



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1
www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

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March-April 2010

Beginning of Knox Church, Georgetown

Richard E. Ruggle

This article first appeared in The Georgetown Independent on 13 November 1985.

It was the mid-1840s when Georgetown began to develop into a village, and when the Presbyterians here began to meet together to worship. Before this time, people in Esquesing tended to go down to the Scotch Block, or up to Fraser's Church (the present Union Church) for their preaching.

The Georgetown Presbyterians gathered for the visits of a travelling missionary, Robert Wallace (1820-99). Wallace's family had come from County Monaghan in Ireland, eventually settling in Toronto Township, where his father, Samuel, was an elder and Sabbath school superintendent. Robert was destined for the ministry. He studied briefly under the Reverend William Rintoul in Streetsville, and when Queen's College was opened in Kingston in 1842, Robert was one of the first students.

1843 was the year of the great disruption in Scotland, when the Free Church split off from the Church of Scotland, partly over the issue of patrons imposing ministers on congregations against their will. Though such patronage did not exist in Canada, the Canadian church was beset by emissaries from the Free Church who sought to persuade the colonists to disown their connection with the established Church of Scotland.

The Canadian church split, as its Scottish parent had done. The majority in the Scotch Block withdrew to set up the Free Church congregation named after Thomas Boston; Norval and Union joined the Free Church; and a congregation was quickly set up



in Acton. Queen's College remained with the Church of Scotland, so Wallace finished his studies at the new Free Church college in Toronto,

Limehouse
Presbyterian
Church – built in
1861

Knox. In April 1845 his old mentor,

William Rintoul, requested him to give a year to organizing and supplying congregations for the new church. During that year he founded some 20 stations in the townships of Esquesing, Trafalgar, Chinguacousy, Inisfil, Bradford, West Gwillimbury, King, Markham, Vaughan and Scarborough. With such a large circuit, his visits would have been infrequent. But it was in this period that he began holding services in Georgetown homes. As the village grew, its Presbyterian families wished to worship nearer to home than Norval, and the Presbytery of Toronto fixed Georgetown as a missionary station. For several years students from Knox College supplied it in the summer months, while occasional aid was furnished in winter, both from the college professors and ministers generally.

In the autumn of 1859, the Reverend Robert Burns (1789-1869) began to come out to Georgetown on alternate Sabbaths. Burns had been secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society, which had assisted, among others, the infant Esquesing congregation. And he was one of those who had been sent to foment the disruption in the Canadian church. By 1859 he had resigned from Knox Church in Toronto, but continued to teach at the college. Burns supplied Georgetown for almost two years, where he had about 30 communicants. Services were held, first in the town hall, then in the Congregational chapel, and finally in the Wesleyan Methodist church.

A church had been opened in Limehouse in 1861, built with the help of Episcopal Methodists and Anglicans of the village, and served from Acton. Hugh McKay and Robert Young visited the new Limehouse congregation, and urged that they join forces in order to obtain a regular supply of preaching. The union was effected, and in 1862 a committee of the two



Knox
Presbyterian
Church,
Georgetown –
built in 1867.
EHS00447

congregations met to arrange a regular summer supply. The following year the Presbytery of Toronto sanctioned the union, and a communion roll was drawn up with about fifty members.

They engaged a student from Knox College, Robert Ewing. Ewing seems to have spent his youth in Glasgow, where he was engaged for a time in missionary work, coming to Canada in 1860. He was called on his ordination (20 April 1865) as the first settled

minister of the united congregation, and stayed until 1872, when he retired on account of his delicate health. The street on which he lived with his wife Barbara and their children, was named after him. After his retirement he lived for a while in Collingwood; but when he died in 1890, his body was brought back to Limehouse, to be buried in a family plot.

Early in 1866, a meeting was held in the home of Georgetown's Common School principal, James Breckenridge (1830-79) to plan the building of a church.

Breckenridge was a native of Argyll, whose father and brothers and sisters had emigrated about 1848 to the Scottish Block near Rockton, Illinois. He remained behind to finish his studies at the University of Edinburgh, and the Marquis of Lorne persuaded him to settle in Canada, rather than join his family in the States. He taught at Chatham and Stewarttown before assuming charge of the Common School in Georgetown. In 1856 he married Agnes Alexander (1838-1912), whose father William (1803-90) had run a hand weaving business in Scotland, and now was a blacksmith in Glen Williams. Breckenridge entered Knox College, and served St. Andrew's Church in Streetsville (1871-79) before his death at the age of 49. During that time, an organ was introduced at St. Andrew's, despite the objection of some of the congregation that it was a "kist-o-whistles" unbecoming for a church.

