

The



Journal

Volume 5, Number 4

January 1, 1991



by Ken Lamb

May 1991 be memorable and fulfilling for you and your families.

It's traditional at the New Year to look back over the past 12 months. I'd like to stretch the concept a bit to cover a decade in Milton and a happy three-year stint as Society president.

I could easily list dozens of worthwhile programs and projects. But for space reasons I'm selecting just a few examples that suggest the scope and flavor of our activities.

* Town Hall opening 1985. You could feel the excitement of the crowd seated in front of the refurbished court house. It was an important day and everyone knew it. The event had special meaning for us because the Society was founded with one of its goals to preserve this historic building. Mayor Gord Krantz acknowledged the important work of Jim Dills and the Society, during the ceremony.

* Doubleheader. Will any of us ever forget the hectic atmosphere of November, 1986 when the Society celebrated two major projects on the same day? There was Val Grimshaw in the Pioneer Cemetery on Bronte Street leading a ceremony to mark restoration of the pioneers' gravestones. It was one of the many projects that Val took on and saw through. Val's ceremony had hardly ended when another began just a couple of hundred yards away, this one crowning months of work by Len McNeil. The Society was honoring P.L. Robertson, inventor of the socket-head screw and one of the Town's best-known historic figures. While dignitaries were making speeches in the Robertson-Whitehouse warehouse, Ad Woodley

HAPPY NEW YEAR

and Tom Howard hustled to erect two memorial plaques. One on Bronte Street marks "P.L.'s" industrial contribution. The other at Margaret and Martin Streets describes his long tenure in the John Martin (Sproat) House.

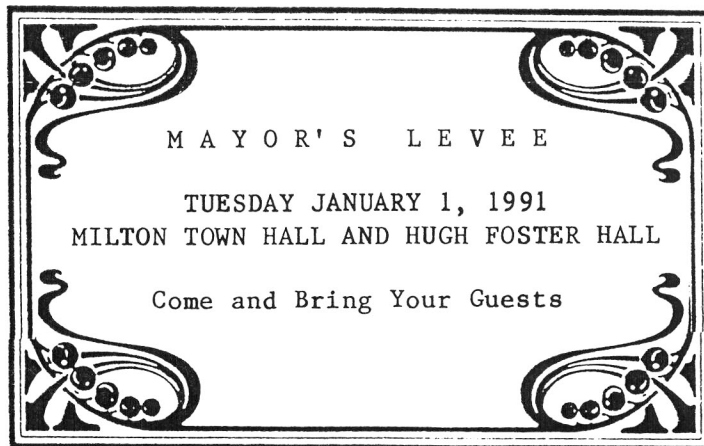
* Letter Perfect, or how Alex Cooke played the role of a great detective. While routine-

Continued on page 6

SOCIETY TO ELECT NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Nominations chairman Len McNeil has been busy seeking nominations for the 1991 executive. We'll hear the results of his efforts at our January 17 meeting.

There's still time for you to take part. Please get in touch with Len (878-2117) with your suggestions. And please don't be shy about putting your own name forward if you are interested in taking part in research, oral history, photography, increasing membership or other activities.



KEEPING IN STEP WITH THE HIKERS

A late September tour of historic Milton was part of the Bruce Trail Association's annual conference program here.

More than 30 hikers spent about three hours with Ken Lamb and Jim Dills. Among the walkers was Ray Lowes, who founded the trail more than 25 years ago as a project of the Hamilton Naturalists.

Jim gave a short talk on P.L. Robertson in "P.L.'s" former home, John Martin (Sproat) House. Then it was on to St. Paul's United Church, which is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its present sanctuary, and where Jim is chair of the Church Council. We ended up at Hugh Foster Hall, where we managed a brief visit even though the Hall was elaborately decorated and set up to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of a Mississauga couple.

Treasa and Ken Lamb are among 400 "end-to-enders" - those who have hiked the entire 760 kilometer Bruce Trail from Queenston to Tobermory at the northern tip of the Bruce peninsula. Tod Laing is well advanced toward the same objective.

SPREADING THE WELCOME MAT AT THE OPEN HOUSE

Dozens of visitors dropped into our display at the early September "open house" at Milton Mall. Several out-of-province people asked about Milton relatives.

A newcomer to our community - Peggy Hughes, who majored in history at university - joined the Society at the "open house".

IN EDUCATION:

RYERSON PLAYED A GIANT ROLE MUSEUM SCHOOL DOING WELL, TOO

At the front of the classroom a dignified portrait of King Edward VII and a huge Union Jack set the stage for Marjorie Powys' Sept. 20 program on education in Ontario.

More than 40 members and friends attended the session in the one-room school, part of the Ontario Agricultural Museum. Marjorie, whose extensive teaching career included 17 years as head of business education at Milton District High School, told of the vital role of Egerton Ryerson in shaping Ontario's educational system. Thanks in large part to his efforts, Ontario was the third government in the world to provide free public education, Marjorie said. Massachusetts and Scotland had earlier introduced such systems.

Egerton Ryerson, a Methodist minister, was Superintendent of Education in this Province from 1844 to 1876.

The story of the Museum school itself was also an important factor in the evening's program. Former teacher Jean Black spoke briefly of her time there: Merv Wilson and Lillian Farlow were two of her pupils.

Ed Parsons attended just before the First World War and later served as a trustee. Sometimes, he said, he had to scurry at the last minute to find enough people for a quorum. Ed's late wife, Florence, was the teacher for 17 years before classes ended in the mid-1960s.

