



Newcastle Village and District Historical Society Newsletter

Summer 2009 - Issue # 98

Summertime in the Village

Inside this issue:

- President's Message2
- Curator's Corner3
- Notched Ledger of "The Dummy"4
- The Great Farini Tour5
- Preservation Award6
- History Camp6
- The Stories We Tell7
- Membership Page8
- Pat Macdonnell Remembered ..8
- Camp Addendum9

As summer rolled in and we began to plan our vacation and weekend time, we wondered how families enjoyed summer in years past. Turns out they enjoyed much of what we do in 2009, although closer to home than today.

At the four way juncture of Mill St. S., just south of the railway overpass, families used to enjoy picnicking and camping at Waltona Park.

Murray Walton remembers this for us ...



Refreshment Booth - this was an auction sale held at the park; early 1960's

The first large picnic was the Bowmanville Legion. On many Sundays, there would be more people in the park than Newcastle's (then) population of 1,000. After a while, travel trailers and campers started to come and we built a vehicle bridge over Graham Creek. We also added sewers, electricity, showers and water hook-ups for the campers. George and his wife, Dunreath, sold the farm and built a small home at the entrance to the park. They wintered in Dunedin, Florida.

We had dammed the creek for swimming but, in 1961, George decided Newcastle needed a Community Pool. The pool they built was copied after the Port Hope Lions Pool. At this time, they built a new refreshment booth, change rooms and a dance pavilion.



View of Park from Mill Street, facing south (note sign)

"In the summer of 1955, my uncle George Walton and I decided to make a Picnic Park out of his pasture on Mill Street South in Newcastle. We opened an entrance, drilled a well, put in a hydro line, built picnic shelters, toilets, refreshment booth and ball fields. We also built a walking bridge over Graham Creek.



Waltons of Newcastle.

*Rear L to R: George Walton, Earl Walton (father), Bob Walton;
Front L to R: Mercie Luxton & Ida Nichols*



*Red Cross swimmers in Pool
House behind pool is newer bungalow built by George & Dunreath after selling the farm*

Cont'd. on next page ...

President's Message

Waltona Park (Cont'd.)

The pool was a big plus for the Newcastle children and parents. They had red cross swimming lessons and families could safely swim with a lifeguard on duty for \$25 a year. The only complaint was that the water was too cold. However, many people who were children in the sixties say how important the Waltona Pool was to them and their parents for safe swimming and great fun. The unfortunate drowning of a young boy in 1958 in the Village's favourite old time swimming hole below the C.N.R. track had made safety a big issue.



Camping in the Park

Waltona Park was sold and later expropriated by Ontario Hydro and eventually bulldozed. Fortunately, by that time, the Newcastle Lions had built a Community Pool on Beaver Street South by the Public School. The only remaining evidence of the Park's existence is the 24 foot square dance floor.



George Walton with Pony at entrance to Park

Here we are with the summer edition of our newsletter and, like the rest of you, I have been scratching my noggin thinking "where is the summer weather?"

Well, while summer may have been a tad late in arriving this year, the Historical Society has been rolling right along.

The NV&DHS Farini Fest was very well received as we toured the historical locations of Port Hope and Bowmanville that were a part of Farini's life. Our tour guide, Myno Van Dyke, showed the family farm, the trees planted by Farini, and the various houses that he lived in. After three hours of touring Farini's local haunts, our guests left with a renewed understanding of the man and his amazing accomplishments. I doubt that there is a more colourful Canadian character in history.

While the bus tour was a super event in itself, our Farini Fest had much more. Read Myno's summary of the event on Page 6 for more detail.

Our presentation to Clarington Council this year seems to have been successful as the planning department has endorsed our proposal wholeheartedly. It is anticipated that new development or renovations that require a building permit within the downtown core will reflect the historical heritage of Newcastle. Not only is it good for commercial enterprises in the downtown core, but for the residents of the village as well.

It is the time of year when we come together for the annual President's Pot Luck for members of the Society. This year, we are holding it again in my backyard at 57 Wilmot Street in Newcastle, starting at 2:00 pm on Saturday, August 29. This year, I ask that you call either Wanda or myself at (905) 987-5567 to coordinate the offerings. This will also help us get a handle on the number of people attending. We will need a balance of meat dishes, side dishes and desserts. This is a BYOB and lawn chair event. I hope to see each and every member again this year. We had a great time last year.

