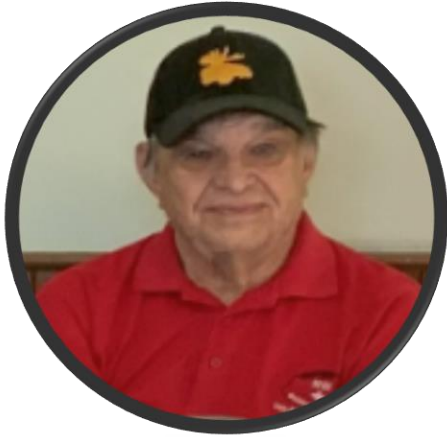


# The Burlington Historical Society **GAZETTE**

## "You Think You Knew Eaton's Canada"



The History of The Eaton's Department Store.  
The story told by Dave Bartlett,  
an avid collector and historian of the Eaton family company's growth.  
The presentation will be supported by a collection of Eaton Artifacts  
collected over a number of years.



Editor's Note: Many years ago, while still in school, I had a parttime job at Eaton's, Montreal. I was making money for Christmas. For some unknown reason, they assigned me to the Millenary Department. What did I know about women's hats?

<i>This month:</i>	<i>In this issue:</i>																
<p>Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm Centennial Hall, Central Library</p> <p>Join us to hear <b>Dave Bartlett</b></p> <p><b>Everyone is welcome!</b> <b>Bring your own Eaton's Memorabilia</b></p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">President's Message</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">BHS Executive</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Charles Davidson Saga</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">3, 4 &amp; 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Goodbye to an old friend</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Membership Report</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Social Media Report</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">From the Archives</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Membership form</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 2px 5px;">8</td> </tr> </table>	President's Message	2	BHS Executive	2	Charles Davidson Saga	3, 4 & 5	Goodbye to an old friend	6	Membership Report	6	Social Media Report	6	From the Archives	7	Membership form	8
President's Message	2																
BHS Executive	2																
Charles Davidson Saga	3, 4 & 5																
Goodbye to an old friend	6																
Membership Report	6																
Social Media Report	6																
From the Archives	7																
Membership form	8																

BHS Members will receive the BHS Gazette and other communications and can unsubscribe at any time [info@burlingtonhistorical.ca](mailto: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 Message *Don Thorpe*

Glad to hear that everything went well at our last speaker meeting. I am sorry that I missed Trevor's presentation. We had a family situation that took Janet and I to Windsor for a few days. Thanks to Alan for hosting the meeting.

Remember to use your solar eclipse glasses if you plan to view the event on the 8<sup>th</sup>. You will be able to tell me all about the eclipse at our next speaker meeting that will take place a few hours after this hundred year event.

## April Calendar

- **April 1** Easter Monday and Fools' Day
- **April 2** World Autism Awareness Day to raise awareness about autism and promote inclusion for people with autism. This day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007.
- **April 7** World Health Day to raise awareness about global health issues and promote healthy living. This day was designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1950.
- **April 8** Solar Eclipse
- **April 9** Vimy Ridge Day The Battle of Vimy Ridge began at 5:30 a.m. on Easter Monday, **April 9, 1917**. The first wave of 15,000-20,000 Canadian soldiers, many heavily laden with equipment, attacked through the wind-driven snow and sleet into the face of deadly machine gun fire. It was victory at a heavy cost: **3,598 Canadians were killed** and another 7,000 wounded. The capture of Vimy was more than just an important battlefield victory. For the first time all four Canadian divisions attacked together: men from all regions of Canada were present at the battle.
- **April 14** Passover A week-long observance of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, as described in the Hebrew Bible.
- **April 22** Earth Day to raise awareness about environmental issues and promote conservation efforts. Earth Day was first celebrated in 1970 and is now observed in more than 190 countries.
- **April 26** Arbor Day to celebrate trees and promote their importance to the environment.

