

The Burlington Historical Society

GAZETTE

**February 11th, 2019 Speaker is
Rob Green, Director, Black History
Awareness Society**

Mr. Green is a retired drama teacher and is currently an actor, singer/songwriter and producer of his own original music. He has served as a teacher for the Hamilton-Wentworth School Board in Hamilton, Ontario for 37 years. He initiated the Drama program at his high school and became the Assistant Head of the English department, teaching Drama and English in Canadian schools.

Mr. Green has an avid interest in the development of Black Canadian culture and grew up in the Owen Sound British Methodist Episcopal church where his great grandfather was once an elder deacon.

Mr. Green's first CD, "Soul Dancing" was nominated for best Indie Album in 2013 and was Highlighted In CBC's talent search, out performing numerous other contestants.

Mr. Green is a graduate of University of Guelph with a Specialized Honours in Drama, The University of London (Allthuse Teachers College) with a Bachelor of Education and The University of Toronto (Faculty of Education) Honours Specialist in Drama.



Join us to hear Rob Green
Monday, **February 11th, 2019** at 7 pm
Centennial Room, Burlington Public Library,
Central Branch



NOTE: Our Annual General Meeting is postponed to
11 March 2019

March 11th, 2019 will be our **Annual General Meeting** when we will vote on a new slate of Officers
We look forward to seeing you on **11 March, 2019**

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BHS Members will receive the BHS Gazette and other communications and can unsubscribe at any time info@burlingtonhistorical.ca. Information contained on our website, newsletters and publications is printed in good faith and for general purposes Editor: Joan Downey

President's Report *Jane Ann Newson*

We started off the new year in fine style with both a Bits of Burlington speaker Robbie McGregor and a feature speaker Gurth M. Pretty.



Photo Tom Bochsler

Many thanks to a long-time member – Edward Naftolin - who took the time to provide me with a list of suggested speakers for the upcoming year!

On behalf of the BHS, we greatly appreciate feedback and suggestions. Don't feel shy about sending us an email indicating your topic preferences or things that you feel need improvement.

Please send your comments to info@burlingtonhistorical.ca.

Our February 11th General Meeting continues in fine style with speaker Rob Green. I understand that his topic will be both inspirational and humorous! See you on February 11th at 7:00pm in the Centennial Room!

Outreach Report – *Jane Ann Newson*

As previously indicated, several bookings have already been received for 2019. The first Outreach request came from The Salvation Army located at 2090 Prospect Street in Burlington for Wednesday February 20th. Our second Outreach request came from The Williamsburg Retirement Residence for Tuesday March 19th. They must have liked us because this will be the 4th time we have been asked to do a presentation for them!



If you have need of a speaker at one of your groups, we ask that you consider BHS as a source of great Burlington history topics for your next event.

For further details, please email – info@burlingtonhistorical.ca.

Membership Table *Jane Ann Newson*

Many thanks to those who renewed their BHS membership at our first BHS General Meeting of 2019! Wow, you outdid yourselves. Your support was most appreciated and valued!

Welcome new members: Donna Ryan, Randall Kapuscinski and Leslie Ferguson!



Commencing with our **February General Meeting on February 11th**, when **renewing**, please complete the top half of our Membership Form entitled “Membership – 2019”. I will have 2 sets of blank forms on the table along with pens to complete this task. This would be a great help when trying to balance the books and make deposits.

Thank you so much and Happy Valentine's Day - JA

PINHOLE CAMERA by Pat Taylor

Photos by Pat Taylor

Statement of fact – I enjoy getting out with my camera – even more so now that it is a digital camera. Click away all day, and if nothing really pleases me, delete, delete, delete. Recently I saw a promotion for the Niagara Falls History Museum for their exhibit of photographs taken with a ‘pinhole’ camera – photos dealing with the Underground Railway and the American Civil War.