See you at the Presidents Pot Luck BBQ August 29th.

Allan Kirby

Curator's Corner

Leslie Wilson, NV&DHS Curator; 2009

Lots, Concessions, Town Lines & Side Roads

The East Town Line or No-Man's Land: a 1790's survey error in establishing the Clarke/Hope Town Line led to two Clarke / Hope boundary lines. The gap between them was widest at the lakeshore and narrowed as it went north, finally merging into one line about halfway between the seventh & eighth concessions of Clarke Twp where the town line veers significantly to the east.

This meant some people who owned land lying between the two boundaries did not pay property taxes. All received a tax bill from both Clarke & Hope but told the respective Councils when they figured out in which township the land really lay they would pay their taxes; but be darned if they were going to pay them twice. For instance, a 145 acre farm on Lot 35 Conc 01 of Hope Twp, which was also an 'eastern extension' of Lot 01 Broken Front of Clarke Twp, was to all intents and purposes impossible for either township to collect property tax from! It has been said that some (presumably more civic minded) land owners in this "no man's land" paid their property taxes alternately - one year to Hope and the following year to Clarke.

The Clarke / Hope Town Line was not conclusively established until the Regional Municipality of Durham was created in the 1970s, at which time Hope Twp was removed from Durham County and became part of Northumberland County. In the late 1990's, one gentleman, living on the northern end of this town line gap, said his grandfather and father had never paid taxes on the portion of their farm situated in this "no-man's land". Despite the Regional Government decision of 1974 he said he did not know if his west fields were part of Hope Township or the Regional Municipality of Durham as both still laid claim to them! (*Your Curator thought it best not to ask if he paid taxes to either municipality on the land in question :-)*)

The tenth concession of Clarke was intended to be 35 lots of 100 acres each but, due to another early survey error in the placing of the Clarke / Manvers Township Line, has lots of less than 100 acres each. To top it off, Clarke is considerably wider at the 10th concession than it is at the base line - because of the veering of the Hope / Clarke town line to the east.

When Samuel Street Wilmot was called upon to lay out Manvers Township in 1816, he discovered this surveying nightmare. To solve the problem, he surveyed and laid out Manvers in such a way that the Base Line lots of

Manvers are all 100 acres and left the lots on Concession 10 of Clarke to contain whatever fell out. Therefore, Lot 01 Concession 10 of Clarke contains 90 acres but by the time one has progressed west across the township to Lot 35 Concession 10, that lot contains only 75 acres. More than one owner of land on the 10th concession of Clarke probably complained mightily concerning this overnight loss of their acreage. However, perhaps because all of them in 1816 were non-resident title holders, the Surveyor General's Office allowed Wilmot's solution to the problem to stand.

Clarke Township has ten concessions, about a kilometer apart; all running east-west. Allowances for side lines or side roads run north-south between the concessions; roughly three quarters of a kilometer apart (the width of two lots).

The concessions and side roads were laid out on a grid pattern and did not take into consideration creeks, swamps, steep hills and the like. This has meant that, even in 2009, there are still many unopened side roads and even parts of some of the concession roads and town lines too. Roads that do not fit this grid pattern are called "forced roads" - such as the east-west road halfway between Concession Roads 4 & 5 running between 115/35 Highway and Buckley Road.

The Lakeshore Road, from Port Hope to Bond Head, is also a forced road. It was put through, at the expense and sweat of the inhabitants of the two townships, prior to 1812. At the time, it was simply an upgrading of an ancient and well traveled aboriginal trail between Montreal and Niagara Falls.

In Clarke Twp there are 35 lots per concession; #01 being immediately west of the Clarke/Hope Town Line and #35 being immediately east of the Clarke/Darlington Town Line.

A broken front lot can be more than 200 acres or considerably less; their size being calculated on the number of acres they contain from the Base line/Concession One south to the shore of Lake Ontario.

A full concession lot, from Concession One/Base Line through Concession Nine is, on paper at any rate, 200 acres. When accurately surveyed some are a bit less and others a little more. The early surveys did not include actual topography - i.e. streams, hills and valleys.