Children had attended the school (grade one to eight in today's terms) for almost 80 years. The Appleby Line School was variously known as Number 6, Richmond, Kelso and Christie.

Researcher Lynn Campbell of the Museum staff explained that the school was furnished to the 1910 period before it was officially opened in 1988 as a Museum attraction. She said it is enjoying a most active "second career"; last year 40,000 children visited the stone school as part of the Museum's education program.



Milton Historical Society

P.O. Box 85
Milton, Ont., L9T 2Y3

President - Ken Lamb

Past President - Len McNeil

Treasurer - Jessie Hamilton

Secretary - Marie Sutcliffe

Publications - Marion Detlor

Programs - Bill Gregg

Publicity and Promotion - Tod Laing

Membership - Marjorie Powys

Municipal Liaison - Audrea Lear-Costigan

Special Events - Ad Woodley

Librarian/Archivist - Brenda Whitlock

Research - Jack Charlton, Jim Dills

Genealogy - Alex Cooke

Annual Memberships

Single \$7. Family \$10
Students \$5

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS FOR HERITAGE WINNERS?

Again this year our Society is working with the Milton LACAC to choose four winners of Heritage Awards.

There will be one award in each of four categories:

- . Heritage writing - newspapers, books, magazines etc.
- . Photography - prints, slides.
- . Architectural - preservation or restoration of historic property.
- . Education - teaching children or adults about heritage.

Do you know someone, or some group, in Regional Milton, that would qualify for one of these awards? If so, please get in touch as soon as possible with Jim Dills (878-6061).

The awards will be presented in a ceremony at Hugh Foster Hall February 17 during Heritage Week.

WE'VE GOT A NEW TOOL TO GET OUR STORY ACROSS

We now have another way to tell our story about Milton's heritage. It's in the form of a Kodak slide projector.

Over the years, we've presented many slide shows, as you know. But to do it we have had to borrow the personal equipment of generous members.

The new projector is being kept in our space in John Martin (Sproat) House along with our archives, the display unit and other property.

OUR BOOK OF PLAQUED HOMES PREVIEWED AT OCTOBER MEETING

At our October meeting Jack Charlton and Jim Dills gave us the first chapters of a coming book about Milton's historic homes.

The program was presented on two screens. One showed the information that has been obtained on a dozen of our plaqued houses by Jack, Jim and Alex Cooke. The other screen showed Len McNeil's slides of the homes.

Jim explained that black-and-white photos being taken by Rex Sutcliffe will illustrate the 60 or so homes and buildings. When Jim asked the audience for their views, it appeared there would be a ready market for the book at a price of \$10.

The book will be available some time in 1991.

OUR JANUARY SPEAKER GIVES US HISTORY ON THE FLY

For our first meeting of the year January 17 - we'll hear from a man who flew around the world but kept his heart in Ontario.

Our speaker is Alan Skeoch, a history teacher and radio broadcaster.

The title of his talk is "Around the World in 40 Days". He found out that almost wherever he went he was reminded of southern Ontario.

That's undoubtedly because he has done so much research on our past, including his extensive work on the "Home" children - the poor and deprived British kids sent to work on Canadian farms from 1870 to the 1930s.

This promises to be an outstanding program.

PLEASE HELP HONOR "MODERN" PIONEERS AT FEBRUARY 21 SOCIETY MEETING

At our February 21 meeting we'll honor Milton's "modern" pioneers. At the same time we hope to obtain important items for our archives.

For our purposes a "modern" pioneer is someone who lived in the Milton area in 1950 or earlier. We'll be paying homage to some of our own members, of course. But we hope you'll invite many other members of the "Class of '50".

We're looking forward to a friendly nostalgic evening. We hope, too, that guests will bring photos, yearbooks and similar items and perhaps contribute some of them to our archives.

Our displays throughout Hugh Foster Hall will take us back to the days when Milton was a close-knit community of fewer than 2,000 and truly a part of rural Ontario.

Please come and bring your "pioneer" friends.

CHURCH HISTORIAN IS OUR MARCH SPEAKER

An accomplished speaker who for many years has been teaching University of Toronto students about church history, will be featured at our March 21 meeting.

Although officially retired, John Moir commutes to Toronto regularly from Port Dover to lecture on religious topics. He has the knack of tailoring broad religious subjects to appeal to historical groups like ours. That was quite evident when he spoke to the Nasagieweya Historical Society a few years ago.

Circle March 21 on your calendar

STUDENTS WALK AND SKETCH ON HISTORIC TOWN TOUR

A walk by grade eight students of St. Peter's School November 8 began in what used to be P.L. Robertson's sitting room.

Twenty-eight boys and girls met in the John Martin (Sproat) House to hear Jack Charlton explain how settlement of Milton began. Jack and Ken Lamb later led the students on a 40 minute heritage walk ending at the Town Hall.

Teacher Paul Leonard included two sketching sessions - at the Sproat House and the Town Hall - as part of the program.

PEOPLE STAY ON AND ON TO TALK ABOUT HERITAGE

It's an interesting meeting when people are still discussing the subject 30 minutes after the thank-you speech. That's what happened November 15 when Dan Schneider, Ministry of Culture and Communications, spoke to us on proposed changes in Ontario's Heritage laws.

Dan spent two years as senior policy analyst with the Heritage Review Committee. He believes legislation will be passed "some time in 1991".

