



## Trafalgar Township Historical Society

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

# Winter/Spring 2018 Newsletter



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# Society News & Updates



## Guest Speaker Julian Kingston Enlightens us about using Affordable Technology to Preserve History on a Budget

Our Annual General Meeting, held the evening of February 7, 2018, featured speaker Julian Kingston, Supervisor at Oakville's Erchless Museum. Julian showed us tools that create interactive experiences of artifacts and images, making them 3 dimensional and/or 360 degree views for internet viewing. The intent is to take the items to internet viewers, to an unlimited audience, and to make them active rather than static. The tools he used started with his Smartphone; in other words, tools that we are likely to already have. Open source (aka free) software that can be easily found on the internet augments the digital possibilities. Click on this link to see how this interactive 3D model image, which rotates for a 360 degree view, brings a woman's clothing to life: [3D model by Julian Kingston of a Travelling Cloak at the Oakville Museum](#) and continue to check out Erchless Museum displays for Julian's ideas. Entry by Anne Choate Little. Photo by Ross Wark.

## A Big Thank You to the Glen Abbey Scouts

We want to extend a huge Thank You to the Glen Abbey Scouts for doing some maintenance work at the schoolhouse! Their efforts included changing the outdoor light bulbs, cleaning up and decluttering the basement, and preparing the front garden bed as the Spring weather rolls around. Scouts, your work is greatly appreciated.

## Thank You to the Region and the Town

We would also like to thank Halton Region and the Town of Oakville for their continued efforts to maintain the schoolhouse and ensure the integrity of the property and parking lot. The Region will be doing some work to prevent flooding in the parking lot, in addition to building some nice beds with edging for gardens on either side of our front door.

## Passing of Melanie Wark

It is with heavy hearts that we report that one of our volunteers, Melanie Wark, passed away in her sleep in early March. Among a very busy and fulfilling lifestyle of activities and volunteer work, Melanie dedicated some of her time towards our Doors Open events over the years. Our condolences to her family and friends.

### 3195 Bronte Road Demolition

A home at 3195 Bronte Road was recently demolished, leaving members with many questions. Tom Murrison reports that he believes this was the home of Mr. & Mrs. Bildad Simons, that had been at the SE corner of Bronte & Dundas, where the medical building now stands. This is the house that was moved in Jan. 1955, as per our archives photos. It is believed based on the birthdates of their children that this is an early 1800 built home and that the back part was likely a hewn timber frame. This home was not on the heritage registry so there were not extra steps in place for when the owner requested the demolition permit.



### Buck Family Reunion 1922 Photograph Used in Research

Barbara McPhail contacted TTHS about a photograph in our online collection on Halton Images. She was conducting research on the former George Copeland Buck House, Trafalgar Township, now 1675 Thompson Road, Town of Milton, and asked if she could use our photograph of the Buck Family Reunion of 1922 in her work. Of course, we were pleased to assist Barbara in her venture.



### Guest Speaker John Mark Rowe on the Village of Hornby

John Mark Rowe, writer and archivist with the Esquesing Historical Society, spoke to our members and friends on April 4th about “Hornby; Gateway to Two Townships.”

Hornby was part of two townships: Trafalgar New Survey (1818) and Esquesing (1819). The village’s position at Steeles Avenue and Trafalgar Road made it a centre for several businesses and religious institutions.

Early log schools were replaced in 1870 by a union school for Esquesing and Trafalgar students known as SS #AE.

Traffic on Trafalgar Road encouraged hotels and taverns in both Hornby East and Hornby West. The Brain Family Brewery, build in 1834, supplied the many local taverns. The post office, established in 1841, was in Hornby West and closed in 2008. Gone too, are the C.P. Railway station, and the Hornby Repeater Station.





Mark's PowerPoint presentation began with many images of buildings past and concluded with the recent Toronto Premium Outlet Mall opening in the Trafalgar/Steeles area. Many changes with more to come in this historic area. Photo and entry submitted by Ross Wark.

### **OurDigitalWorld's Multicultural Community Capacity Project Contributions**

TTTHS contributed some digital material towards a cross-Ontario exhibit by OurDigitalWorld. This virtual exhibit compiled material about Ontario's multicultural history using records from over 50 Ontario institutions. The project, which developed three exhibits on women's history, black history, and Japanese history in Ontario, can be viewed at <http://images.ourontario.ca/exhibits>. It is a pleasure to be able to help educate and enlighten Ontarians about their local history and heritage! Please make sure to explore the virtual exhibit and discover the history of Ontario's multiculturalism.