Hugh McKay and Thomas Young, a hardware merchant, were trustees for the congregation. They purchased two lots from Hugh Maloy on the corner of Main and Church Streets, where Maloy had been a blacksmith and plough maker.

David Cross was a tanner and hop grower in Stewarttown, where he had also built a brick store with a hall overhead for social gatherings. Cross hosted a social for the building fund, at which about 160 people attended. On a rainy Wednesday in May, a crowd gathered to hear an address by Mr. Ewing, and watch Dr. Burns lay the corner stone.

Though no evidence exists to substantiate this, it would be reasonable to presume that Walter McKay, who would later be involved with the construction of St. George's, and the design of the Presbyterian church in Norval, was involved with the erection of the brick church. Walter McKay, like his brother Hugh, was on Knox's first communion roll. The church was built at a cost of about \$3,000.

Dawn Livingstone will speak on the history of Knox Presbyterian Church on Wednesday 10 March 2010 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown.



Knox
Presbyterian
Church,
Georgetown
– built in
1887

EHS00318



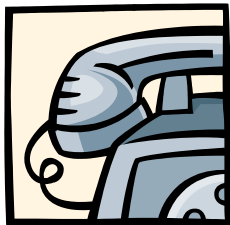
ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2010

- Wed. 10 March 2010 **Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown** - Dawn Livingstone will give a presentation on Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown, as they look towards their 150th anniversary.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main and Church Sts, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 14 April 2010 **Celebrated and Notorious Women of the Nineteenth Century** - The 19th century was populated by a bevy of beautiful, dangerous and courageous women. From the exploits of Lily Langtry and the treachery of Lizzie Borden to the nearly forgotten heroism of Nellie Bly, it was a time of change and opportunity. We will explore the lives of some of the celebrated and notorious women whose achievements and infamy have made their mark on the fabric of this fascinating age.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main and Church Sts, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 12 May 2010 **Early Georgetown Photographers** - Who were they? Karen Hunter presents examples of their work from the EHS Archive photo collection. Check your family photographs and bring in examples of Georgetown's professional photographers.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main and Church Sts, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE!

Refreshments served from 7:00 p.m.



Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	905 877-7363	Treasurer
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Secretary
Sherry Westfahl	905 873-7145	Past - President
J. Mark Rowe	905 877-9510	Archivist
Jan Raymond	905 877-9172	Publications
Marj Allan	905 877-9985	Membership
Cathy Hunt		Social
Lise Currie	905-877-0634	

Society Notes

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

The Esquesing Historical Society has an official web site on the World Wide Web. <www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca>

Send your e-mail to mrowe6@sympatico.ca or dawn.livingstone@sympatico.ca

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter and Dawn Livingstone. Submissions welcome. You may opt to receive your newsletter sent electronically to an e-mail address you provide.

MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your 2010 membership. The individual membership rate is \$10. The family or institution rate is \$12. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box. Membership runs until February. Marj Allen, membership secretary, will accept your 2010 fee at the meetings. This will be your final newsletter if you do not renew your membership.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

www.archives.gov.on.ca

ARCHIVES

Read the Archival Report for 2009 starting on page 7 of this newsletter.

HALTON-PEEL OGS

Four Corners Branch Library, 65 Queen St., Brampton @ 2p.m.

Call Ann Logan at 905-845-7755

Mar. 28 – Don Hinchley, *Newspapers and Genealogy*

Apr. 25- Rick Roberts, *Global Genealogy, "Publishing Your Family History"* Oakville

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

PO box 598, Streetsville, ON L5M 2C1

Our General meetings are held, opposite the Leslie Log House, at the Specialty Care, 4350 Mississauga Rd. S. on the 2nd Thurs. of the month (Feb, Apr, Oct, Dec,) at 7:30

Contact: Ann Holmes Ph: (905) 826-3183 or e-mail abholmes@sympatico.ca

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church, 25 Ruth Ave. at 7:15 on the third Thursday of the month.

Mar. 18 – *Annual General Meeting followed by a Heritage Update* Jim Leonard, City of Brampton Heritage Coordinator

April 15 - *Cory Trepanier, Artist.* - Arctic painting project.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society meets at the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 8p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

March 18 - Vintage Post Cards - guest speaker John Duignan

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

The Nasagiweya Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of each month at Nassagaweya Presbyterian Church in Haltonville at 7 p.m. President Audrey Allison 905-854-2378

March 9: Annual Irish Stew dinner with live entertainment.