The meeting attracted many interested in town administration and/or heritage matters. These included Mayor Gordon Krantz, Councillors Brad Clements and Barry Lee; three members of Milton LACAC - the chairman Doug Griggs, Councillor Bruce Attenborough and Bob Moreau; and Director Paul Attack of the Regional Museum.

The speaker said proposals made by the review committee represented a carrot-and-stick approach. Some proposals would make it financially attractive for property owners to preserve heritage structures. Others would make it more difficult, and in some instances impossible, for owners to demolish historic buildings.

Mayor Krantz commented that Milton and many other communities would be greatly interested in the financial implications of proposed changes in heritage laws. Higher costs to the Town would have to be weighed against the benefits of increased protection for heritage structures.

Councillor Lee and others stressed the need for measures to educate residents about heritage values.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO VIEW NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

The Niagara Escarpment, in its time, has played many parts in Milton's life. And speakers at the Thanksgiving Day program at the Regional Museum described some of the major roles.

Our John McDonald discussed making of lime from Escarpment rocks. In addition to showing slides of lime's use in construction and agriculture, John later led a tour of the remains of several kilns in the Kelso Conservation area. Lime was produced at Kelso for about 80 years, starting in the 1880s.

Limestone from the Escarpment is also important in road and other types of construction. Executive Director Robert Cook of the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario talked about this controversial topic. He stressed the importance of having a nearby source of construction material for the "Golden Triangle". He also showed slides of how some mined-out quarries have been "recycled" as recreational lakes, botanical gardens and other uses.

Murray Stephen of the Halton Region Conservation Authority explained that the impetus for the conservation authority in this area came not from the need for flood control but as a protest against "flyrock" from industrial blasting at Mount Nemo. He showed slides of various activities promoted by the Authority and later guided visitors on a tour of a former quarry.

WALT ELLIOT IS NOW PART OF OUR "ORAL" LIBRARY

Our "Oral History" records now include a 50 minute conversation with Walt Elliot, former Liberal MPP for Halton North.

Walt, a member of our Society, met with Alex Cooke and Ken Lamb three weeks after the September 6 election. He described what it's like to serve as an MPP and as a Parliamentary Assistant (Ministry of Housing, in Walt's case).

He also commented on the election that returned the first NDP government in Ontario history.

Walt's tape will be kept primarily for the use of future historians. However, Walt is quite willing to make the tape available to Society members. If you would like to hear it, please make your views known at the next meeting.

We would like to expand our "Oral History" program. Volunteers would be most welcome.

FORMER MEMBER TAKES ON BIG JOB

Peter Ledwith, former Society member as well as guest speaker, is taking on another big job.

At a June meeting in Edmonton, Peter becomes president of The Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums. The association represents scores of farm-related organizations in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Peter is curator of collections at the Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton. The local museum includes elements of historical farms because it includes several homesteads representing different periods of the 19th century. A full-fledged "living historical farm", however, recreates a specific farm in great detail, including the number and type of animals, types of vehicles and implements, furniture and other features.

Peter is only the second Canadian to be chosen for the position.

HERITAGE PROTECTION IS TOUGH IN PORTUGAL

Heritage protectors carry a big stick in Portugal. At our November 15 meeting Alma and Glen Wicks gave this example.

They were disappointed to find that a popular overseas restaurant had gone out of business.

"We were told that the owner had altered an interior wall without permission of heritage authorities," Alma says. "The result was that the restaurant owner was forced out of the heritage building and lost his business."

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR THE NEW YEAR?

This is a special note to all those who have not yet renewed their Society membership for 1991.

If you won't be attending our January 17 meeting please send a cheque to: Milton Historical Society, Box 85, Milton Ont. L9T 2Y3. There's no change in fees - \$7 for individuals; \$10 for families.

Obviously we think our heritage organization is extremely important. We believe we have already made a worthwhile contribution to the community, thanks to your support.

We're confident our Society will continue to grow in 1991 so we can broaden our scope and we want you and your friends to be a part of that work.

CEMETERY IS LOCALE OF NEW HISTORIC WALK

The Society is working with Evergreen Cemetery officials to develop another historic walk. (Our booklet, published 18 months ago, covers two walks in the downtown area.)

Jack Charlton is researching information on some of the notable Miltonians buried at Evergreen. Roy Downs, Secretary Treasurer of the cemetery board, will help in mapping out a path linking the various grave sites.

We expect the project to be completed and the first walk scheduled by fall. A likely starting point is the recently-completed garden near the Ontario St. gates. A bequest from long-time Miltonian Mildred Menzies made that project possible. Mildred died six years ago. She was a founding member of the Society and her father built many homes in the community.

Evergreen, which has been in use for 110 years, has records of almost 5,800 burials.



MILL DISAPPEARS DOWNTOWN AS HISTORIC SITE CLEARED

There has been a dramatic change in the look of downtown Milton. For generations a mill on Martin Street shaped the town's character. By October 1 the former mill site was as flat as a bowling alley. After almost 170 years that's quite a change.

Jasper Martin's grist mill, built in 1821, is usually considered the beginning of the core of the town. The first mill was replaced following a fire in December 1855. That stone mill remained until a fire in 1963. Subsequently more modern buildings were adapted to the feed operations.

Robin Hood Flour Mills closed the mill some months ago and recently sold the site to the developer of adjacent condominiums.