Camera + History = Trip to Niagara Falls

A pinhole camera is a simple camera without a lens but with a tiny aperture – a pinhole. It is mainly a lightproof box with a small hole on one side and a piece of film or photographic paper on the opposite side. The cover over the pinhole would be removed to allow light rays into the box to imprint the scene on the film or paper. Since exposure times would vary, the camera would be placed on a stand to keep it steady. The second camera has 6 pinholes that can be opened sequentially or simultaneously. As a result, it can produce up to a 360-degree panorama image.



Pinhole Camera



Panoramic Model
Or 6 pinhole Model

The artist for this exhibit was Nassau-born; Burlington Ontario based Tod Ainslie. He is related by marriage to John Brown, the abolitionist. Tod researched pinhole cameras and then designed and built his own cameras. The first part of the exhibit consisted of photos of current sites of the historical Underground Railway – a slave

pen where the men were shackled 2 together so they could only sit or lie down; the women, on the ground floor, could move about and they did the cooking. The slaves could be held here for days, or even months, summer or winter until the prices improved in the slave market. There was a photo of the log slave quarters on the plantation of Andrew Jackson, a future president of the United States, with his palatial home in the background. Next in the exhibit there was a picture of the Natchez Trace – once a trail along the Mississippi River. Originally a footpath created by foraging animals, then used by Native Americans and eventually as a settler’s path, it became a way north for escaped slaves. Today it appears as a sunken pathway.



Path to Rev. John Rankin's home

Further north, fugitive slaves, where they crossed the Ohio River from ‘slave Kentucky’ to ‘free Ohio’ aimed to cross at Ripley, Ohio. There, under the cover of darkness, they would proceed up this path to the home of the Rev. John Rankin; a station on the Underground Railway. This Railway was a safe route to the free northern states and into Canada. Crossing from Detroit into Canada many freed and fugitive slaves found a safe haven in South Western Ontario – many settling near present day Dresden, Chatham, and Buxton. Those at Buxton constructed a school that developed such an excellent reputation that the white settlers wanted to send their children there too. This they were allowed to do

A second set of photos was of Civil War sites. One of the most famous abolitionists, who travelled throughout Kansas, Ohio and New York, was John Brown. His last and favourite home was in North Elba N.Y. near Lake Placid. It was from this house that he and fellow conspirators planned the takeover of the armoury at Harper's Ferry. This didn't go as planned and eventually John Brown was found guilty of treason and hanged. He was buried on his farm at North Elba. His grave marker is enclosed in a glass and metal structure to protect it from the elements and to prevent souvenir hunters from chipping away pieces of the monument.



Many historians believe that the activities of John Brown and the publication of the book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' were the triggers for the American Civil War.

I spent a fascinating 2 hours at this exhibit. Another thing to add to my "To Do List" – read the book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. I expect, with the opening of the expanded Joseph Brant Museum, that I won't have to go to Niagara Falls to see such exhibits – we'll have our own exhibit hall here in Burlington.

Mystery Photo *Joan Downey*

January 2019 unknown photographer

No one was willing to take a chance on guessing that this is a photo of an Ice Volcano.

From Wikipedia we get the following description –
“ An **ice volcano** is a conical mound of ice formed over a terrestrial lake via the eruption of water and slush through an ice shelf. The process is wave-driven, with wind providing the energy for the waves to cut through the ice and form the volcanoes.”



This phenomenon came to my attention in a donation from Robert G. Taylor, a former Burlingtonian who now lives in Cannifton, ON (near Belleville).
If you want to read a little more about Ice Volcanoes go to our website.

From the Archives *Joan Downey*



In mid-December, a long time friend and former member of the Burlington Historical Society passed away.

Some years ago, Betty Stubbs began work on a collection of stories and photographs about her families – the Williamsons of Wellington Square & the Browns of Port Nelson. It was her wish that this collection, called My Life Story, be given to The Burlington Historical Society on her death. She even prepared and signed a donation form in 2010!

Per her wishes, a family member stopped by the Archives on the way home from Betty's funeral with the binder. What a wonderful addition to the collection.