## **Recent Donations & Contributions**

### **Sir John Kirk 1890 Visit to Palermo**

Peter Mitchell contacted us via our Facebook page to tell us, as noted in his diary, his great-great grandfather, Sir John Kirk, had visited Palermo with J.J. Kelso in 1890. Sir John Kirk was Director of the Ragged School Union and Shaftesbury Society, groups which provided fresh air outings to inner city children of London, England. J.J. Kelso founded the Children's Aid Society, Fresh Air Funds and was located in Toronto. As with the Canadian efforts to help disabled and disadvantaged children, the English foundations grew to encompass holiday homes. The two men, with Sir John's brother, George who was the RSU solicitor, spent some time in the area meeting and talking with people about their work to help children, and spoke at the Palermo schoolhouse one evening. We haven't found any local report of this event or of the travels of the two men so we can't authenticate this event definitively at this time. The men made other visits in connection with their work back and forth over the years. Peter Mitchell has sent photographs which are available for viewing on the schoolhouse computer. Peter writes, "...I realize it's a very small connection [that we have]; but one that really struck me on multiple levels. At the very least it shows just how vitally important your conservation efforts are as we often don't know just how far reaching those histories are, and how many people they touched." More information about Sir John Kirk's work can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/aknightinthelums/>



## Recipe Book Donation

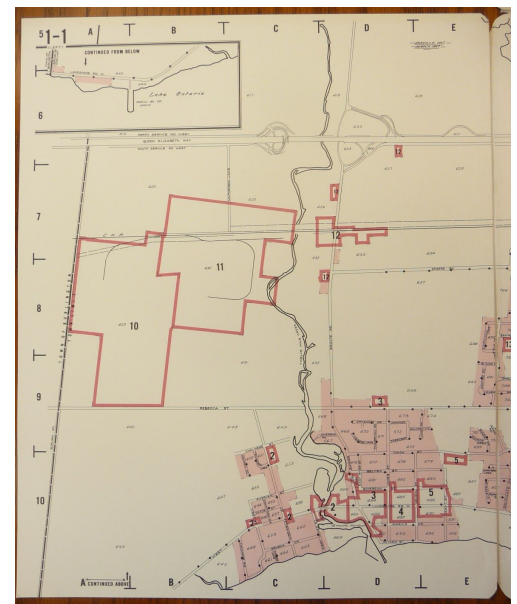
John Breckon has given us the 1951 recipe book "Favourite Recipes Compiled by the Willing Workers Club of Palermo United Church." This copy was owned by Muriel Breckon and judging by the loose pages, additional handwritten and inserted recipes and blotches on the pages, it is a book she used often. Cook book contributors were the Vansickle family women including Ethel, Laura and Betty, Eva Joubert, Myrtle Tovell, Gladys Pell, Myrtle McGill, Evelyn Delve, Jean Kingston, Edith Fox, Dorothy Wise, Helen Spencer, Verna Jarvis, Winnie Heslop, Mrs. Ken Giles, Edith Cooper, Helen Jesseman, Evelyn Delve, Elsie Duncan, Helen Lees, Verna Jarvis, Lena Meredith, Geraldine Clewer and Wilma Wilson. These are the women who fed church work parties, church picnics, prepared fancies for the teas, and fundraising suppers, and who had fun while contributing to the fellowship. A great addition to our collection of cookbooks prepared by local organizations as fundraisers.

## Fire Insurance Plans

We've collected digital copies of all readily available fire insurance plans for the greater Oakville area, and added information to the TTHS collection about the history and further whereabouts of these plans.

The insurance industry standardization of a risk grading schedule and preparation of a classification system was in response to the many devastating fires when water supplies, fire departments and fire codes were not able to cope with fires. The plans identified primarily businesses, not residences. Homes were usually simply identified as "frame buildings". Not only do the plans describe the structure of the buildings, but they also identify the exact location of businesses long gone which will help with research. This insurance work started in 1883. Recent plans are managed by the Fire Underwriters' Survey.

We have the plans from 1910 to 1967. Only the 1967 plans really show any areas outside the core town of Oakville, into Bronte, Palermo and Merton. The plans for Acton, Milton and Georgetown are available from the Esquesing and Milton Historical Societies. Our copies of the plans are kept in our file: Municipal Governments, Fire Insurance.