### Were you born in April ?

They love adventure and thrill.  
 They are quite sensitive.  
 They can persuade anyone easily.  
 They are quite energetic and passionate.  
 They take risks when needed.  
 They have a creative side.  
 They are independent souls.  
 They hate being late.  
 They are reliable friends.  
 They are extremely honest.  
 They love sports.  
 They are romantic partners.

**Trivia Question:** Now a popular site for weddings and photo shoots, this property was originally owned by Laura Secord. What am I?

**Last Month's answer:** The Zimmerman House (aka Queen's Hotel, 400 Brant) was built in 1860

Officers (Elected)		Directors (Appointed)		Convenors (Appointed)		Archives Volunteers
President	Don Thorpe	Programs	Alan Harrington	Greeting Cards	Anne Wingfield	Peggy Armstrong
Vice President	Nicola Thomson	Archives	Joan Downey	Heritage Burlington	Alan Harrington	Jennifer Kemp
Secretary	Pat Taylor	Webmaster	Wayne Murphy	Social Media	Jennifer Kemp	Dorothy Kew
Treasurer	Joan Downey	Membership	Pat Taylor	Publicity	Jennifer Kemp	Chris Mallion Moore
Past President	Jane Ann Newson	Newsletter	Joan Downey	Image Specialist	Nicola Thomson	Gwynneth Richardson
		Outreach	All		David Craig	Pat Taylor
		Event Planner	Pat Taylor			Nicola Thomson

# Charles Davidson Saga by Ron Danielsen.....cont'd

Charles was joined in Mexico by his wife Minnie, and their two children Marion, six years old, and Pearl three years old. He obtained work with a Mexican railway as a car checker. The Pinkerton detectives were persistent and finally located Charles in November of that year. Detective John Murray was assigned to arrest Charles and bring him back to Canada for trial.

On November 8, the Hamilton Spectator reported that Charles' many friends were very much hurt by the unkind remarks made about him in that paper.

On November 18, 1892, Charles Davidson was arrested in Juarez, by the Mexican police accompanied by Detective John Murray. Murray was a thoughtful, kind and practical man. As soon as he saw the conditions in the Juarez jail he arranged for alternate accommodation for Charles. Evidently he neither considered Charles a dangerous criminal, nor a flight risk. It may have helped that Charles' family were in Juarez with him. It would be stretching it a bit to say that Murray and Charles became friends, but it is clear they became comrades, as they spent much time together, and had quite an adventure. They even went to a bull fight.



*Mexican Bullfight (Getty image)*

Charles resisted deportation and forced a judicial hearing. A representative of the Bank of Hamilton had to travel to Mexico to testify. Murray complained to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario that the extradition process was dragging on. The Lieutenant Governor appealed to the Governor General of Canada, who in turn asked for action from the British Consul in Mexico. Evidently this was a high profile case. In early December the extradition was approved, and the Solicitor General of Mexico issued the papers to

turn Charles over to the British authorities. By mid December, Charles and Detective Murray were in Vera Cruz, seeking transport back to Canada.

Returning to Canada from Mexico, without going through the US, was no mean feat, but considered necessary by Detective Murray and his superiors, as Charles could seek asylum in the US, and slip out of their grasp. Charles and Murray spent Christmas in Vera Cruz and then booked passage on a freighter to Santiago, Cuba. From Cuba they took another ship to Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and from Haiti, yet another ship to Kingston, Jamaica where they arrived on January 31<sup>st</sup> 1893. For the first time, they were now on British territory. Particularly in Haiti, Murray found that the prisons were far from comfortable and the prisoners badly treated, so he had spent funds as needed to secure Charles comfortable accommodations.

Detective Murray and Charles sailed from Jamaica on a cargo liner and arrived in Liverpool on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1893.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, they boarded the Dominion Steamship Company steamship, Sarnia bound for Halifax.

SS. Sarnia was a cargo liner with 30 passenger cabins, and a deadweight tonnage of 6,041. She was built in 1882 for the Dominion Line by Charles Connell and Company of Glasgow, Scotland. One way passage from Liverpool to Halifax, for each of two passengers sharing a cabin, was \$60.



