

OCTOBER 2023



VOLUME 19 ISSUE 07

THE BURLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MINI GAZETTE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**From our families to YOURS –
We hope you had a Happy
Thanksgiving!**

We have much to be thankful for this season!

In September, I promised to have more about our upcoming AGM in January 2024 and the planning of Elections in 2024. We are asking for **your assistance** in placing your name forward as a candidate for **Treasurer** and for a **Bookkeeper**. We would sincerely appreciate your help going into 2024 by filling these two important positions.



Jane Ann Newson on behalf of the
BHS Executive

MINI GAZETTE

OCTOBER CONTENTS

President's Message
October presentation
BHS Volunteer Organization
Outreach Activities
Membership Report
Burlington history snapshots:
Collections – Dakota
Crawford Lake Makes History - again
Who was Alexander Brown Jr?
Membership Form

UPCOMING 2023 GENERAL MEETINGS

MONDAY OCTOBER 16TH

MONDAY NOVEMBER 13TH

INFORMATION CONTAINED ON OUR WEBSITE, NEWSLETTERS AND PUBLICATIONS IS PRINTED IN GOOD FAITH FOR GENERAL PURPOSES.

BHS MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE BHS MINI GAZETTE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS AND CAN UNSUBSCRIBE AT ANY TIME.

October Presentation

On **Monday October 16th**, we are very pleased to have as our speaker –

John O'Reilly

John is the City of Burlington Heritage Planner.

He will be talking about the Downtown Heritage Study and also the advantages of owning a Heritage Home!

ALL ARE WELCOME

Burlington Historical Society Volunteer Organization

Officers (Elected)

President	Jane Ann Newson
1 st Vice President	Don Thorpe
2 ND Vice President	Nicola Thomson
Secretary	Patricia Taylor
Treasurer	Vacant
Past President	Joan Downey

Directors (Appointed)

Program	Alan Harrington
Bookkeeper	Jane Ann Newson
Archives	Joan Downey
Webmaster	Wayne Murphy
Membership	Patricia Taylor
Newsletter	Jane Ann Newson
Outreach	All
Event Planner	Patricia Taylor
Publicity/Social Media	Jennifer Kemp Nicola Thomson

Convenors (Appointed)

Greeting Cards	Anne Wingfield
Heritage Burlington	Alan Harrington
50/50 Draw	Don Thorpe

Archive Volunteers

Joan Downey
Jennifer Kemp
Dorothy Kew
Nicola Thomson
Patricia Taylor
Peggy Armstrong
Josie Hammond

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

September is normally the restart period after the long summer break. BHS Executive Members have been extremely busy attending the following events:

- Joan, Patricia, and Alan attended the Halton Heritage Open House to see some of the work they had been doing at the Sovereign House in Oakville.
- Attending the 2023 Heritage Week debrief via Zoom and by all accounts, all events were at capacity or very well attended. 2024 Heritage Week planning will start up next month. Many groups wish to participate again and even some interest expressed by new groups in 2024.
- Attending Burlington 150 event at the City Hall and manning a BHS table.
- Writing articles for BurlingtonToday.com

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A very warm welcome to our 4 newest members – Robert Price, Gwynneth Richardson, Donna Dickens, and Natalie Clark!

Reminder – If your **email changes**, please advise us by filling out a **Membership Form** which can be found on the last page of the Gazette and hand it to **Patricia Taylor**, who looks after our Membership at each General Meeting **or** mail to the address shown on the Membership Form. Our current 2023 Membership consists of **103** members.

BURLINGTON SNAPSHOTS:

From our Villages collection - featuring this month – Dakota

by Patricia Taylor and Joan Downey

Dakota was one of the three villages within a mile of each other on what is now Cedar Springs Road. At one time a wooden sidewalk joined the three communities. Thomas Simpson was an early settler. To get the patent (deed) for his land, he had to build a home – most settlers usually built a log cabin – 16 by 20 feet, clear and fence 5 acres around his home and maintain half the roadway in front of his property - all within two years. A self-sufficient man, he could tan deer hides to make boots for his family, he carded and spun wool ready to weave or knit into clothes. He was the first settler in the area to own a horse; a reward for his services in the Napoleonic Wars. His wife rode this horse when taking the farm produce to Hamilton.

