



Trafalgar Township Historical Society

"Documenting, celebrating and preserving the agricultural heritage of North Oakville"

Spring Newsletter 2010

Board Report

Our renovations have started! The gas furnace has been installed and the renovation to the bathroom and kitchen area has begun.

Thanks so much to everyone who has renewed their membership with us. We are starting out our year with 40 members! (\$25 for individuals & \$35 for families) made payable to Trafalgar Twp Historical Society. Send to Jane Watt, 3089 Jaguar Valley Drive, Apt. B2, Mississauga, Ont. L5A 2J1



We are very pleased to announce that our very own Jane Watt won the Ontario Heritage Trust Award for Lifetime Achievement. Jane is a founding member of Trafalgar Twp Historical Society and has been a board member since. She is also an active member of a number of heritage groups and a well known local researcher.

TTHS Board Meetings

Our next board meetings are at the schoolhouse at 3pm on Tuesday April 20th, Tuesday May 18th and Tuesday June 18th. Please call ahead if you are interested in attending incase we change the location due to construction. All are welcome to attend and participate in discussion. michelle@tths.ca

Trafalgar History Updates

North Oakville Heritage Street Names

With some help from our members who have a heritage connection to the property at Neyagawa and Dundas we were able to submit a list of suggested heritage street names to the town for this new sub division. If your family owned property in North Oakville please submit to us a list of suggested street names with the reason for the request and the lot and concession number where it should be added. We hope to have these in place ahead of time so we can respond to the Town in a timely manner when development applications come in.

New Palermo School to open in September

A brand new school will open in West Oak tails and it will be named Palermo. We have provided the school board and the future principal with information on the history of Palermo.

Kevin Flynn Meeting

Thanks to all who wrote letters to Kevin Flynn asking him to save Bronte Creek Provincial Park Heritage buildings from demolition by neglect. Oakville, Bronte and Trafalgar Historical Societies all met with Kevin Flynn, MPP Oakville last month to urge him to protect the buildings. The meeting went well and he assured us he would at least get the buildings in question properly boarded up for now with the intent of looking at future uses.

Property Research

These are the next three homes that are most in danger of being removed from the heritage registry. If you are able to provide heritage information on any of these homes we are researching that would be very helpful. We would especially be interested in early photos, interesting stories, family genealogies and help with determining the date of construction.



87 Dundas Street East- Near Sixth Line, just east of Munn's



3269 Dundas Street West (North Side, W of Bronte)



1297 Dundas Street East (North side near Ninth Line)

Speaker Series

TTHS – Tuesday, April 27th, 7pm- 2431 Dundas Street West Palermo schoolhouse

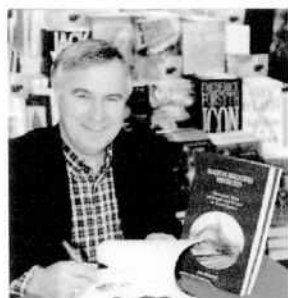
Guest speaker: Richard Collins - "Commander John Skyryner - Man of Mystery"

"Mysteries surrounding the commander include- why he never became a captain, why he didn't join the navy until the age of 33, a collection of secret naval items that should have been destroyed, a personal relationship with a Russian admiral and a chance encounter he had with the father of Queen Victoria. (Richard is a local Mississauga historian, President of the Mississauga South Historical Society, and interpreter for the Museums of Mississauga).

TTHS – Tuesday, June 29th, 7pm - "A pictorial review of the early history of Halton County with a comparison of the development of north and south Halton featuring many of the settlements, entrepreneurs and industries."

Guest Speaker: Local Halton Author and Historian, John McDonald

John is a lifelong resident of Halton, has taken a keen interest in the history of the county for over 30 years, and has authored two books Halton Sketches and Halton Sketches Revisited. John was born in Milton and has served for a ten year period on Halton Hills Council and Halton Region Council. He is a founding member of the Esquesing Historical Society and is



presently active with the Milton Historical Society. John is currently writing a new book called Halton's Heritage.

Inquiries

Oakville Town Heritage Planner, Michael Seaman is wondering if anyone has information related to Oakville/Trafalgar and the war of 1812 so that they may plan an event for 2012. Contact Michael at mseaman@oakville.ca or 905-845-6601

SAYING GODBYE to Two More North Oakville Heritage Homes

Bertin Stables- 3445 Dundas Street West

William Book & James VanSickle were early owners – destroyed by fire March 2010



Gord Kaitting, of the Trafalgar Township Historical Society, says allowing the razing of historic properties in north Oakville like the Emily Biggar farmhouse are short-sighted. Days after this photo was taken in early March 2010, the house was demolished.

