



# Newcastle Village and District Historical Society

Newsletter Issue # 100  
Winter 2009

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## Annual General Meeting

Monday, February 1st, 2010 at 7:30 pm NV&DHS will host their Annual General Meeting.

One of the items of business at that meeting will be the election of the Executive positions of the Board of Directors.

As members of the Society, you are reminded that you are eligible to stand for an Executive position or for the positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary.

If you are interested in doing so, please contact Beverly Jeeves before January 15, 2010 at [info.nvdhs@bellnet.ca](mailto:info.nvdhs@bellnet.ca) or by calling (905) 987-5180.

Members are also reminded of the Show & Tell portion of the meeting so please bring your interesting artifacts to share with others.

### Did you Know?

In the 1860's & 70's, a large, five-storey, white brick building sat at Mill Street south, slightly southeast of the current eastbound exit to Hwy. 401. This was home to The Durham Woollen Manufacturing Company.

This business employed over 150 employees (compared to Massey manufacturing at that time with a total of 70 employees).

The building was destroyed by fire in the 1890's.

## President's Message

As Directors of the Newcastle and District Historical Society, we serve our community by helping to fund our initiatives that help to preserve the record of our historical past. That rich heritage of our community helps to identify and maintain our community and, in turn, gives us continuity in how we proceed forward. Visitors and newcomers to the community alike remark on the visual architecture of this vibrant village and note that it has a distinct element of design they admire. Many times I have been told that it was one of the main reasons people chose to live in this community - they liked the unique character that the village presents.

Your support through membership in this organization helps us to speak on behalf of that distinct character. It is what we like about our community and we wish to preserve that look and feel. Your membership gives us the support we need to document and preserve the unique story of this village's growth and of the people who made it all happen here.

Our next phase at NV&DHS is to create a digital record of our collection that can then be accessed online. It is a big job that requires many hours of work to scan and enter documents into a database. Our archival committee has carefully thought through this task and has presented a working plan to the executive. We are moving ahead cautiously at a rate that our resources permit. It would appear to be a long road ahead of us but we feel that it is the right road nonetheless.

If you would like to assist in the digital project, please contact Bev Jeeves at (905) 987-5180. Another pair of hands area always welcome.

I look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting on February 1st.

**Allan Kirby**  
*President, NV&DHS*

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

## Life Member Awards

At the General Meeting of October 13th of NV&DHS, Ron Locke, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented two Life Awards to long time members and contributors, Dorothy Brown and Mabel Goode.

**Dorothy Brown** has been an excellent member of NV&DHS. She first served on the Board of Directors as Secretary in 1986. Since then, health permitting, she has been an active member and Director. Dorothy always made sure that we, as a Board, followed the rules. She was insistent on the fact that we followed our constitution and that we carry out our business as a professional organization. She made certain that we followed proper protocol and was responsible for a number of changes to our Constitution. Dorothy took on a number of projects including writing. One of her books is a history of her family, *The Paper Chase to the Coulson's of Clarke*, published in 2000. She also worked for many years transcribing voter's lists, tax rolls and historical documents. Her enthusiasm for the history of this community and for the NV&DHS has been an inspiration to everyone.

**Mabel Goode** is one of the founding members of NV&DHS in 1980. She was also instrumental in the decision to move to the former Newcastle library in 1988. Until recently, she has always served on the Board of Directors. She also worked as Curator and assisted Pat Macdonnell. Mabel was involved in all facets of NV&DHS. She put together beautiful historical booklets outlining the businesses in our community. She was involved in setting up and running the Heritage Shows and Collector's Fair. Mabel has written a number of articles and stories for our newsletters regarding her family and the community. She is always willing to help in any project. Her work was always accurate and beautifully done. In her quiet but efficient way, Mabel has always demonstrated great leadership and has been a great mentor to others.