In the next NV&DHS newsletter, the Curator will write about some Crown land grants in Clarke Twp.

Notched Ledger of "The Dummy"

While it is no longer acceptable to call someone "Dummy", no particular harm was meant by it in the 19th century. Although no documentary proof has as yet been found that Morris Breen of Bond Head was "The Dummy" of this tale, most will likely admit the circumstantial evidence leans heavily toward that conclusion. *Curator's Note: although the Schooner Ariadne was "of Newcastle", Captain Abram Farewell is usually considered to have been "of Oshawa".*

Excerpt from "Schooner Days CMLIV", by C.H.J. Snider; Toronto Telegram; additional research by Herb Taylor, Helen Schmid & Leslie Wilson.

If the vessel was an old one - they all were, it seemed! - each bunk edge or deckbeam might be serrated with a series of notches. These were the tally sheets of departed mariners, who kept their "time" by cutting a notch for each day. Another day, another dollar.

"Looka here, captain, you can see it for yourself above my bunk in the forecandle, they's eighteen notches cut, and that's my time since I j'ined her, a notch for every day an' no more. I don't care what your book says."

So the captain, sick and tired of trying to chisel days out of sailors for owners who were sick and tired of the vessel always being in the hole, might give up, and call it eighteen days; and perhaps be rewarded with a fair wind and a fast passage at last, for there is such a thing as justice in this world as well as in the next.

This notch-cutting was never disputed. It was not a form of cooking the books that could be practiced with much success, for payoffs came too frequently.

Some captains and owners liked this saw-tooth decoration in their forecastles. The more the merrier. It showed their men stayed with them a long time, instead of "jumping" at the first port. They could point to a comfortable, well-fed schooner, with steady employment and steady fellows in the forecandle.

Capt. Abram Farewell of Newcastle had such a vessel in the Ariadne, and her forecandle documentation proved it. Her notches were all the work of one man, who had been in her for years.

Nobody knew his name, and he himself could not tell it, because the cat must have stolen his tongue when a child, and he had not learned to write. He was known all over Lake Ontario as The Dummy, with two capitals, and a smart sailor he was, steady as the clock and reliable as the barometer. He earned a good livelihood for himself and

his sister and never said a word. He heard well enough. He kept his time as indicated, and his notches were more reliable than some vessel's logbooks. Only once he did slip and that caused a commotion.

They were going down the lake of a dark stormy night with a load of lumber for the box factory at Oswego. The deckload was piled high, for the Ariadne was a great carrier. Below the Devil's Nose she got rolling hard and the frapping chains parted and a great section of the deckload rolled overboard.

Someone yelled "My God, The Dummy's gone!" Alas, it was only too true. It was black and blowing but they got the Ariadne's boat down and hove the vessel to and searched for two hours, calling and calling and calling in vain, for the poor Dummy could not answer if he had heard them. So, in great sadness, the boat returned to the schooner and she went on under short sail. Everyone on board felt as if he had lost a brother. When Capt. Farewell took a look at that last fresh-cut notch in the beam over The Dummy's bunk, he choked up.

It proved a slow voyage to Oswego for the wind died out and came ahead light and it was three days before the Ariadne got in, flying her colours, out of respect to The Dummy, all half-masted. As soon as his lines were out, Capt. Farewell hastened to the harbor office to report.

"What d'you mean, you've lost The Dummy?" demanded John S. Parsons, who knew every lake sailor, Canadian or American. "I saw him just an hour ago at the Reciprocity House and I asked him how he had got there so quick, for I had seen you coming in, and your sails were not yet tied up. He tried to tell me, but I couldn't understand his signs."

"It was his ghost, poor Dummy." said Capt. Farewell, and his rough hailing-voice shook. "He'll never cut another notch over his bunk. We lost him overboard off the Devil's Nose three nights ago."

"The devil you did, Captain!" shouted the Harbor Master from his desk. "The Dummy's at the Reciprocity House now, at your expense and has been for three days. The Anglo-Saxon steam barge picked him off a mess of lumber that must have been your deckload and brought him in here the same day and left him. She was bound down to the 'Burg'. They knew you'd be along."