For this project, we were pleased to work with and share our findings with the Oakville Historical Society, Bronte Historical Society, the Archives of Ontario and the Town of Oakville.

## William Lyon Mackenzie Chair

Ruth Taylor has emailed to tell us that in December 2017, the chair in which William Lyon Mackenzie slept for an hour at the home of Absalom and Anna Mary Smith during his 1837 flight to the United States, was returned to family descendants in Halton County. Ruth writes: "the chair was returned to the Smith/Pickett family descendants...180 years less one day from the night William Lyon Mackenzie rested in the chair beside the fire in the Smith farmhouse in Palermo. The 1836 woven quilt was once again draped over the arm - it took over half a

century to reunite the two beloved family artifacts!"

Ruth has written an essay to tell of the journey of the chair which we have filed in our print archives folder; Category "Families", Surname "Smith", Donor "Ruth Taylor" and also posted to our internet collection. Ruth's words: "It was the evening of December 8, 1837 when William Lyon Mackenzie and Allan Wilcox, travelling west on foot north of the Dundas Highway, pursued by government forces, approached the Sixteen Mile Creek, running deep and fast, and icy cold. Attempting to cross, they carried their clothes above their heads as they waded into the icy cold water. Mackenzie slipped and fell into the creek, scrambling out on the west side, but with clothes thoroughly soaked. After travelling on foot across recently cleared fields, they came to the Absalom Smith Farm, known as Lot 27, Con. 1, NDS, Trafalgar Township.

Hiding first in the barn, they waited for a group of visitors, loyal to the government, who had been visiting the Smiths to leave. On entering the Absalom Smith home, Mackenzie and Wilcox shed their wet clothes, were outfitted with warm and "dry flannels"...It was under one of these jacquard woven quilts that Mackenzie slept for an hour before a search party entered the house - on a corner of the quilt is woven "Ana M S 1836".



The quilt and chair were proudly cared for and handed down through the family; first to Anna Catherine Smith, eldest daughter of Absalom and Anna Mary, who married Thomas Ebenezer Pickett, then to Laura Barbara (Prudham) Dixon. In the mid 1960's to Professor Bethel Pickett in Grimsby. The Pickett farm had originally been part of the Beamer property, but it was finally determined that it was likely the chair was sold at an auction when the Pickett farm was sold. It was a member of the Metcalfe family, relatives of the Pickett and Beamer family in Grimsby who were able to put Ruth in touch with cousins to successfully find the chair. Positively identifying the chair was not a problem - you'll have to read Ruth's essay to find out why! Ruth writes, "Moral of the story - never give up on the search to find a much loved family artifact - somewhere out there, it is just waiting to be found."

Read Ruth's essay, see the new chair and quilt photograph shown here, and follow the links to the other records in our internet collection here: <http://images.ourontario.ca/TrafalgarTownship/3481564/data?dis=dm>

### Methodist Parsonage Palermo

David Hobden forwarded an image of an envelope addressed to a Mrs. Hector O'Neill from Littleton, Colorado from Rev. B. L. Cohoe, Methodist Parsonage from Palermo, Ontario. The Palermo building still stands today but has a demolition request coming to the Town.



# TTHS Queries

## **Alfred Pehlke, "Drugless Practitioner"**

In 1935, Halton MPP Thomas Blakelock sponsored the petition for a private members bill to allow "drugless practitioner" or "drugless therapist" Alfred Pehlke to carry on his medical practice from his office in Palermo. Mr. Pehlke's practice attracted many patients in the 1930's and early 1940's to Palermo. Apparently sometimes people from long distances away lined up for hours waiting to see him.

Wondering what a "drugless practitioner" was, and where exactly in Palermo Mr. Pehlke was located, the TTHS has now put together a print file of information. Alfred Pehlke's father was born in England, his mother in Germany. He claimed his father and grandfather had German university medical degrees and in 1878 emigrated to New York where his father opened a practice. His mother and one son came to join his father in 1880. The family later moved to Mitchell in Perth County, where his father did not take out a Canadian license although he had a large medical practice. Mr. Pehlke said that as the seventh son of a seventh son for eleven generations, and having been trained by his father and grandfather, he had the ability to "see...the body as it exists and how it works. I can see troubles, and I can tell...whether I will be of help." One newspaper article quoted him as saying he could look at a lock of hair and see into the body, even seeing the afflictions of people living thousand of miles away.

Our TTHS research shows that Mr. Pehlke's 7th sons claims and that of being trained by his grandfather were not literally true.