JIM WILKES/TORONTO STAR

This was the home at Neyagawa (previously Fourth Line), on the North side of Dundas Street West. The developer donated \$40,000 to the Town of Oakville to use in a yet to be determined heritage fund for restoration of heritage

buildings.

Heritage Events Around Halton

BURLINGTON

May 9...A Taste of History & Mother's Day Tea, Ireland House, 905-332-9888

May 10...The War of 1812, Burlington Historical Society, 905-333-1345

HALTON HILLS

May 12...Georgetown Photographers, Esquesing Historical Society, 905-877-9510

May 30...Irish Catholic Settlement Halton-Peel Branch, OGS, 905-281-1701

MILTON

Until April 30...Exhibition of Sculptures, Telling Stories, is at Halton Region Museum.

May 11...Old-Fashioned Games, Nasagiweya Historical Society, 905-854-2378

May 18...Halton County and the 1918 Influenza, Halton Region Museum

OAKVILLE

Apr.25...Publishing Your Family History, Halton-Peel Branch, OGS, 905-281-1701

Apr. 26... Oakville Town Hall Palermo Report 5-9pm, 1225 Trafalgar Rd.

Apr. 27..."Commander John Skywyner - Man of Mystery" 7pm Trafalgar Historical

May 19...Surely Not In Canada! (Be prepared to laugh), Oakville Historical Society, 905-825-5552

May 24...Spring Tyme on the Farm, Spruce Lane Farm, Bronte Creek Park, 905-827-6991

May 15/Rain date May 29...White Elephant Sale, Oakville Historical, 110 King St, 905-825-5552

June 13... Band Concert, at Lakeside Park, noon – 4pm Oakville Historical Society 905-825-5552

September 25... Trafalgar Heritage Fair- Palermo School House.

Future of Palermo

MARK Monday APRIL 26th on your calendar and plan to come out and speak to the committee- bring your friends and family, bring petitions, wear buttons and make sure you send a letter to the Town at the email below and/or come prepared to speak at council.

Members of the public are invited to attend and provide input at a public meeting hosted by the Planning and Development Committee of Town Council to be held on April 26th, 2010:

Open House: 5 – 7 PM - Oakville Town Hall, 1225 Trafalgar Road, North Atrium

Public Meeting: 7 PM Oakville Town Hall, 1225 Trafalgar Road, Council Chambers

The purpose of the proposed policies is to integrate land use with the cultural heritage of Palermo Village, introduce opportunities for streetscaping, as well as complement the policies found in proximity to the area. The proposed Official Plan Amendment will make changes to the North Oakville West Secondary Plan for Palermo Village, which applies north of Dundas Street. These lands are also subject to PL 090614 (North Oakville West Secondary Plan)

The public may view planning documents and background material at the Planning Services Department between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or on the Town's website at <http://www.oakville.ca/eams.htm> as of April 19th, 2010. Questions or written submissions may be directed to Ita Waghray, Planner, Planning Services Department at telephone: (905) 845-6601, extension 3264 or e-mail: iwaghrav@oakville.ca.

Trafalgar Historical Society Palermo Concerns

The document is not available at the Town until April 19th so it is difficult to comment fully. We are assuming that it will not suggest a Palermo Heritage District and we feel a heritage district is necessary to preserve it. Town of Oakville Heritage map shows 16 homes either designated or on the heritage registry in Palermo making enough of a concentration of homes to qualify for a district.



Why the Need for a Heritage District?

Why not?- we have 3 heritage districts in the 960 acres that was the original town of Oakville but none in the former Twp of Trafalgar which covers 34,000 acres?

The district is needed to ensure that the oldest remaining village in present day Oakville is protected.

It is about time Oakville acknowledged the contribution of the former Twp of Trafalgar to our

It

history and saved the last remaining portion before it is completely gone. Trafalgar was settled before Oakville and has a rich heritage- in fact some of the families who settled here in 1806 still have descendents living on the original farms. Palermo boasted at one time 300 residents and a foundry that rivaled Massey Ferguson. It was part of the Underground Railroad, had one of the first grammar schools in the Province, and was one of the first public schools to include music in the curriculum. The former villages of Trafalgar are all gone- Sheridan, Merton, Munns, Post Corners, Sniders Corners, Sixteen Hollow, and Glenorchy. Palermo and Bronte are the only ones that remain- that said Bronte also needs a heritage district to celebrate its rich heritage.