It is likely that an apartment building or condominiums will eventually be built on the former mill site.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Continued from page one

ly checking items for the archives at the Regional Museum a few years ago, Alex spotted a gem. It was the original letter from Hugh Foster offering to give Halton County a four-acre plot as a site for the courthouse and other county buildings. A copy of that hand-written letter is now part of our plaque in Hugh Foster Hall. Hundreds of visitors see it each year, including members of walking tours led by Society members.

* Rekindling recognition of Hugh Foster. It always bothered Jack Charlton that he sat on a municipal council that allowed Charles St. to replace Foster St. When the former Registry Office was nearing completion Jack led the Society in asking Council to recognize the early developer Hugh Foster, in naming the building in honor of the donor of the site.

* P.L. Robertson re-union. We've had dozens of excellent meetings but for community involvement, attendance and volume of flashing video lights, this deserves special mention. Dozens of present and former employees of the P.L. Robertson and Robertson-Whitehouse firms thoroughly enjoyed themselves.


* Mayors' Photos. Finding photos of all Milton mayors since the town was incorporated in 1857 took a lot of effort by our researchers. But the composite photo looks great on the wall of the committee room in the Town Hall. And it makes a valid contribution to the building's traditions.

* Recognizing the Arms. A bronze plaque is also located in the main foyer of the new town hall marking the anniversary of the Society. But it particularly refers to the Arms of Milton and includes the poem from which the motto was taken. Len McNeil's research led to this complete project.

* Walking Tour Booklet. We've had a lot of mileage out of this booklet since it was published 18 months ago. It has been a useful guide for numerous walkers in town and a good promotional piece for the Society. It is also just one reflection of the extensive research program under way by Jim Dills, Jack Charlton and Alex Cooke.

So there we are -- just a few great moments, as they say. But we can be sure there are more to come in '91. (No rhyme intended.)

I predict a wonderful year for our collective efforts.



GO AHEAD
MAKE HISTORY

JOIN
MILTON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
NOW

Membership
Application

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Post. Code _____

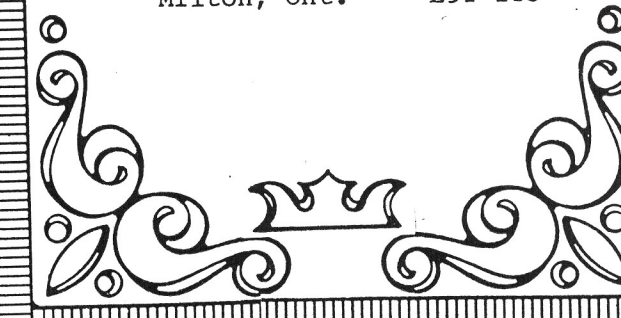
Telephone _____

Family \$10 Single \$7
Student \$5

Please make cheques payable to
Milton Historical Society and
mail to :

Milton Historical Society

P.O. Box 85
Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3



The Journal

Volume 6 No. 1

Published by the Milton Historical Society

April 1, 1991

Walt Elliot is New President; Ken Hassard Joins Executive

Walt Elliot became the Society's sixth president at the election held during the January meeting. He succeeds Ken Lamb who held the office for three years.

Walt has been involved in public affairs for many years. He was MPP for Halton North and parliamentary assistant to the housing minister before being narrowly defeated in last September's election.

Walt spent many years as an educator. He was head of mathematics at Birchmount Park Collegiate, Scarborough and before that was principal of the regional high school in Orangeville.

He is a native of Chesley and a direct descendant of Adam Scott Elliot, who founded that central Ontario town almost 150 years ago.

Also joining the executive is Ken Hassard, who succeeds Ad Woodley as director - special events. A native of Acton, Ken is a lifetime resident of Halton, except for a three-year Navy stint during World War II. He moved to Milton about 30 years ago and retired last year after 35 years with the local Canadian Meter Company.

Ken is active in public affairs as area president for the Oakville-Milton Progressive Conservative Association.

Guides Show Keen Interest In Milton Street Names

About 25 Girl Guides took part in a local history session in January at St. Paul's United Church.

The girls (9 to 12 years old) tried to identify a dozen personalities from clues given by Ken Lamb. The 30 minute program, arranged by Guide leader Lisa Moore, also included a discussion of historic buildings and some of the factors that established the town and made it grow.

The guides showed special interest in how streets got their names. They were glad to hear that the Society has done some work on this subject and expects to publish it.

Join now in

MAKING HISTORY



Milton
Historical
Society
P.O. Box 85
Milton, Ontario
L9T 2Y3

New Brochure Reveals All

A brochure that describes the Society's goals and activities made its debut at the February heritage event. It will be used at "open houses" and on other occasions to promote heritage and attract new members. Pick up a copy at a regular meeting and pass it along to a friend who might consider membership.

The brochure was the first work to emerge from the desktop-publishing addition to Jim Dills' computer.

Jim Snow is Speaker At Our April Meeting

One of the most widely known figures in Ontario will be our April 18 speaker.

Jim Snow lives in Hornby, not far from the James Snow Parkway, named after him. Jim was a member of the Ontario cabinet for almost 15 years including 10 years as Minister of Transport and Communications. He left politics in 1985.

Educated in Milton, Jim founded a construction business as a young man and later branched into other business and industrial ventures, as well as a beef-raising operation.

Jim will talk about his lifetime in Halton and no doubt elaborate on many of the chapters in his recently published autobiography "Mister Jim".

The Society's regular meetings are held at Hugh Foster Hall, next to the Milton Town Hall. Doors open at 7.30 p.m. for chat and coffee. The program begins at 8 p.m.