April 9 - AGM

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For a list of walking tours and ghost tours of Oakville visit www.oakvillehistory.org and click on EVENTS or phone 905-844-2695.

Mar. 17 – Potluck supper and AGM

May 19 – Ken Weber “*Surely Not in Canada!*”

TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April 27 – Richard Collins, Mississauga Historical Society.

June 29 – John McDonald – Early history of Halton County

<http://www.trafalgartownshiphistory.ca>

FALLBROOK FARM

News of the designation of Fallbrook Farm on 27 Sideroad was premature. The Town of Halton Hills has delayed approval of their vote. The issue is complicated because the site is owned by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, who does not want designation. A third-party group has been lobbying to save the property. Any

expenses incurred in this issue must be borne by Halton Hills since the municipality is one of the funding sources for the CVCA.

AGNES MCCLURE-EHS EXEC DIES

It is with great sadness, the family announces the passing of a dear aunt, Agnes McClure on January 6, 2010, age 86. She was the last surviving child of Sadie Eccles and William Albert McClure. Predeceased by her sisters Islay and Mary McClure, brothers John and Eccles McClure. Aunt Agnes will be missed by her nieces and nephews, Mary Jane and Bruce Barrett (Glenn); Bill and Sherry McClure (Sadie

and Grace); Islay McClure-Keane and Paul Keane (Clarissa and Laughlin); and Stuart and Debbie McClure. Dear sister-in-law of Ethel McClure. She was born on the Mountainview Rd. family farm, and attended Georgetown District High School. Agnes was a graduate of the Provincial Normal School, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Secretarial Sciences. She enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a secretary for the Ontario Government in Ministries of Health, Education, Community and Social Services, and the Speaker of the House.

Celebrated and Notorious Women of the Nineteenth Century

While we denizens of the quiet hinterland abhor all citizens who threaten the safety and security of our community, we love to hear about wicked people from *other* places! In trying to find some local examples to whet our appetite for this meeting in April, your editor had a hard time. My theory is that either we could not acknowledge such depravity in our midst or the newspapers wouldn't print them! Therefore I present three excerpts involving women who may or may not have driven the men arrested to this sad end.

MURDER IN ACTON!

The Canadian Champion, Milton, Canada West, 29 June 1865

A young man named Drumgole, a carpenter by trade but lately taught singing school in the Catholic Church [Dublin], became intimate with a young woman named [Matilda] Lozier, and under a promise of marriage, seduced her. A child was born, and the mother expired on Tuesday the 20th with Drumgole at her side. The girl was living at home in Acton with her two half brothers named Lightheart, coopers by trade. A third half brother, David Lightheart, a painter of New York City, absent about five years, being in the Southern Army [Confederates] was sent for, arriving a few days before the death of his sister. He seemed to feel very keenly the disgrace brought upon the family and went to Toronto and procured an improved Colt revolver... On the day of the funeral, in the presence of a number of spectators, he shot Drumgole as he was stepping out of the house. Dr. McGarvin was sent for and Dr. McCulloch of Georgetown.

Lightheart walked around Acton for several hours undisturbed until he was arrested without a warrant and placed in custody of Messrs. Storey, Hall and Johnston... They just locked him in a room and by 4 a.m. found their bird had flown. Mr. Zimmerman of Milton was sent for and promptly searched Campbellville, Sodom and Acton, but found no traces of the fugitive.

- *Continued on page Ten...*



Annual General Meeting Highlights

2009 ARCHIVAL REPORT (excerpts)

John Mark Rowe, Archivist

ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES

The sad demise of the Limehouse Women's Institute resulted in the donation of their Tweedsmuir histories to the EHS Archives. Tracy Richardson was our summer student this summer working at the Library, where she scanned the Limehouse Tweedsmuir histories, making them searchable on the internet. Their books will join the Tweedsmuir histories of Halton District, Acton, Bannockburn, Dublin, Stewarttown, Georgetown, Terra Cotta. The library also has microfilm copies of several Tweedsmuir histories.

Ms. Richardson also scanned all our back issues of the EHS Newsletter. That will make them scanable on the computer.

Years of web page gunk has been cleaned out in the past few years by our new volunteer webmaster – Ron Raffan. Our webpage has been rearranged to provide easier access to more items.