*SS. Sarnia*

It took eighteen days to cross the Atlantic due to storms and a broken propellor shaft. According to Murray, the shaft was repaired just in time to prevent the ship from sinking in a violent storm. The SS Sarnia arrived in Halifax on March 20<sup>th</sup>.



On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1893, Charles was arraigned before Judge Snider at the County Court in Milton and pleaded guilty to three charges of forgery. The county attorney was Mr. Matheson and the defence attorney Mr. Nesbitt. Charles Davidson was sentenced to five years imprisonment in the Provincial Penitentiary in Kingston, with possibility of release in four years for good behaviour. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, Charles was transported to Kingston to serve his sentence.



*Kingston Penitentiary*

Meanwhile, Minnie, Pearl and Marian remained in Juarez after Charles' deportation. Charles' mother Jane, travelled to El Paso and stayed there to provide assistance and support to Minnie. It is unclear why she did not go to Juarez, but she crossed the border regularly to spend time with her daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Sadly, Marian, aged seven became ill and died on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1893. Shortly afterward, her grandmother, Jane, became ill and died on November 17<sup>th</sup> in El Paso. This left Minnie and Pearl alone in Juarez. Although we do not know exactly when, it would seem they returned to Burlington shortly thereafter.

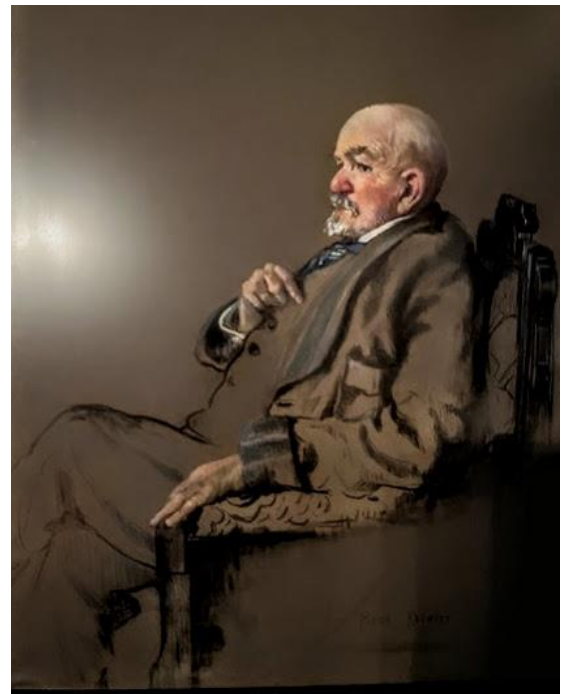
### **Epilogue**

We are not sure how long Charles Davidson was in prison, but the birth of his son Allan in 1898 would indicate he was released in 1897 after serving four years. All of the money was paid back to the Bank of Hamilton. Based on the corruption, fraud, bribery, conflict of interest, theft, and nepotism that were prevalent in government, and business in that era\*\*, one can only speculate on why the Bank of Hamilton chose to prosecute Charles rather than simply ask for repayment of the funds in 1892. In any case, Charles overcame the trauma caused by the events of this article, and the loss of his mother and daughter. He led a productive, satisfying and happy life thereafter. He loved his family, and was highly respected and well liked in the community.



*Charles Davidson with his son Allen, and wife Minnie, upon Allen's return from WW I*

Charles returned to running the nursery, which prospered. He put an addition on the family home, which now held three generations, his father, himself, Minnie, and their remaining children. Charles' brother William moved to Vaughn, Washington sometime between 1911 and 1914, where he had a farm. William had a long life, dying in 1950. After moving to Walla Walla, Harrison continued to practice as a veterinary surgeon. He was divorced twice, and died in 1929, in Forest Grove, Oregon, less than a month before his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday. John Davidson continued to work in the nursery and died in 1916.