The President Writes

. . . by Walt Elliot

The evolution of small-town Ontario has always fascinated me greatly. Under the capable direction of Ken Lamb the Milton Historical Society, over the past three years, has done an excellent job. At its meetings the heritage of Milton has been highlighted. The Society has provided a focus for interested community members to better understand the evolution of Milton to the fine community it is today. It is super to have a little time to take part more fully in these significant activities. It is also super to say thanks a million to Ken and his executive for a job well done.

It's shaping up to be another exciting year for the Milton Historical Society. At our regular May meeting we will be highlighting genealogy. In June we visit Ireland House, the restored farmstead on Guelph Line. A special event in September will feature a meter museum right here in Milton. Dr. Bill Finlayson will be our speaker in October to tell us about recent archaeological finds at Crawford

Lake. We plan to arrange an art and architecture tour to Queen's Park in November. The entire historical society will be invited to the December light show at the Halton County Radial Railway Museum.

In addition to our regular monthly meetings we will be searching, in co-operation with LACAC, for our third set of Heritage Award winners for February 1992, attempting to publish a book of plaqued historical homes in Milton, manning a booth at two community days at the Milton Mall and dealing with a request to raise some money for the new Leisure Centre.

If you have any unique fund-raising suggestions please call a member of the executive. We would like to help in this important town venture.

Do you know of anyone interested in local history? If so encourage them to join the Society as they would enjoy discussing history with other Society members. As well, ask them to get in touch with Marjorie Powys, our membership vice-president.

Your executive is impressive. To a person they are high calibre, interested people. It will be my pleasure to assist them in generating a worthwhile program of events for you in 1991. Hopefully you will actively participate and enjoy these events with us on a regular basis.



Milton Historical Society

P.O. Box 85
Milton, Ont.
L9T 2Y3

President - Walt Elliot
Past President - Ken Lamb
Treasurer - Jessie Hamilton
Secretary - Marie Sutcliffe
Membership - Marjorie Powys
Special Events - Ken Hassard
Publicity - Tod Laing
Liaison - Audrea Lear-Costigan
Program - Bill Gregg
Archivist - Brenda Whitlock
Genealogy - Alex Cooke
Research - Jack Charlton and
Jim Dills
Publications - Marion Detlor

Annual Memberships
Single \$7. Family \$10
Students \$5

Society's Sept. 19 Meeting Is Visit to a Special Museum

Our new director of special events, Ken Hassard, has arranged a visit to the industrial museum at the Canadian Meter Company in Milton. The trip will be on Thursday, **Sept. 19.**

This is familiar territory for Ken, who retired a year ago after a long career with the firm.

The museum is devoted to the history of meters used in the natural gas industry.

"I think people will be surprised at the range of these measuring devices," Ken says. "It is also an opportunity to see one of the few private-industry museums in this area."

The visit begins at 7:30 p.m. at Canadian Meter Company on the north side of Derry Road on the opposite corner from Milton District Hospital. Members can either drive directly to the Derry Road site or meet at Hugh Foster Hall at 7:15 for car pooling.

Joe Henderson Wins Local Heritage Award

Joe Henderson - a long-time and popular member - has been recognized for his role in heritage education.

At the Heritage Celebration in Hugh Foster Hall Feb. 17 Joe was presented with a Milton Heritage award, one of four presented during the ceremony. The event was arranged by the Society and Milton LACAC in co-operation with the Town.

Joe, whose paternal great-grandparents settled in Nassagaweya in 1856, has played many parts in heritage education. He has spoken often on farming in Nassagaweya, family history, early cars and other topics. And he is a familiar figure at "open houses" and historical meetings, displaying and playing his 1911 phonograph.

Three other winners were recognized at the Feb. 17 celebration. The late George Jackson, Milton, won the visual category. His collection of more than 60 Milton postcards, mostly of the early 1900s, is now part of the archives at Halton Region Museum. Eleanor Jackson accepted the award in her husband's name.

Dorothy Singleton took the architectural award. She and her late husband, Jim, restored an 1891 limestone home, built by the pioneer Easterbrook family, on Guelph Line just south of Campbellville.

We Were Well Represented At Heritage Celebration

Members played many roles in the February 17 heritage event. Walt Elliot presided at the award presentations, Jim Dills produced a photo display and Shirley customized the velvet and gold braid bags for the limestone awards. Jack Charlton and Ken Lamb led a historic walk in downtown Milton. Alex Cooke, Don Hayward and George Wachmann set up and attended the display. Jessie Hamilton and Treasa Lamb took care of refreshments. Helen and Len McNeil greeted guests. Brad Clements provided the limestone and represented Town Council along with Councillors Bruce Attenborough, Barry Lee and Mayor Gordon Krantz. MPP Noel Duignan represented the Provincial government.

Lawyer Peter McWilliams was honored in the writing category for his book "Rambling Tales of a Country Lawyer" published about a year ago.

The four metal plaques were mounted on pieces of limestone taken from the walls of the former Bruce St. School in Milton. The school, which served the area for 115 years, was razed following its closure in June 1972. The Milton Public Library and Bruce Apartments now occupy the site.

Death of Gordon MacKenzie Recalls Long "P.L." Career

The death of Gordon MacKenzie in Toronto in December at the age of 101 brings to mind a 50-year career in Milton industry as well as one of the liveliest meetings in the history of our Society.

Len McNeil has done extensive research on P.L. Robertson as a personality and an industrialist. Gordon MacKenzie played an important part in both spheres.