The Georgetown Leader, a newspaper from the 1960s was microfilmed and is available at the Georgetown Library. Steve Blake coordinated the project.

Karen Hunter has now completed descriptions of 21 400 negatives from the Acton Free Press files in the Archives.

The John Sommer collection relating to the Arts community in Georgetown had further additions mad to it this year.

Our EHS volunteers spent quite some time helping people with genealogical inquiries this year. We thank all our volunteers. Perhaps you can offer a helping hand this year. We appreciate it now and future generations of researchers will appreciate it long after you've forgotten about the donation.

2009 ACCESSIONS

The Archives had donations from Mrs. Marlene Switzer, Audrey Brown, Dawn Livingstone, Mary Goebelle, June Lenz, Eva Middleton, Daisy Harris, John Sommer, Josie Sargent, James McIsaac, Maggie Wilkinson, Bruce Andrews, *Georgetown*; Russell Miller, *Wasaga Beach*; C. Richard Hunter, *Cheltenham*; Betty Brownridge, *Esquesing*; Gloria Brown, Neil Robertson, *Milton*; Esme Ball, *Langley, BC*; John Butchart, *England* Edward VonZuben, *Terra Cotta*; David & Kay Dills, *Acton*; Judy MacKinnon, *Paisley*; Estate of Dorothy Hill, Fredrichs, Amnesty International.

WEBSITE USE – esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

Our website had 8881 visits over the past year, an increase of 892 visits over last year. These visits originated in the United States 38% of the time followed by Canada 35% of the time. Unknown visitors comprised 18% of visitors. The top six countries were China, Great Britain, Germany, Australia, Sweden, and The Netherlands. The unique visitors to the site (once only) were 84%.

Besides searching for EHS directly, the most popular search phrases were Georgetown (4.26%), Acton, Kennedy, Glen Williams, Terra Cotta, Toronto, Speyside, Halton and Norval.

Web pages accessed on our website in order of popularity were About Us, Acton Free Press 1888, Kennedy family, Toronto Daily Mail 1893, Terra Cotta, Georgetown Herald 1913, Georgetown, Norval, Speyside, Ballinafad, Glen Williams, Acton and Limehouse.

There were 1592 downloads from the site, 38% of which were for our Archival Table of Contents. Next in popularity was the newsletter at 25% and third was the book list at 17%

The most popular months of visits were November (945), March (841) and January(801).

Inquiries received by topic:

DATE	PERSON	INQUIRY
Jan. 05	Bob Kirkpatrick	1893 Daily Mail
Jan. 07	Jim Devin	Ruth Sarah Pearson
Jan. 08	Gordon Tibbles	Peter Scott
Jan. 10	Keith Clive	Ukranian Streets –Terra Cotta
Jan. 14	Peter Woods	Land documents
Jan. 16	Marilyn Rogers	Robinson Family
Jan. 22	Angela	Directories
Jan. 22	Allen Scott	Acton Fire Fighters
Jan. 28	Karen Field	George Kennedy
Jan. 28	Andy Kyle	Kyle Family
Feb. 06	Sandra Williamson	Georgetown Horticultural Society Presidents
Feb. 08	Marikka Nicklin	Nicklin Family
Feb. 08	Ron Russell	High School Yearbooks
Feb. 16	David Carney	Norval Mill
Feb. 23	Kim Hill	Pontz Family
Mar. 16	Don Fendley	Sports pictures for Museum
Apr. 10	Allen Scott	Photo request for fire fighters
Apr. 13	Kay d'Entremont	Arena photo
May 20	Lorraine Apanaskh	11033 Trafalgar Rd, Stewarttown
May 23	Margaret Gill	Raymond Beckett
May 26	Susan Aitken	R H Mimms photos
May 30	Tom Curnutte	Kennedy nail barrell
June	Bill Maxwell	McLarty and Shortreed
July 3	Karen Matthews-Reid	Matthews family, Acton
July 6	Mary Martin	John Langan, Georgetown
July 8	Bill Martin	Langan information
Sept. 24	Bill Rafferty	Rafferty/Gaughan/McDermott family history
Oct. 14	Blair Goss	Speight stationary engines
Oct. 20	Karen Watson	George Kennedy School Accessions (there are none)
Nov. 01	Dr. Ken Mankin	Photos of Norval United Home
Dec.	Amy Sykes	Trying to save 14 Guelph St.