One winter a band of Indigenous Peoples camped along with government surveyors. Being too ill to travel when her family moved on, a young girl stayed behind. She eventually married the son of a surveyor, and they constructed their home on Cedar Springs Road. On the door of the mill, they built they chiseled “The Dakota Mill: Canada West” to honour her birth family – The Dakotas. The mill stood until 17 November 1979 when it was destroyed by fire. Parts of the stone foundation can still be found in the undergrowth. In 1857 The Canada

Powder Company, a manufacturer of gun and blasting powders, built a powder mill in a hidden valley off the main trail/road. Twelve Mile Creek supplied the waterpower. The powder press was hauled from the lakefront village of Wellington Square, on a specially built sleigh of 13 yokes of oxen. The mill site consisted of a cooper shop where the kegs for the powder were constructed, a barn, the manager's house and across a wooden bridge over the creek the 3 actual powder mill buildings. At it's peak the mill employed 200 men, most of who lived in the immediate area. In summer, the men worked barefoot in the factory and only shoes with wooden pegs in the soles were permitted in other seasons. "Quality Control" was conducted at noon when most of the staff were away on their lunch break. In a field, far from the Mill itself, a small brass cannon was fired using recently produced powder. As a result of these tests various ingredients could be adjusted. The Mill secured exclusive control to supply the Canadian Pacific Railway with powder as they blasted the way through the Rockies.

In 1884 they received a large rush order. Mill production was increased from 250 kegs/day to 360 – each keg holding about 25 lbs of powder. Then disaster struck. On 9 October 1884 during the lunch break, when only a skeleton staff of 6 men were onsite, the Mill exploded – actually 3 separate explosions as each building became involved. Four workers were killed instantly, 1 died later and 1 survived – he landed in the treetops and then fell into the water and escaped death.

Nearby homes, including some in Cumminsville just to the north were so badly damaged as to be unfit for habitation. Residents of Hamilton, besides hearing the explosion, felt the earth shake like an earthquake. The reverberations were felt as far away as Owen Sound and St. Catharine's. A benefit in the nearby village of Carlisle (Flamborough Township) was held with proceeds going to help those affected by the explosion. Relief organizations came to the aid of the bereaved and those left homeless. The powder mill was not rebuilt. The Plant Manager Edward Corlett purchased the land and planted a large apple orchard.

In 1924, W.D. Flatt, a local businessman, bought property and converted into a resort community and named it Cedar Springs. Why Cedar Springs? Cedar Springs derived its name from the thousands of sweet cedars that give charm and beauty to the landscape and from the many springs of cold sparkling water.

Special note: For the balance of this story and coloured photos of the above address, please ask for the Dakota 3-fold Villages brochure at the next General Meeting

Crawford Lake Makes History – Again

by Patricia Taylor

Definitions:

- **What is a MEROMICTIC lake?** A lake in which the layers of water don't mix.
- **What is a GOLDEN SPIKE?** A geology marker created by a global event that leads to long lasting global changes recorded in the geological record that can be used to indicate a change in geological time division as an epoch, age, era. (from WIKTIONARY)

- **What is ANTHROPOCENE?** The PROPOSED current geological epoch, in which the effect of human activities on the global environment that have disrupted the natural variability of the current geological epoch the HOLOCENE that started at the end of the last ice age – 11,700 years ago. Or, simply The ANTHROPCENE is the epoch when humans began to irrevocably shape the planet's state – PROPOSED TIME - in the mid 20th century.

Crawford Lake, in north Halton region is a MEROMICTIC lake. It is not very big – you can complete a circle walk around the lake on the boardwalk in about 15 minutes. It is very deep – 24 meters (75 feet). A seven to eight-storey building sitting on the bottom of the lake would barely break the surface. There is no inlet or outlet. The rock of the Niagara Escarpment forms a bowl that holds the water. Sediment is deposited in annual layers and remains undisturbed. Core samples taken from the lake bottom are well preserved and read like tree rings. They have shown corn pollen dating from the 13th to 15th centuries.

Researchers decided to use the presence of plutonium 239 – an isotope released during the detonation of nuclear weapons – another marker of time. Plutonium 239 has been found in core samples from Crawford Lake.

Archaeological studies showed the remains of a pre-colonial Wendat village. Three longhouses have been reconstructed to help educate the public about the local Indigenous history.