Born in Kincardine, Ont. in 1889, Gordon was brought up by the Robertson family after his mother's death in the early 1890s. He joined the P.L. Robertson firm in 1908 when it moved from Hamilton to Milton. He lived with "P.L.", a bachelor, and his mother in Sproat House on Margaret Street from 1916 until 1927 when he married pianist Kathleen Wahrin. The MacKenzies later lived for many years at 87 Martin Street, now occupied by optometrist and town Councillor Les Laughren.

In a 50-year career with the P.L. Robertson metal products firm, Gordon served in many positions. He was assistant manager for 25 years and later served as vice-president, acting president and director. He became president after "P.L.'s" death in 1951 and served in that position until he retired in 1959.

Gordon was an active participant in our "P.L. Robertson Night" in the Public Library several years ago. Dozens of former Robertson employees attended. They enjoyed Gordon's reminiscences; they also filled the room with photo and video flashes, most of them directed at Gordon.

Want to Search Family Roots? Get a Good Start May 16

If you want to uncover your family roots but don't know how to go about it, our **May 16** meeting is for you.

The featured speaker has not been confirmed at this writing but the aim will be to take some of the mystery out of "growing" family trees with time-saving hints on domestic and overseas searches.

No doubt our members Marion Detlor and Alex Cooke, also enthusiastic and experienced genealogists, will contribute to a lively discussion.

Jim Dills Compiles 174 Year Vote Record

Jim Dills' latest research project centres on Halton's politics.

He has just compiled a record of all those who have represented Halton - or parts of it - in the federal and provincial legislatures. The record begins in 1816 when Halton was established as part of Gore District. One of the final entries records Walt Elliot's term as a Liberal member of the Legislature for Halton North, ending with the September election last year.

Although he has not decided when and how the record will be published, Jim says it will be a valuable resource for future historians.

Ken Wilson's Files Bulge With Nassagaweya Records

Ken Wilson, who lives in London, is gearing up to write a book on the history of Nassagaweya.

He already has obtained several memoirs of pioneers as well as family histories and early photos. Another recent addition is a computer system capable of desktop publishing.

He expects to be devoting a lot of time to the project, especially after he retires later this year from the London Free Press.

"This started out as my own family history project," Ken says, "but in the past seven or eight years seems to have snowballed into something much bigger. In tracing four of my paternal lines in old Nassagaweya - the Norrishes, Easterbrooks, Youarts and Wilsons - I found I was getting more and more involved in a history of the whole township, what with all the inter-marriages and complex social relationships that developed in a relatively restricted rural area in the early-to-mid-1800s."

British Columbia Where Were you?

The Mayor's New Year's Day Levee was just one province short of being a coast-to-coast event. About 200 visitors attended, hailing from Kentville Nova Scotia to Leduc, Alberta.

A few highlights of the entertaining event:

. Jim Dills' excellent photo display in Hugh Foster Hall, attended by Marjorie Powys and Alex Cooke.

. Gordon Krantz, resplendent in his mayoralty chains, holding forth on various town topics in the Council Chambers.

. The huge and impressive spruce donated by Town employee Dick Henricksen as a Christmas tree. The tree was getting a bit too large for Dick's property but it was just right for the Town Hall foyer.

. Trevor Lewington and several other youngsters who sat in the mayor's chair and had the fun of banging the gavel.

. The 'goodies' provided by Society members in Hugh Foster Hall.

. The more than 30 photos taken by Rex Sutcliffe for the Champion and Society records.

Members who took part included Jessie Hamilton, Helen and Len McNeil, Tod Laing, Marie Sutcliffe, Ken Hassard, Lillian Krywaniuk, Ad Woodley, Jim Dills and Ken Lamb. Participating Town councillors were Brad Clements, Rick Day, Bill Johnson, Barry Lee, Mary Long and Art Melanson.

Alan Skeoch Takes Light Tack On a Violent, Gloomy Night

Iraq's first missile attack on Israel Jan. 17 created an ominous feeling and made people reluctant to leave their television screens. Yet less than two hours after the attack was announced more than 30 members met to hear Alan Skeoch's talk on his world travels.

Mr. Skeoch's light and informal approach gave us a sharp contrast to the gloomy news. He showed slides of the many places visited on the 40-day round-the-world trip. He also described the cattle and agricultural machinery found in New Zealand and Australia and traced some improvements in these fields to their Canadian sources.

"New Pioneers" Have Keen Recall Of Mid-Century Years in Milton

Our four speakers at our "New Pioneers" night Feb. 21 showed keen memories and a sure touch with amusing incidents. More than 35 members attended.

Edgar Foster spent 36 years in the local school system starting in 1933. He recalled many student trips to Toronto to visit the Legislature, the Royal Ontario Museum and sessions of the "Happy Gang" radio show. Students once met the Lieutenant-Governor and another time Agnes MacPhail, Canada's first female M.P. and eminent feminist. She had grown up in the area in which Edgar first taught.

Joe Henderson, lifelong farmer, felt the only times farmers could make a good living locally were during or immediately after wars. "In the 1890s," Joe said, "farmers got \$20 for a steer - enough to pay their land taxes for two years. In recent years farmers had to sell two steers to pay one year's taxes. On the other hand a farm that sold for \$3000 fifty years ago changed hands again recently for \$1,250,000."

Jean Butts retired a few years ago after a distinguished nursing career. She recalled with enthusiasm Milton's pioneer spirit of "all for one and one for all." Jean praised the efforts of Dr. Stevenson who operated a private hospital on Martin Street. The building was demolished in the early 1980s to make way for Heritage Square.