Freeman Station Update



Editor's note – for a change of pace, this month's Freeman Station Update will be replaced by the following article by Earl John Chapman, a member of both BHS and Friends of Freeman Station, and an avid researcher. The Freeman Station Update will return in the March edition.

THE THREE STATIONS AT FREEMAN

by Earl John Chapman

A railway station has existed in Burlington, Ontario since 1855, shortly after the Great Western Railway (GWR) completed its line between Hamilton and Toronto. This first station was a substantial two-storey wood structure measuring "about 80 by 40 feet" with living quarters provided for the station agent (there was also an attached freight shed). It was situated in the northern tip of Wellington Square (today's Burlington) near Brant Street and Plains Road. This was an area known as Freeman, and as a result, the station was popularly known to local residents as the "Freeman Station" (but officially carried in the GWR timetable, first as "Wellington Square," and later as "Burlington").

In 1877, a second passenger station was built in the downtown section of Wellington Square, close to Lake Ontario, by the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway (H&NW). This second station was also designated in the H&NW timetable as "Burlington" and this likely solidified the popular name of "Freeman" for the more northerly station as residents would need some way to differentiate between the two stations. In August 1882, the GWR – then operating 1,280 km of track throughout south western Ontario – was taken over by its chief rival, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) which would in turn, merge with Canadian National Railways (CNR) in 1923.

On March 6th, 1883, the GTR station at Freeman was completely destroyed by a devastating fire – a common occurrence in the days of steam! On the following day, the *Hamilton Spectator* reported that "The fire was first seen by the signal man who attends the junction crossing. The telegraph company lost all their instruments, and...Mr. S. Moore, the agent, lost most of his effects."



Burlington Junction GTR station, c.1883 (FOFS photo). The station name (Burlington Junction) as well as the staged posing of dignitaries and workmen suggests that the photo was taken on opening day, sometime in 1883.

That same year, a new replacement station was erected, again as a two-storey passenger station with attached freight shed, as it appears that a decision was made by the GTR to retain the appearance and functionality of the original GWR station – the GTR had recently taken over

the GWR and presumably had more important business to attend to. This second station lasted until April 1st, 1906, when it too met with a fiery demise. As reported by the *Burlington Gazette* on April 4th, once again, the station agent (at that time, Mr. Blair) lost most of his effects: "...the residents [Agent Blair and his immediate neighbours] removed most of the valuable papers from the G.T.R. office and baggage room, and also Mr. Blair's household effects downstairs, but nearly all his goods upstairs were destroyed, with the exception of some bedding...the station will be rebuilt with as little delay as possible, and we sincerely hope the company will erect a building that will be a credit to the place." As the same newspaper reported on June 20th "that work on the new G.T.R. station is progressing rapidly," there can be little doubt that the new station was in full operation by the early fall of 1906. The new station was indeed "a credit to the place" as the GTR erected an attractive and functional passenger station at the Freeman site, albeit a more modest single-story combination passenger and freight station measuring 20 by 50 feet. The design of the building, an adaptation of the GTRs standard station plans of the period, included several distinctive features (such as a high bell-cast hipped roof with widely flared eaves) which gave this rather simple functional structure "an appealingly picturesque quality." The original build included a large canopy extending from the west, or baggage end of the building, which also included a bell-cast hipped roof (however, the canopy was later walled in to form an integral part of the station).

It is interesting to note that in 1906 the train order signal at Freeman was a simple rotating wood board with kerosene lantern, a common type of fixed train order signal used by the GTR since the late 1880s. By the 1920s, this

important junction point would qualify for a more prominent semaphore type train order signal, likely when train speeds and tonnage had increased to the point where a more conspicuous signal was deemed necessary.



Burlington Junction GTR station, c.1906 (BHS photo). Shortly after the new station opened in 1906.