"I'll cut more notches in his deckbeam for him myself!" said Capt. Farewell. "I'd rather cut a hundred and pay for them, then have to face his sister with the news that he was gone." ...

1871 census Newcastle	MORRIS BREEN	age 25	dumb & illiterate - <u>SAILOR</u>	living with his parents
1911 census Newcastle	MORRIS BREEN	age 65	dumb & illiterate - <u>LABOURER</u>	living with his sister
1913 Jan	MORRIS BREEN	died "age about 70"	interred Port Hope Union Cemetery, Roman Catholic section, no stone	

Reg Le Gresley (1902-2000), of Ebor House at Bond Head, in his later years, said that "in his time" Dummy Breen lived with a sister at Bond Head and had once worked on schooners and around the harbour. However, Reg & his parents moved to Newcastle in the 1920s, several years after the death of "Dummy Breen. In 1879 John Breen, brother of Morris, purchased #8 Boulton Street at Bond Head and his parents, then his brother Morris and spinster sister Helen and later his brother Jeremiah Breen Jr lived in the house. It was occupied from at least 1879 until 1938 by the Breen family.

The Great Farini Tour

by Myno Van Dyke

On Sunday, May 31st, NVDHS hosted its first "Great Farini Tour" to celebrate the 150th anniversary of William Hunt's (aka Senor Farini) first efforts at tight rope walking in this area. The NVDHS room, set up by our Curator, Leslie Wilson, opened at 11 am with a display of Farini paintings provided by members Jack and Gloria Gordon and Don and Susan Brown. Members Sanford and Helen Ann Haskill brought a piece of the rope that Farini walked on as well as a piece of the steel cable that was used for the re-enactment of the famous walk over the Ganaraska River. A number of other informative items and articles were on display in the room.

At 1:00 pm, the bus left Newcastle with 22 passengers; myself, acting as tour guide; and Phoenix bus driver Tammy. Our first stop was at Morrish Road between Newtonville and Welcome to see the farm which was William Hunt's childhood home. Going a bit farther north to the former Marsh farm, we saw the beautiful locust trees that were planted by Farini. We also stopped at the old brick barn on the north side of Highway #2 where Farini practiced and made his first walk in front of the committee from the Port Hope Fair. Our next stop was at the Marvindale Farm, which was at one time owned by Farini and where the Marvin family had a nice display of artifacts and art for us to enjoy.

Traveling on to Port Hope Cemetery, we visited Farini's gravesite. The Port Hope Historical Society had placed a special plaque and flower there for us that morning. Proceeding downtown to Walton and Division Street, we went to the Capitol Theatre Tourist Information Centre to see a lovely display. Farini's Great Grand Nephew, Ted Hunt, gave an excellent presentation to the group before we walked over to the Ganaraska River where Peter Boulton of the Port Hope Historical Society gave a great talk on Farini's walk over the river in October of 1859.

It was time to get back on the bus and make our way to Bowmanville, but not before stopping at 77 Dorset Street, which was Farini's last home in Port Hope. Our first stop in Bowmanville was at 7 Lover's Lane, which was built by Farini's father, T. W. Hunt around 1850. We also stopped by Central School which was young William Hunt's Grammar School. A drive along King Avenue brought us to the site where T.W. Hunt (William's father)

had a store in Bowmanville (the location of James Printing now) as well as the location of Farini's two tightrope walks across King Street in Bowmanville.

The Great Farini Tour ended back at Newcastle Community Hall to view the Great Farini Documentary, set up by Greg Forget. The movie was provided by Jack Gordon. The trip was a busy three hour journey outlining the "local" life and heroics of one of Canada's most colourful characters. Many thanks to President Allan and all of the members who worked so hard to make this a success.



Farini's Gravesite



Peter Boulton Speaking on Farini's Ganaraska River Walk

Preservation Award

On Tuesday, June 2nd, NV&DHS presented Edmond and Sylvia Vanhaverbeke and their daughter Teresa with our "Preservation Award". This was in recognition of their efforts to restore and preserve the building at 101-109 King Ave. West in Newcastle, formerly known locally as "The House of All Nations".