"We often called on Charlie Johnson, a nearby garage owner, to help us out. Whether it was to help calm a troublesome patient or to make a special splint, he never let us down," Jean said.

Mike Ledwith, a Dundas native, came to Milton in 1946 after a stint in the Navy. His first store in Milton was eight feet wide - so narrow that the counter sometimes barred him from some of his merchandise. He then had to leave by the rear door, tramp through his neighbor's property and come in again by his front door to get what his customer at the counter wanted.

A big factor in changing the nature of the downtown area here was the start of mail delivery in 1967. People no longer had to pick up their mail at the post office (Main and Martin Streets) and downtown pedestrian traffic dropped a lot.

Jim Dills Makes TV Appearance

Jim Dills has brought the history of Milton to the TV screen. He was featured in two 20 minute programs on community TV (Channel 4) in January and February. Going back to the Town's earliest days, Jim touched on many forces and personalities that have helped give Milton its distinctive character.

Jim taped the interviews in December in Acton as part of a program produced by the Georgetown volunteer seniors organization. These seniors, who organized themselves to work in community television, own cameras and other equipment.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NAME _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES

ADDRESS _____

☐ FAMILY \$10.

☐ SINGLE \$7.

TELEPHONE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

☐ STUDENT \$5.

Please Mail to Milton Historical Society, P.O. Box 85, Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3

1995 Opening Predicted For New Regional Museum

Director Paul Attack of the Halton Region Museum expects a new heritage building to be in operation by 1995. He gave that estimate in a brief talk to our Feb. 21 meeting.

Describing how the present museum buildings in Kelso Conservation area leave much to be desired, Paul said the new site will be highly visible and centrally located within Halton. The Halton Heritage Centre will be located on part of the farmland obtained for Halton's soon-to-be-opened landfill site. (Highway 25 and Britannia Road)

In addition to being more accessible the Centre will be much better equipped to display, store and repair the museum's large collection. It will also put more focus on heritage throughout the region.

One step already under way, he said, is formation of an advisory committee for the Centre; our Society will be asked to nominate a member.

Walt Elliot is anxious to make plans for a History and Architecture tour of the Ontario Legislature in November. If this kind of event appeals to you please call Walt at 876-3377.

Nassagaweya House Tour To Aid Glastonbury Abbey

A **June 15** tour of historic stone buildings in Nassagaweya will support England's Glastonbury Abbey.

The six-hour tour starting at 10 a.m. includes four 19th century restored homes, a church organ recital, visit to a sculptor's studio, tour of a 19th century farm and other attractions.

Tour organizers are Val Grimshaw, a former president of our Society, and husband, John. The venture supports The Glastonbury Abbey Development Trust of which John is Canadian chairman. Glastonbury in Somerset is the legendary burial place of King Arthur.

Proceeds from the tour will be used to build a structure to house and identify ancient stones scattered about the abbey grounds.

Cost of the house tour is \$15, payable by cheque made out to Glastonbury Abbey Development Trust. Please mail to Mr. and Mrs. J. Grimshaw, R.R. 1, Campbellville Ont. L0P 1B0. A self-addressed stamped envelope should be enclosed for the return of the tickets.

Ireland House Opens May 20

These are exciting times down Burlington way - Ireland House is opening May 20. We've already planned a visit for **June 20**.

We'll meet at 6:45 at Hugh Foster Hall for car pooling. Please put this date in your book.

The restored Ireland family farmstead on Guelph Line (just above Mountain Grove) is described as a "living history museum".

This is the Year For Church Centennials

Two large churches on Milton's Main Street celebrate centennials this year.

St. Paul's United's big day was March 3. Despite freezing rain more than 300 arrived to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the present sanctuary.

During the March 3 service a "time capsule" was filled with mementos, including the church newsletter, Sunday school cards, a musical tape of choir selections and other items.

Knox Presbyterian Church, on the opposite side of Main Street, has its big day June 23. A six-member committee chaired by Jean Wills has plans well under way. A search is on for members of Knox families who dedicated the church 100 years ago. Planners are also trying to unearth the original order of service of 1891.

Gordon Timbers, St. Thomas teacher and minister, who grew up in the Knox congregation, is returning to preach June 23. And Barbara MacKay, daughter of our Adeline and Robert, will be the guest singer.

Both St. Paul's and Knox are handsome red-brick buildings. Brick-making using local clay from the foothills of the Escarpment was a major Milton industry from the late 1800s until the 1960s.

Atmosphere Warm for Mall Event

Perhaps the near record temperature (17°) helped. Whatever it was the March 2 Open House at Milton Mall was a busy place.

Our display attracted a steady stream of visitors. And we likely will gain a few members thanks to our new brochure.

Those taking part were Jean Butts, Jack Charlton, Alex Cooke, Jim Dills, Walt Elliot, Jessie Hamilton, Ken Hassard, Tod Laing and Ken Lamb.

The



Journal

Volume 6 No. 2

Published by the Milton Historical Society

September 1, 1991

Off to Meter Museum For September 19 Meet

We'll meet at 7.30 p.m. at Hugh Foster Hall for our visit to Canadian Meter Company's museum on Derry Road, Milton, Thursday September 19.

The museum concentrates on measuring devices used in the natural gas industry. The exhibits will give us a new insight into an important natural resource.

Ken Hassard, our special events director, promises an interesting evening. Ken enjoyed a 30-year career with the meter firm before retiring last year.