Meetings for the year:

January History of Lorne Scots, Rick Ruggle 40 attendees

February Annual Meeting, Georgetown Slide Show, Mark Rowe 32 attendees

March Stewarttown School History, Ray Denny 32 attendees

April Native Peoples – talk and display, Don Ablett 40 attendees

May Exploitation of the Dionne Quintuplets, Donald Zaldin 38 attendees

June Pot Luck and History of St Stephens, Hornby, Ken Whaley 28 attendees

September History of Beardmores, Mark Rowe 20 attendees

October Dry Stone Walls, with Matthew Ring of Fergus 25 attendees

November Shipping on the Great Lakes, Walter Lewis, at Georgetown Library 40 attendees

Total Attendees 295
9 meetings during the year
with an average of 33 attendees per meeting

Dawn Livingstone
2 February 2010

Esquesing Historical Society

Annual Financial Statement - January 31, 2009

Income

Balance on Hand - January 31, 2008		\$15,583.21
Ontario Heritage Development grant	\$911.00	
Membership fees	\$932.95	
Publication Sales	\$4,897.57	
Archive Sales	\$139.16	
Donations	\$114.00	
Royalties - Access, The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency	\$273.00	<u>\$7,267.68</u>
Total Income		\$22,850.89

Expenses

Administration	\$433.41	
Newsletter	\$599.22	
Rent - Meeting Halls	\$550.00	
Honorarium - Speakers	\$250.00	
Membership fee - Ontario Historical Society	\$50.00	
Entrance fee	\$60.00	
Publications purchased for Resale	\$30.00	
Advertising	\$193.85	
Archives - Supplies	\$245.62	
- Other	\$114.17	
Bank fees	\$0.32	
Total Expenses		<u>\$2,526.59</u>

Balance on Hand - January 31, 2009 **\$20,324.30**

Treasurer - Karen Hunter

Celebrated and Notorious Women of the Nineteenth Century

Continued from Page Six...

Martin Drumgole died on Monday morning about 7 o'clock at age 32. It is very much to be regretted that during the excitement caused by the murder a Wesleyan clergyman residing here has, on more than one occasion, publically made statements which were tantamount to saying the murderer had done right by shooting the murdered man, and that if he had been in his place he would have done the same!

MILTON YOUTH EXECUTED FOR MURDER

The Canadian Champion, Milton, Canada West, 18 June 1862

At about 10:30 today the sentence of the Court in the case of the unfortunate young Edward Keenan was carried into effect.... The young man, not yet 19, was convicted in the murder of his mother while both were intoxicated....

“On Monday previous to my mother’s death my father and brother were working at Mr. Brownridge’s and I and my mother drank two quarts of whiskey. On Tuesday we drank two quarts more of whiskey and in the evening my father and brother came home and when my father found that we had not put in the cow and were drunk, he began to rage, and he beat my mother in a most dreadful manner and he also beat me. On Wednesday I think we drank about two quarts more of whiskey and while in a state of intoxication that afternoon, I beat my mother; but I did not strike her with any weapon. My father and my brother came home that evening and, though I was very drunk yet, I remember my father asking my mother if I had touched her and she said two or three times, ‘No, he did not.’ On Thursday morning Dr. Freeman came to our house and shook the bunk where I was sleeping saying, ‘Edward get up your mother is dying’. I really did not think that she was so near death. And now that I am about to enter into eternity, my solemn conviction is that I did not cause her death.”

Sequel – In October 1865 Edward’s father Jimmy died suddenly in the office of Dr. Freeman ‘whither he had crawled a few minutes earlier’.

The Canadian Champion, Milton, Canada West, 13 September 1866

MATRIMONIAL – A young lady, lately returned from the Southern States, who intends to spend two or three months among the Canadians, wishes to cultivate the acquaintance of a young man with a view to marriage. He must be pious and industrious; money is no object as the advertiser is in easy circumstances. Send your address, enclosing carte-de-visite to Miss L.V.C. Glenwilliams

The Canadian Champion, Milton, Canada West, 4 October 1866

MISS LAURA VIRGINIA CLAYTON arrived in Canada from Louisiana not long ago and took up respectable lodgings not 50 miles from here. She was orphaned at the age of 21 and possessor of a Louisiana plantation. She has \$10 000 in the bank and 45 letters of testimony from Milton, Georgetown, Brampton, Hamilton, Oakville, Bronte and Glenwilliams. She received a letter from a poet of Glenwilliams signed A.S.S.

Who was Laura Clayton??? Does anyone know what happened???