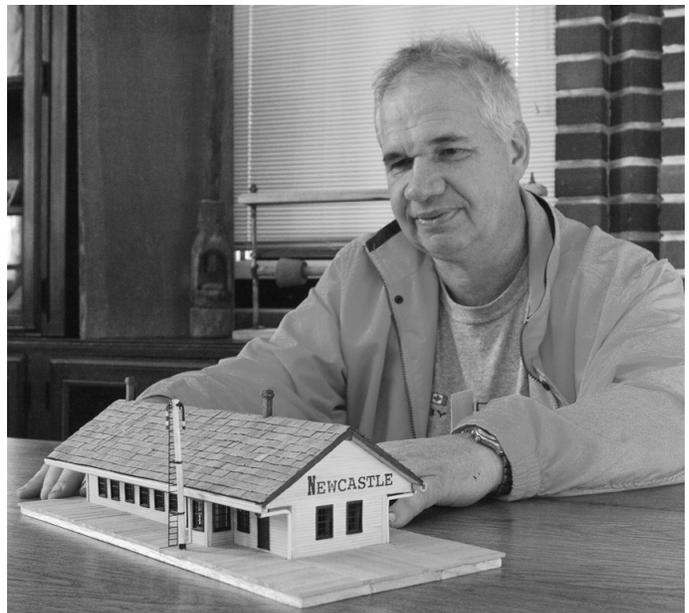
*Mabel Goode, Ron Locke & Dorothy Brown*

## Grand Trunk Station

Greg St. Amand built this replica of the Grand Trunk Railway station that was originally constructed in Newcastle in 1856, the same year Newcastle was incorporated. In 2006, Newcastle's Sesquicentennial year, Greg became intrigued by a replica postcard of the long gone railway station that once was a hub for transportation in the community.

Since then, he has seen other pictures of the station at the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society in the Community Hall. Last November, after retiring from GM, Greg was looking for a project to occupy himself and the model of the railroad station seemed to be a good start to his HO railway project.

The railway station is not Greg's first model as he also has a radio-controlled model of the Bluenose that he sails from time to time at the Bond Head Harbour.



*Greg St. Amand with his replica of the Grand Trunk Railway Station*

## Looking Back

It would be impossible to be involved in a historical society without looking back. It is the love of this history that drives us all as members. Whether for the history of our own families, local architecture, the events in our community or the characters who once lived here, we share a common interest in looking back.

In my role as the current editor of this newsletter, I have been looking back through the issues of our newsletters during the society's first ten years (1982 - 1992). Doing so has opened up so much more than the history of our area: the history and growth of NV&DHS itself and an introduction to the individuals who helped to develop it.

All of you know of the members we have lost this year. Although we've tried to intimate some description of their contributions in these newsletters, I feel the collective loss of their shared love of history and knowledge affects us all.

It was in reading earlier editions of this newsletter that this love of history jumped out of the pages. From its inaugural issue of April 1983 (written by then President & current Board Member, Ron Locke) onward, the newsletters provide a glimpse into the growth of this society. As I read these earlier issues, I wished I had had an opportunity to work with all of these volunteers at some point. It is a treat to read the research they did on our behalf and to get a sense of how they brought like-minded citizens together.

In July of 1983, the society had thirteen family memberships and twelve single members (*Compare this to today's total membership of 129*). It's pretty safe to imagine that the original membership count was made up of many of the original members and volunteers who first had the drive to create a society. But, through their collective ongoing efforts year after year, membership grew and prospered, ensuring that history became more relevant within the community.

From its inception in 1982, the society held general meetings for the public with "stimulating" guest speakers. Outings were regularly planned by early Board members with members visiting Black Creek, local museums, Dundurn Castle and other historical sites.

NV&DHS took full advantage of their relationship with the Ontario Historical Society to guide interested members to workshops such as "writing and publishing community histories", "oral history" and other related endeavours.

The first 'Heritage Day' was organized in May of 1983 by NV&DHS with displays of private collections and from local museums, followed by a variety show.

NV&DHS was instrumental in the reprinting of Professor Squairs book "The Townships of Darlington and Clarke" and has sold them steadily since.

By 1986, the society was conducting "old folks' interviews ... using the "latest advance in technology - a machine that visually recorded both picture and sound in a cassette that could be played through a VCR on a television." This technology was chosen because it was the latest and most up to date and VCRs were seen as the media of the future. *Who amongst us would have predicted the rapid evolution of technology to come?* The tapes of these interviews are still available in VHF format. NV&DHS has plans to convert them to digital films.