*Portrait of Charles Davidson in later years by renowned artis Maida Knowles*

Charles Davidson lived until 1933. The nursery was then divided into two businesses, Allan H. Davidson and Son, vegetable and plant growers, and fruit brokers; and Davidson Nurseries. Allan H. Davidson was located at 590 Maple Avenue. It was owned by Charles' son Allan until his death in 1975. Allan's home at that location still exists. His son David then ran the business under the name Allan H. Davidson Co. David was a longstanding member of the Burlington Historical Society, and at one time gave a talk to the society on Maple Avenue history. David died in 2012.



Former Allan Davidson House at 590 Maple Ave.

Davidson Nurseries was run by Charles' daughter Constance (Con), and her husband Cecil Danielsen. It was located at 1199 Lockhart Road. The John Davidson family home at that location was torn down by a developer in 1980. The two properties abutted each other. Both of these businesses operated for over 100 years after the founding of John Davidson and Sons in 1874.



Drawing of John Davidson house at 1199 Lockhart Road, Burlington

Many of the Davidsons in this article are buried in the Davidson family plot in Greenwood Cemetery.



Davidson family plot, Greenwood Cemetery

### Acknowledgement

Thank you to Peggy Armstrong, whose research furnished almost all of the information for this article. And thank you to Dorothy Kew for filling in the gaps in the family tree. I am also indebted to Martha Davidson and Lynn Horler, (great-granddaughters of Charles) for family information and photographs.

### Footnotes:

\*Ref.BC Campus Canadian History: Post Confederation." it was the period from 1876 to 1896 that was to shape 20th century ideas about crisis management. In the course of a single generation, there were four important downturns: the first produced a depression across the North Atlantic in 1873; the second, a run on New York's Wall Street Stock Exchange, led to a North American economic crash in 1884; third, the collapse of London's Barings Bank followed in 1890; and fourth, in 1893 farm product prices collapsed and there was a run on banks in North America, Europe, and Australia. This sequence of economic crises is sometimes referred to collectively as the Long Depression ..."

\*\* ref. the book "Dominion" by Stephen R. Bown, Doubleday Canada, 2023.

**R.C.T. Danielsen, January 20, 2024**

### Editor's Note

The author, Ron Danielsen, is the son of Constance (Con) Davidson and Cecil Danielsen, the grandson of Charles.

Except where stated otherwise, photos are from the Danielsen family collection.



## Goodbye to a good friend of BHS

Longtime BHS member, **Ken Davy**, passed away last month. He was 97 years old. Along with many other endeavours, Ken served as BHS President and he was always a presence in our group.

The Brant Inn was one of his favourite topics and he was responsible for securing a Trillium grant and for the herculean task of putting together both the DVD “Meet Me at the Brant Inn” and the book “Brant Inn Memories” and later, for the plaque in Spencer Smith Park.

Ken was a friend and mentor to BHS and we will miss him. I’m sure he was met at the pearly gates by Gav Morton and his band playing music from the Brant Inn.

This photo, by Alan Harrington, is of a painting by Ken. A prolific artist, his favourite subject was

Hamilton’s north end. This view, however, is from Burlington looking towards Hamilton. Note the Skyway in the distance.



## Membership Report *Pat Taylor*



The end of March finds us with a membership of 67 individuals - 44 Seniors; 9 Family (18 people); 5 Adults. Another total is 54 renewed members, and 13 new members. It would be nice to see a membership total of at least 75 - it's not too late to renew - the form is on the last page of this Gazette.

Did you know the last time we increased membership fees was at the beginning of 2008? Where else can you get a deal like that?

Covering newly planted tomato plants with newspaper to protect from frost.  
BHS the Thorpe Collection

## Social Media Report *Jennifer Kemp*

The number of our followers on social media continues to rise, especially on Facebook. These were the figures at the beginning of March:

Facebook -	1387
Instagram -	475
Twitter (X) -	59



Did you sign in yet? If not, you're missing out.

