead 4 acres of land was purchased to the North East of the school to be constructed into the Waterdown District High School we know today.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

As the days lengthen and summer embraces our region, the season offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with the rich tapestry of our past and the vibrant community we share. We hope this edition of Heritage Happenings finds you well and eager to explore the historical treasures around us.



Our vital work both in the Archives and out in the community underscores our commitment to providing in-depth historical knowledge to our members and the public. This summer offers a wealth of opportunities to connect with our past, both within Flamborough and across the wider Hamilton region. We are particularly proud to see local preservation efforts recognized, such as the recent Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee (HMHC) award for masonry restoration at 99 Mountsberg Road, a Mountsberg property also known as the Kerr-Woolsey House.

I encourage you to explore history available throughout the summer. For family-friendly and immersive historical experiences, consider a visit to Westfield Heritage Village in Rockton. Their “Maker’s Month” in July delves into historical crafts and art, while “Churn Back Time at Dairy Delicious!” in August offers a hands-on journey through the history of Ontario’s dairy industry.

Your continued support as members is the cornerstone of our success. We encourage you to share your own family stories or historical materials with us; your contributions are invaluable to our collective memory. If you’re looking for ways to become more actively involved, please reach out - your passion is our greatest asset.

Chris Rivait, President

AREA HERITAGE WEBSITES

The Ancaster Township Historical Society: ancasterhistory.ca

The Burlington Historical Society: burlingtonhistorical.ca

The Dundas Valley Historical Society: dundashistory.ca

The Grimsby Historical Society: grimsbyhistoricalsociety.ca

The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society: headofthelake.ca

The United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Canada,
Hamilton Branch: uel-hamilton.com

The West Lincoln Historical Society: wlhs.info

Waterdown Mill Street Heritage:
waterdownmillstreetheritage.ca

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