NV&DHS initially met in different rooms in the Community Hall but has been in its current home (the old library) since December 4, 1993. The Newcastle Community Hall originally opened in 1923 and this news was printed in the *ORONO NEWS* on Sept 6, 1923: "*The Library Board has placed between 600 and 700 volumes on the shelves of the memorial Library Room being the first instalment of the books to be placed there.*" With the library's move to a new building, the room became available but required quite extensive work on the part of many volunteers. One time-consuming task was taking the book shelf glass fronts out of storage and re-hanging them on the cabinets. The newly polished room was a hit for the official re-opening on Dec. 4th. This was quite the event with grandchildren of the original Massey family members who dedicated the building in 1923 as well as the grandchildren of the original architect and master mason in attendance.

With the evolution of technology, NV&DHS' capabilities for capturing history has improved. We were gifted with the historic films taken by Cecil Carveth from the 1920's through the 50's. These 16 mm films were in remarkable condition and Ron Locke and Myno Van Dyke have worked diligently to convert and edit them into a digital format. Anyone viewing the digital format would believe that the films are current with actors of today wearing 1920's costumes but they are, in fact, local residents in every day actions. Plans are underway for showing these wonderful films in the future but you can see them most Tuesday mornings as Ron and Myno continue to edit them.

NV&DHS has a living historical record of the area through different media and may very well be one of the few historical societies to have such records.

Looking back at the old newsletters has given me a greater appreciation for the history of our area, kept alive through the efforts of all of those volunteers before me. What an amazing group to follow.

*Judith Clapperton*

## Samuel Wilmot & the Fish of Clarke Township

(from an article by Pat Macdonnell for the NV&DHS Newsletter of March/April, 1987)

Newcastle and Clarke Township has been home to many accomplished individuals. Although the Massey family and Joseph Atkinson (first publisher of the Toronto Star) may be the most recognized, Samuel Wilmot, with his accomplishments in the world of fish hatcheries was another exceptional forefather. We think you'll agree that his endeavours are just as relevant today.

During the NV&DHS October General Meeting, member Brian Wilson sang a ballad he had written about Samuel Wilmot. Wilmot, in his concern over the depleting stock of fish in the area, achieved the following :

- Honoured as the Father of Canadian fish culture, Wilmot began his experiments in aquaculture and the artificial breeding of fish using the spring in the cellar of his house on Belmont Farm (at the dead end of Given Road; northwest of North St).
- Under his supervision, the first fish hatchery in Canada was built on Wilmot Creek in 1867.
- His research data and inventions were used across the US and in Europe. Even today (1987), many hatcheries bear a remarkable likeness to the Newcastle Hatchery.
- As Superintendent of Fish Culture for the Dominion from 1876 - 1895, Wilmot supervised the building of 12 other hatcheries, including one in BC and nine in the Maritimes.
- At the age of 16, he commanded a small group of youthful horsemen who were the homeguard for the Village of Napanee during the 1837-38 rebellion. This boyish troop managed to capture rebel teamsters smuggling arms for a planned attack on Kingston.
- In his youth, salmon were so thick, people scooped them out with pitch forks and nets made from petticoats.
- Wilmot was born at Belmont in 1822 but did not start his experiments in Pisciculture until he was in his forties and became concerned about the depletion of Atlantic salmon in the creek running through his farm.
- His first award came from France in 1873 and a silver medal was awarded by the Societe d'Acclimatation for his work in practical science.
- Six years later, he was awarded the gold medal for excellence at the first Dominion Exposition of Agriculture, Arts and Manufacturing in Ottawa (1879).
- In 1882 and '83, Samuel was busy preparing Canada's exhibit of fishes and fishery appliances for the World's Fishery Exposition which opened in London England in

May 1883. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Canadian exhibit, a popular and respected representative of the Dominion.

- A working model of the Newcastle Hatchery won the gold medal at the International Fishery Exposition in 1883 held in London.
- As part of Canada's Centennial year, the Ontario Government erected a historic plaque close to where the hatchery once stood, 100 years after it was built.
- Wilmot has been called "The First Conservationist" because he realized the importance of preserving the environment and tried to prevent the wholesale clearing of forests and draining of wetlands.