To quote Dr. Cumming from the Queens University research group; “The history of Crawford Lake shows a progression from local changes impacting the lake, such as impact on the watershed, including the cleared forests, to regional changes associated with industrialization such as acid deposition and climate change. Changes were most rapid post-Second World War, supporting this site as a strong candidate site for marking the start of the ANTHROPOCENE. The GOLDEN SPIKE.

The designation of the new epoch still needs to be approved by the International Commission on Stratigraphy. Hopefully, sometime in 2024.

Who was Alexander Brown Jr?

by Rick Craven

Why was he named to the Aldershot Community Honour Roll?

Alexander Brown's contribution to Aldershot in the mid-19th century was a major catalyst for development of the then tiny village.

It was Brown who planted the seeds for LaSalle Park, the current location of Waterdown Road and most importantly the community marina. He was one of Aldershot's most influential citizens.

In the mid-1800s Brown, a shrewd businessman, built a wharf at the foot of what we now call LaSalle Park Road. His goal was to ship the wood from his family's saw mill on the Grindstone Creek to his customers around Lake Ontario via steam boats.

That wharf would eventually become an important piece of Aldershot history.

Known as Brown's Wharf or Port Flamborough, it would evolve into one of the leading shipping centers on the Great Lakes.

By the 1860's it was a major supplier of wood to fuel the engines of paddle wheel steamers. The wharf shipped grain, flour, aggregate material, woolen goods and farm products such as the famous Aldershot sugar melons.

Brown's Wharf became strategically important and rivalled the nearby Bunton and Baxter's Wharfs in Burlington.

The wharf, however, was not the end of Brown's enterprising activity.

He also built a toll road running from the family sawmill on Grindstone Creek toward his wharf. That road was two-and-a-half miles long. It was the start of Waterdown Road at the location where we know it today. He called it the Waterdown and Port Flamborough Road.

Brown was not the only one to benefit from the economic success of his road and wharf. They also helped stimulate the early development and social life of Aldershot. They led to the construction of the Victoria Pleasure Grounds tavern beside the wharf in the area we now call Oaklands Park Court.

Inevitably, they attracted services such as a blacksmith shop, shoemaker, general store and post office on nearby Plains Road at the intersection of Waterdown Rd / LaSalle Park Rd. and Plains Rd, today sometimes referred to as Aldershot Corners.

Our hero also owned the land above the wharf and built his two-storey family home where the pavilion now stands in LaSalle Park. Brown lived there until his death in 1880. The home was moved to North Shore Boulevard in 1917 and demolished in 1950.

Brown was not only a smart and successful businessman, he was a full player in the life of early Aldershot and Waterdown. He was a soldier, a builder, a Justice of the Peace, an

alderman, a deputy reeve and later a Warden of East Flamborough. He eventually became the first postmaster in Aldershot.

Today we would call Brown a “mover and shaker” but he wasn’t always successful. He ran for parliament and lost.

Downtown Burlington has buildings named after the original Baxter’s Wharf and Bunton’s Wharf. Should one of the new buildings going up in Aldershot be named after Brown’s Wharf? Something to think about?

For his wharf, which energized early Aldershot. For his building of Waterdown Road and for his laying of the foundation for LaSalle Park, the Aldershot Community Honour Roll recognized Aldexander Brown Junior at its annual event in May.

A group photo taken at the Burlington 150 Celebration





The Burlington Historical Society

Preserving Burlington's History for Today and Tomorrow

Membership Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Membership Dues

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

Are you interested in volunteering with the Society? Would you like to help us in preserving the history of our City? Tell us a bit about your talents and interests – info@burlingtonhistorical.ca

Donation

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

A Tax Receipt will be issued for all donations totaling \$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 Director

PO Box 93164

Burlington, Ontario L7M 4A3

1450 Headon Road

Make cheques payable to The Burlington Historical Society

E-Transfer

If you are a **new** member using e-transfer, please mail the completed form to us at the mailing address shown on the bottom left-hand side of this form OR

leave it at the Membership table at any General Meeting. This will ensure that we capture your email and mailing address for our database and the receipt of our newsletter.

www.burlingtonhistorical.ca

info@burlingtonhistorical.ca

[www.facebook.com/burlington history](https://www.facebook.com/burlingtonhistory)