In 1962 when Trafalgar Twp amalgamated with Oakville there were approx 30,000 people living in Trafalgar and only about 10,000 living in Oakville. Since that time almost all of the Trafalgar heritage documents from the old Trafalgar Town Hall have been lost or destroyed and the old Trafalgar homes and Trafalgar buildings have been slowly demolished.

The QEW, 407 and widenings of Bronte, Trafalgar and Dundas meant demolition for many. Palermo has the largest concentration of heritage buildings this close together outside of Old Oakville. It is unique in that it is the oldest remaining village in present day Oakville (dating back to 1806) still has standing, two churches, the one room schoolhouse, two cemeteries (Palermo being the oldest cemetery in Halton), the doctors house, the storekeepers home, the home of a son of one of the town's first resident, the blacksmith's shop, the parsonage and even a barn. (Sadly the Town agreed to have the Inn demolished this year.) Even

the local pub - called the Palermo Pub and the local restaurant, Anson's, named after the village doctor and Trafalgar Reeve have caught on to the marketability and heritage of this unique village. Another unique quality of Palermo village is that the North East corner will be completely surrounded by the Glenorchy Conservation area so that if a heritage district is put in place the original school, church, homes and barn will have the same back drop that they had 190 years ago.

WWW.OAKVILLETODAY.CA



Property Value Concerns for Palermo Residents

The reality is that almost all of Palermo is currently owned by developers. There are about 6 owners left who live in their homes. When the developers purchased the properties they knew the land contained heritage buildings.

For the home owners it is important for them to know that a heritage district does not lower property values- have we seen South Oakville's values decrease?

Having a heritage district rather than just designating homes actually increases the property values because it ensures a unique community and protects against new housing that does not pick up characteristics of the surrounding heritage homes.

This is an opportunity to build a community that values its heritage and builds on it with new development to create something that could not be duplicated anywhere else. It is not a community simply named Palermo but still reflects elements of Palermo.

Milton has done a great job of incorporating heritage homes into all their new developments but for whatever reason this has not been done very often in Oakville. The Tovell home is a great example of how a heritage home was restored by the developer and incorporated into a new development. This

developer said that they did not lose any money in this venture. The argument that preserving a home is too costly to developers is not an issue and they should not be telling landowners that when they are negotiating purchase.

There are lots of compromises that can be made in terms of moving buildings to accommodate developers' plans or incorporating part of a heritage home into a new building to make it larger. It is also possible to build larger homes or apartments next to these heritage homes but make the first couple of stories of the apartments reflect some heritage architecture.

The hope is that everyone wins in the end- that property owners get good value for their property, that heritage buildings remain and that we create a unique community in Oakville that becomes an example for others to follow and a place where people want to live. Is this not the kind of livable Oakville we are looking for? Respecting the past but looking towards the future?

OPINIONS & LETTERS

Historical neglect

The Emily Biggar farmhouse stood at the corner of Neyagawa Boulevard and Dundas Street for 150 years.

The house, a symbol of North Oakville's historic past, was recently demolished to make room for a sprawling subdivision of cookie-cutter, suburban homes.

It was determined that it could not be moved out of the path of the development because it was in such rough condition. It had to be destroyed.

In Oakville, we like progress. We like moving forward, we like innovation and we like advancement. But we also put great stock in our history.

That's why when we heard that the Emily Biggar farmhouse had been demolished we were saddened.

In recent time, the once majestic homestead was left to rot. Frequently a party house for neighbourhood teens and exposed to the elements, its condition deteriorated through years of neglect.

It was identified as one of Oakville's historic homes, but identifying its histor-

ical significance obviously wasn't enough. If it had been maintained over the years, maybe we would have been able to hold on to this treasured landmark of our local history.

It seems that North Oakville's heritage is slowly slipping through our fingers while most of the attention has been set on preserving South Oakville and its storied past.

It's time for a switch in Oakville's preservation priorities. The Town needs to focus more on preserving North Oakville history. Considering there are more taxpayers in North Oakville, it should rank higher on the Town's to do list.

South Oakville has been the favourite older sister for long enough.

The history of North Oakville is worth keeping a hold of as well. Focusing on one part of town at the expense of another is not progress.

And Oakville likes progress.

-Ian Holroyd

iholroyd@haltonsearch.com