*Editor's Note: these original facts about Samuel Wilmot were provided in 1987 by NV&DHS member, Mrs. Diana Grandfield of Newcastle, his great-granddaughter.*



### Who is this woman?

This is one of the hundreds of people that appear in the Carveth tapes. People have been able to name some of them, but many more remain unnamed. E-mail ron Locke if you know this person. [ronald.locke@gmail.com](mailto:ronald.locke@gmail.com)

## Of Interest to Members

NV&DHS has a growing library of historical books available for Members' use and purchase. These books are kept in the NV&DHS room (fittingly, the old Newcastle library).

### Books for sale:

<i>Newcastle Celebrates 150 Years</i>	Hard Cover	\$30
	Soft Cover	\$25

<i>Squair's History of Darlington &amp; Clark</i>		\$75
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(This book includes interesting local trivia such as what was placed under the cornerstone of the Newcastle United Church in 1867. At the dedication of this church, Newcastle's Brass Band played.)

<i>Out of the Mists</i>		\$50
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<i>1793 - 1813 Settlers of Durham County</i>		\$30
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### Reference books (for use at NV&DHS only).

The Ontario Historical Society has gifted NV&DHS with volumes such as:

*Pioneering Spirit, Ontario Places of Worship, Then & Now*

*Ontario History* (various volumes)

*Celebrating One Thousand Years of Ontario's History*

### Books to borrow.

Whether your interests are places, people or events, NV&DHS has a great many titles to choose from. To name a few:

*Memories of Haldimand Township*

*This Green & Pleasant Land; Chronicles of Cavan Township*

*The First 200 Years; A brief history of Darlington Township*

*The Masseys* by Mollie Gillen

*Bishop Brent* by Alexander C. Zabriskie

Each year, individuals donate historical artifacts to NV&DHS. These donations bring our local history to life in more ways than the actual item itself. Consider some of the donations (highlighted to the right) made this past year and how they guide us to our own history in many ways:

A **jewelry box from J.C. Anderson Smith & Co.** (known as the Box Factory), donated by Marilyn Martin reminds us of a time when quality workmanship and detail was treasured by families for generations.

A look into the **1929 Secretary's Box** and its contents from St. John's Roman Catholic Church tells us a great deal about the times. We get a view of the community through the correspondence and cards inside. The sealing wax used for the church seal is intact and envelopes tell us how letters were addressed in the mail (Name, town and province was enough to get the mail delivered). This box, donated by Sylvia Vanhaverbeke, is unique to NV&DHS because items of the church would normally be kept by the Archdiocese.

An **1883-76 ledger from Atherstone Mill** is a good resource for who was farming in the area at the time. A farmer may have been missed in the local Church records or by the census but this ledger is a credible resource for anyone creating a genealogy of their family. The ledger has pages for each individual farmer who brought grain to the mill, where it was ground into grist for the farmer's own use or sold to the mill for shipping at Newcastle Harbour. But we learn so much more than just the financial records of the mill from the elegant calligraphy on these pages. We also know that wealthier citizens acted as bankers for residents and these loans were captured in the ledger, with interest paid.

The prize at the end of this year (described by Ron Locke as "like getting ten Christmases rolled into one") is the donation of a collection of documents, photos and ledgers from Ebor House (of the Farncomb family).

This comprehensive collection includes a Physicians Visiting List of Dr. Wm. Rose of the 1850's and 60's.

In this ledger is an entry for "S. Wilmot" from January 1865, again showing us the many ways we are able to confirm residency of someone; in this case, a visit to the doctor.



*Balfour LeGresley with the collection from Ebor House*

The collection also includes Dr. Rose's medical directions for specific conditions, all written in his elegant calligraphic handwriting.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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The NV&DHS 2009 Board of Directors would like to thank you for your continued interest in the Society's ongoing efforts to preserve and celebrate our local history.

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Please remember that  
*2010 membership fees are now due*  
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From the March 1984 NV&DHS newsletter, "*A membership gives you the right to come out to our general membership meeting and air your ideas for historical good in our community. It also gives you the right to vote on the issues.*"

Visit the NV&DHS room in Newcastle's Community Hall on Tuesday or Saturday or contact Ron Locke at [ronald.locke@gmail.com](mailto:ronald.locke@gmail.com) to make payment arrangements.