L to R: Theresa & Sylvia Vanhaverbeke, Myno Van Dyke & Edmond Vanhaverbeke

George S. Boulton bought this property in 1841 from the holder of the original Crown Patent. In 1844 he sold the west part (109 King) to Horace Foster. By 1854, the Foster family had built the three-story front section of 109 King as their home with professional space on the ground floor. 109 King remained in the Foster family until 1935 and had been converted into apartments. During this time it was referred to as the "Foster Homestead".

By 1850, the east part (101 King) was owned by Elizabeth and William McIntosh and they built the present three-storey east side of the building in 1856. In the latter part of the 1800's there was a general store at 101 King although by the 1940s it too had been converted entirely into apartments.

There were many uses of the building including a dry goods store, a small sandwich shop and a toy box making facility. During the latter part of the 1900's it was used exclusively as apartments. Although it was officially named "Kingsview Apartments", it was widely known as "The House of All Nations".

In 2007, after extensive restoration and renovations, Syvan Developments Limited converted the lower apartments back to the originally intended commercial use.

History Camp

July 13 - 17th, NV&DHS hosted the first History Camp "Pioneer Adventure Days" for kids aged 7 - 12. All eight campers declared it a great experience and we are pleased to include an addendum, "History Camp" with this newsletter. This was created by the campers to share their week with NV&DHS members.



Campers (in no particular order): Taylor Sulphur, Jordan Kukavica, Jacob Burnett and Alyssa Lucyk, David Lindsay, Julian Pleasance, Aryton Lucyk and Kirstie Sulphur



The Stories we Tell

Editor's Note: In 2004, NV&DHS member, Pippa Schmiegelow, interviewed Ken Stephenson, who passed away last year. This excerpt from that interview was the catalyst for this article which celebrates our history through the stories of others. The interview covered many subjects and topics moved from one to another readily.

Kenneth Haig Stephenson arrived in Newcastle on March 6, 1928, aged 11, and moved into Hillcrest just east of the village. At that time, the house came with 170 acres, ten of which were orchard. The family raised beef cattle, pigs and sheep. The orchards included black cherry trees which are no longer seen in the area.

PS: You took the fruit (*black cherries*) to sell to the grocery stores in Bowmanville. Can you remember the names of the stores?

KS: *Well, this is before, no, not before the day of the big chains. They had started but they weren't in Bowmanville. These were privately owned grocery stores that got most of their produce from local producers. You always had deliveries of meat from Toronto by refrigerator truck: trucks with ice, from Canada Packers.*

PS: The packing houses were all in Toronto? What about local farmers? Would their animals be taken into Toronto to be slaughtered and then brought back here?

KS: *Up until about 1930, some cattle and sheep and swine would be taken to the station at Newcastle by local drovers. The 8th highway with local truckers changed that because the trucker would pick your animals up in the morning, drive to Toronto where they would be sold and come back with the cheque. It took a drover a day or two to gather up ten loads to go into the little stockyards at Newcastle, Port Hope, etc. The station master would have to arrange for the weight-rate to drop off the requisite number of livestock cars and they would weigh the animals and drive them onto the cars. Then the weight-rate would pick them up, drive them to the marshalling point, then into the stockyards so it was most inefficient.*

PS: At what point would the farmer get paid?

KS: *When they were sold from the Toronto stockyards to the slaughterhouse.*

PS: Did you sell surplus locally or just raise enough for family consumption?

KS: *No. Wally Brunt would pick up cattle or pigs or sheep at our place or any of our neighbours and they would be in Toronto in a couple of hours. Even in 1928 or 29, I don't think we ever sold an animal that was taken by the drovers to the yards down at the Newcastle CNR station. Shortly after that, the old-fashioned drovers such as Chris Law found other employment. They were out of a job.*

PS: Where did you learn to shoot? Were boys taught that or did you teach yourself?

KS: *In our case, .22 rifles were available in the Eaton's or Simpsons' catalogues, any hardware store, along with shovels or axes. The age would be at the discretion of the person selling it. I don't think there was ever any problem getting them. We had the standard groundhog problem. We didn't have a rifle in the house but friends from the city came down for an opportunity to shoot and they gave my brother Lloyd a single shop .22 rifle and he gave it to me.*

PS: What age were you when you first started to shoot?