The new GTR depot at the Freeman site was a significant factor in the growth of Burlington in the boom years prior to World War I, as the burgeoning agricultural industry in the area generated a heavy volume of traffic. The old station remained in use by CNR and later by VIA Rail (when it was designated as "Burlington West"). After it was declared surplus by CNR in 1988, a period of private ownership followed with the old station temporarily relocated to the grounds of the No. 1 Fire Station on Fairview Street to await its fate – demolition or restoration. But, thanks to the financial generosity of local citizens and businesses, this 113-year-old historic building, now owned by the City of Burlington, was permanently relocated to 1285 Fairview Street, next to the Fire Station, and not far from its original location in 1855. The station is now in the final stages of its extensive restoration. When fully completed, the station will be operated as an interpretive centre, its elements including railway history and rails as a major influence on Confederation. It

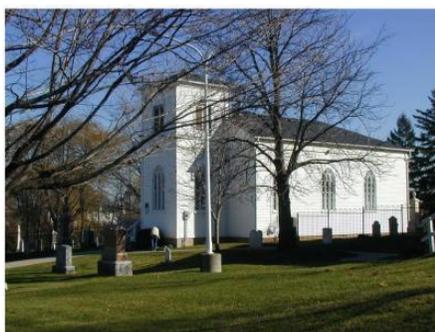
will also act as a community hub for those interested in the nostalgia of simpler times. The Waiting Room will be available as a meeting space for small groups, and a historic model railway diorama will operate on the Lower Level, depicting bucolic life in Burlington in the early 20th Century.

Burlington Junction GTR station, October 2018 (author's photo). The exterior rehabilitation of the building is almost complete.



Heritage Happenings

February is Heritage Month!!!



2464 Dundas Street
St John's Anglican Church built 1839

The month long festivities will be launched on 1 February 2019, at 1 pm at St. John's Anglican Church, 2464 Dundas Street with refreshments and a tour to follow at Ireland House

The Burlington Historical Society and the Burlington Public Library will host an Open House in the Burlington History Room, Central Library, 2nd Floor each Thursday in February, from 2 – 4 pm.
Drop by the Burlington History Room, home of the BHS Archives

There are many other activities planned. Pick up a copy of the calendar. Don't miss anything!

Burlington Historical Society Executive

Officers (Elected)	Directors (Appointed)	Convenors (Appointed)
President (acting) Jane Ann Newson	Programs Alan Harrington	Greeting Cards Anne Wingfield
1 st Vice President Vacant	Archives Joan Downey	Telephone Committee Elizabeth Baldwin
2 nd Vice President Vacant	Webmaster Wayne Murphy	Heritage Burlington Rick Wilson
Secretary Pat Taylor	Membership Jane Ann Newson	50/50 Draw Pat Taylor
Treasurer Alan Harrington	Newsletter Joan Downey	
Past President Jane Ann Newson		



The Burlington Historical Society

Preserving Burlington's History for Today and Tomorrow

Membership - 2019

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Membership Dues (check all categories that apply)

- New Member
 Family: \$40.00
 Senior: \$25.00
 Renewal
 Adult: \$30.00

Yes, as a **new** BHS member I wish to receive the Gazette newsletter and other e-communications and understand I can unsubscribe at any time.

Volunteer

Join our volunteer team – please circle your interest(s)

RESEARCH - 50/50 DRAW - COFFEE - BYTES OF BURLINGTON - ARCHIVES - NEWSLETTER – OUTREACH - MEMBERSHIP - SPECIAL PROJECTS – GENERAL MEETING GREETERS – EXECUTIVE – DIRECTOR - TELEPHONE COMMITTEE

Donation

I wish to make a separate donation to the society in the sum of _____

A Tax Receipt will be issued for all donations totalling \$25.00 or more
The Burlington Historical Society is a registered charity # 119217693RR0001

Mail completed form and remittance(s) to:

The Burlington Historical Society
Membership Convenor
PO Box 93164
1450 Headon Road
Burlington, Ontario L7M 4A3

OR

-
Leave it at the Membership table at any General Meeting

Make cheques payable to The Burlington Historical Society

www.burlingtonhistorical.ca

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