Photo BHS, The Fisher Family collection

## From the Archives *Joan Downey*

### A Taste of the Past, conclusion....

In March I included recipes from the past. Included was Nellie's Shortbread and I had no idea who Nellie was. Longtime Archives volunteer, Peggy Armstrong knows who Nellie was! It was Helen Morriner, always known as Nellie or, as Aunt Nell to close friends. Nellie was a dressmaker and operated a business out of her home on Elizabeth Street until she was 85! But, she continued to do some dressmaking and lived to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 16 March 1976. She died in October of that year. In a Burlington Post story of January 1976, she said "I really don't want my picture in the paper you know. People will say I look 100!"

### Winter chores at the Kemp farm *William Kemp*

Winters were long and with no money coming in through these winter months things were rather tough. In the market garden business you still had to spend money through these months to prepare for spring and summer crops, such as repairing any wood rot of the frames in preparation for next spring plants and replacing any broken glass panes in the sashes, putting a strain on the money pit. Through the winter months they would compile a composted soil pile. As I recall it was about 4' tall x 15 or 20' wide x 30 to 35' long, all mixed by hand in preparation for spring planting in the cold frames.

In preparation to have a warm base of manure for the cold frames they ordered a railway gondola car filled with manure from the stockyards in Toronto. It would arrive at the Freeman railway station and was put on a side track for the Kemps to unload. They were given 3 days to unload it and if they didn't get it unloaded in that time there was an extra charge! With this in mind they used their own farm truck as well as borrowing their brother Arthur's truck from Strathcona Orchards. That was a huge help as his was equipped with a dump feature. You still had to off load from the rail car, but the dump feature made things easier at the frame yard. This pile of manure, if it was not warm at this time, was piled in the frame yard and either snow was added or, if there was no snow, it was watered down to encourage the manure to heat up. I recall personally helping to off load the manure at the rail yard and if the manure was warm it would be a very steamy atmosphere. If you had a cold when you entered that gondola car you didn't have it when you left it!

The manure was necessary to be warm as that was all the heat there was in these so-called cold frames. The row of manure was turned once to mix the cool manure on the outside with the hot manure in the center, prior to spreading out and tamping so the portable frames could

be placed on this bed of hot manure. As well the outside of the frames were banked with manure to the top of the frame, to contain the heat and eliminate penetration of cold weather. An amount of soil was added on top of the layer of warm manure to allow seeding and transplanting.

Each frame accommodated a three glazed sash to allow sun penetration. If severe weather, a second glazed sash was added to maintain an even temperature for the seedlings. In addition, light board covers were added to assist in keeping this even temperature and to protect the glass. Straw was also added on top of the board covers. The board covers were removed daily to allow sun to penetrate again. This was done if weather permitted! There was a wire that ran from one end of the frame to the other, a distance of approx. 200 feet, in order to hold the board covers in high winds. Frames were located in order to get most benefit from the sun. When the plants were big enough they would transfer them into the hot frames. This operation was all done while lying on their stomach on a board over the frame in the area they were being planted. This was done in rain, snow, cold windy weather with a makeshift shelter they would erect to ward off the elements. Not a very likeable job but these early crops provided some early money.



*Photo from Kemp Collection, BHS Archiv*



*The Burlington Historical Society*  
**Preserving Burlington's History for Today and Tomorrow**

**Membership - 2024**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Dues**

New Member

Renewal

Family \$40.00

Adult: \$30.00

Senior \$25.00

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](mailto: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 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

Make cheques payable to The Burlington Historical Society

**OR**

e-transfer funds to  
[info@burlingtonhistorical.ca](mailto:info@burlingtonhistorical.ca)



If you are a new member using e-transfer, please email the completed form to us at the above email

**OR**

Leave it at the Membership table at any General Meeting

[www.burlingtonhistorical.ca](http://www.burlingtonhistorical.ca)  
[info@burlingtonhistorical.ca](mailto:info@burlingtonhistorical.ca)  
[www.facebook.com/burlingtonhistory](https://www.facebook.com/burlingtonhistory)