KS: *To shoot under instruction, eleven. To go out alone with the rifle, very shortly thereafter because I was shooting groundhogs alone. I received the money to buy my first shotgun, a single-shot shotgun, when I was thirteen. Mother gave me the money because I passed my entrance exams, two years in one, and passed with honours. So my reward was \$15 to go buy a shotgun.*

PS: That would have been the best reward you could have had, wouldn't it?

KS: *Absolutely. By then we had the depression following the stock crash of 1929 and there was no money for anything. There was no money for that shotgun except that, when the market crashed, Mother went to New York where she was able to resume her nursing as an RN. She was a strong person. At that point, she would have been 52-53. She left her family, went to New York and sent money home.*

PS: Were you using that gun to shoot food for the family?

KS: *For entertainment and, yes, if I shot a cottontail or jack rabbit, it went into the pot. People came in off the road to offer to work for the rest of the winter for their food and, if need be, to sleep in the barn. We did take in one man and he spent the entire winter with us. When spring came, he had a family in Montreal that he had worked for before and he was going to go back. We gave him a new pair of work boots and I think a pair of overalls to send him on his way.*

PS: Were there a lot of people out of work in Newcastle?

KS: *Yes. Later on they tried organized work for young men to go into northern Ontario and, under the guidance of a contractor, brushing out the new Trans Canada Highway. For this, they received ten cents a day, some sort of lodging and food.*

Editor: We'll continue Pippa's interview of Ken in future issues of the newsletter.

Membership Page

Newsletter rules for members

Single Membership (one vote):

Hard Copy delivered by mail or by hand ... Annual fees for calendar year \$15.
Digital Copy delivered by e-mail (pdf) ... Annual fees for calendar year \$10

Family Membership (two votes):

Hard Copy delivered by mail or by hand ... Annual fees for calendar year \$20.
Digital Copy delivered by e-mail (pdf) ... Annual fees for calendar year \$15

Corporate membership (one vote):

Up to 3 Hard Copies delivered by mail or by hand plus Digital Copy delivered by e-mail) (pdf)
... Annual fees for calendar year \$25.

Sponsors will get recognition in the quarterly newsletter as well as a digital copy of the newsletter

Membership Chairman Ron Locke ronald.locke@gmail.com

NV&DHS is open in Newcastle's Community Hall every Tuesday & Saturday 9:30 - 12:00.
Contact NVDHS at info@bellnet.ca

NV&DHS gratefully acknowledges the ongoing sponsorship of **Tim Horton's of Newcastle**, who supply the room with complementary coffee for visitors every Saturday morning.

We Remember "Pat"

NV&DHS once again lost a key member when Pat McDonnell passed away June 4th. Patricia Macdonnell was most notably the first president of the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society and one of the people credit-worthy of the formation of the society.

It seems that back in 1981, Pat Loraine Lover and Peggy Moorhouse were discussing the fact that the old Catholic church on Emily Street was for sale and, being an historian at heart, Pat suggested that they attempt to raise enough money and interest in the community to save the old building from being sold and possibly being demolished. While they did not raise enough money, they did raise interest in the history of the area and within a year the NVDHS was formed with Pat as the inaugural president.

Without a proper home the society would meet for their executive meetings at the homes of the executive members. Some that I remember would be Macdonnells, Rudells, Lovekins, Lockes, Browns, the Anglican Church Hall and Graham's place. Our general meetings would be held in the Centennial Room at the Community Hall.

Recently I have been chatting about Pat with some of the early members and one thing that everyone is in agreement with is how easy she was to work with. It seemed that she could accomplish pretty well anything she turned her hand to. She amazed me one day when visiting me at the farm. As she was leaving, I suggested she turn the car around and drive out the long driveway. "No". she replied. "That's OK" and proceeded to back out onto the highway at a fast pace using only her mirrors.

Pat was instrumental in many of our early ventures like the House and Garden Tour on June 13th 1987 and our Annual Heritage Day. Without Pat the society wouldn't be where it is today.

Over the years she has received many awards for her tireless work and was honoured several years ago with the one and only Life Membership that the society has presented.

Submitted by Ron Locke

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