Alfred had a practice first in Kitchener, then he was involved with the Sulphur Springs Hotel in Preston. This hotel took advantage of the "powerful spring of cold, mineral-laden water on site" to offer guests healing, relaxing, refreshing hot or cold baths. A Toronto Globe newspaper article of November 3, 1931 said he actually purchased it.

He then moved to Hamilton and his practice in Palermo. We learned he was living and working out of the Jonathan Hager house at 3015 Dundas Street West. This house was located to the immediate west of the gas station that was on the northwest corner just west of Old Bronte Road. The house was built about 1848. Despite strong efforts between the Town and TTHS to preserve the building, they lacked enough evidence to save it. Unfortunately, it was demolished even though it had very special historic attributes. Just before his death in 1944, Alfred Pehlke moved to the Oakville residence of his nurse assistant, Alveretta Ostrander.

In 1927, the Drugless Practitioners Act was passed in Ontario's Legislature. It established a Board which prescribed the qualifications, the discipline and control, to maintain the register of, and to classify people under the Act. If you failed to qualify yet continued to practise as a drugless practitioner, you would be guilty of an offense under the act. Mr. Pehlke, with only a rudimentary school education and no formal medical training, twice failed accreditation but was allowed to continue without penalty until it was clear in 1935 that he needed to rectify the matter.

The Act today is Ontario's Regulated Health Professions Act which governs such professions as occupational therapy, midwifery, kinesiology, chiropody, dental hygienists, homeopathy, psychotherapy, naturopathy and much more.



Mr. Pehlke's supporters were many, including MPP Blakelock, apparently also G. Howard Ferguson who had been Premier of Ontario, the former head of the Royal Military College, and prominent Toronto lawyer Mr. J.C.M. German.

Our file includes newspaper reports of Mr. Pehlke's legal affairs pertaining to his practice and businesses, a copy of the 1925 Act, his 1935 notice in area newspapers of his intent to apply for an Act to enable him to carry on as a drugless practitioner, his petition to the Legislature as presented by MPP Blakelock, Wikipedia information on the idea of the significance of "seventh sons" with healing, and genealogical records for Alfred Pehlke and Alveretta Ostrander. Our only photograph of him is a grainy black and white newspaper reproduction.

If you can add to our information, please contact one of us. Thank you!

## TTHS Query Responses

### Assistance with Research using the 1806 Trafalgar Township Map

Rick Hayden of western Pennsylvania contacted TTHS for some clarification about the 1806 Trafalgar Township map. He inquired about a name given for lot 1 concession 1 SDS, as well as how the property may have changed hands since the map was drawn. Michelle Knoll confirmed that the name on the land registry was Henry Schuck, purchasing the property on June 30, 1808. In 1823 he sold the whole 200 acre property to Darcy Boulton.

## Upcoming TTHS Events

### Guest Speakers & Meetings

**Location:** Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West

All are welcome to attend our guest speaker evenings to learn more about Trafalgar through informative and interactive discussions. Light snacks and refreshments are provided. If you know anyone who might be interested in being a guest speaker in the future, please contact Michelle at [michelle@tths.ca](mailto:michelle@tths.ca)!

Date & Time	Activity
Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 7:00pm	Guest Speaker Evening: <b>Sean Livingston– Oakville's Naval History-HCMS Oakville</b> Books \$30 cash
Saturday, September 29 at 10:00am-4:00pm	<b>Family Heritage Fair Desk &amp; Book Sale: Heritage displays, activities and BBQ</b>
Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 7:00pm	Guest Speaker Evening: <b>Jay Young of Archives of Ontario: Dear Sadie, Loves, Lives &amp; remembrances from WW1</b>
Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 7:00pm	Guest Speaker Evening: <b>David Hobden: Early Settlement of Halton County &amp; Annual General Meeting</b>



## **Open Houses - Archives Research**

**Location:** Old Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West from 1:30pm to 3:30pm

All are welcome in joining us in researching family and community histories. Do you have something to donate or contribute? Bring your precious documents and artefacts to one of our open houses and we would be happy to learn about your story! We can scan your documents and add them to our archives so that others can enjoy and engage in research. Join us from **1:30pm to 3:30pm**:

**Friday, May 18, 2018**

**Friday, June 15, 2018**

**Friday, July 20, 2018**

**Friday, August 17, 2018**

**Friday, September 21, 2018**

**Friday, October 19, 2018**

**Friday, January 18, 2019**

**Friday, February 15, 2019**