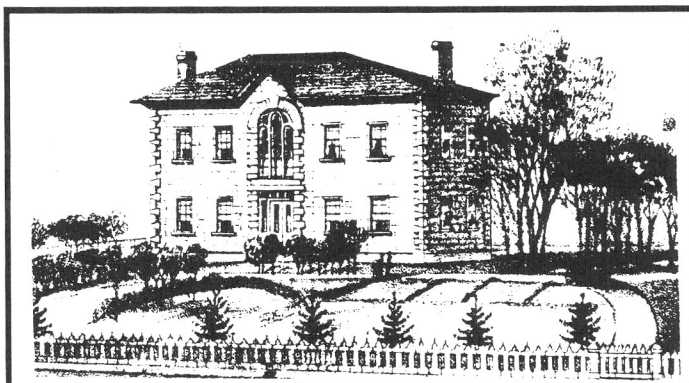
New Discoveries Highlight for October

At our October 17 meeting we'll hear about important new archaeological discoveries in the Campbellville area. The meeting is being held at the Nature Centre in the Crawford Lake Conservation Area, off Guelph Line.

Our speaker is Bill Finlayson, executive director of the Indian Archaeological Museum, University of Western Ontario. He's one of Canada's outstanding archaeologists: many will recall his outstanding presentation a few years ago at Crawford Lake.

To ensure that all members can attend we're arranging for cars to leave Hugh Foster Hall at 7 p.m. This will give us time to stroll around this scenic and historic site before the program begins at 8 p.m.

If it's not convenient for you to meet at Hugh Foster Hall by all means drive direct to Crawford Lake.



Historic Martin Home Takes on New Role

It looks different but a historic building still stands on the Martin St. grounds of Holy Rosary Church.

As part of an extensive building program at the Martin St. site the historic home, built by John Martin in 1857, has been sand-blasted. It now looks like freshly-cut sandstone;

The interior is also being greatly changed to make it suitable as a residence for the three parish priests.

While the congregation was considering what to do with the home, known as Bishop Reding Centre, our society wrote to Holy Rosary representatives about the historical significance of the structure.

John Martin, the builder, was the eldest son of Jasper Martin. He came with his father and mother from England. They arrived here in 1821. The construction of the mill by his father Jasper established the commercial nucleus of Milton. Others who later lived in the house include John Dewar Jr., Halton's Crown Attorney; tannery owner Charles Knees; and merchant Duncan McKay.

Plenty of Help Available But Building Family Tree Still Means Lots of Work

Elaine Bertram, historian and genealogist, had lots of good advice at our May meeting for people who want to build a family tree.

"My advice would be to begin by making a record of all living relatives, complete with photos. Another good idea is to write down all the unusual family stories," Elaine said.

These stories may not be significant from a historical perspective, she said, but they help give families an important sense of sharing.

Elaine has served in many roles with the Halton-Peel Genealogical Society and the Esquesing Historical Society. She also is past chair of LACAC in Halton Hills.

She believes historians and genealogists have a lot in common.

"In Georgetown, for example, it's almost impossible to understand the history of the area without a knowledge of the prominent families," the speaker said.

Elaine described many of the aids available to budding genealogists. One of the books she recommended is "In Search of Your Roots" by Angus Baxter. She felt, however, that the author may underestimate the difficulties often met.

Key sources for genealogists include land records, land petitions, census records, newspaper files, church and public archives and burial records. Elaine said people should be aware that family names could have many spellings. She strongly recommended keeping a list of records consulted to prevent going over the same ground again, especially when your search continues over some years.

Elaine said for people in this area there are lots of records available in the Georgetown Library.



Milton Historical Society

P.O. Box 85
Milton, Ont.
L9T 2Y3

President - Walt Elliot
Past President - Ken Lamb
Treasurer - Jessie Hamilton
Secretary - Marie Sutcliffe
Membership - Marjorie Powys
Special Events - Ken Hassard
Publicity - Tod Laing
Liaison - Audrea Lear-Costigan
Program - Bill Gregg
Archivist - Brenda Whitlock
Genealogy - Alex Cooke
Research - Jack Charlton and
Jim Dills
Publications - Marion Detlor

Annual Memberships
Single \$7. Family \$10
Students \$5
Life \$60

George Wachmann Helps Guide Plans for New Region Museum

George Wachmann is working hard as our representative on a special committee concerned with the new Halton Region Museum.

The museum is moving from Kelso Conservation Area to a 30-acre site at Highway 25 south of Britannia Road next to the landfill site now being developed. The Museum opening is scheduled for the spring of 1995.

George and other committee members - all representing Halton Region - will work closely with Museum consultants to produce documents and models required for critical fund-raising programs.

Newcomers to Milton Are Invited to Join Us

The 'hello' package for Milton newcomers now includes the Society's membership brochure. Newcomer packages are delivered to homes by the Welcome Wagon organization.

Our recently-published brochure describes our activities and goals and invites people to join.

Local History is Bedrock Of All Historical Study

Local historians - there were quite a few of them in the audience - got the ultimate compliment at our March meeting.

"Local history is the bedrock of general history," said speaker John Moir.

The best test of historical truth is how events affect individuals, Mr. Moir said, and local historians establish this. Our speaker should know - he is former president of the Ontario Historical Society, author, university professor and professional historian.

Other points made in a wide-ranging talk:

- . Historical research should begin with the general and proceed to the particular. In contrast, historical writing should begin with the particular and expand to the general.

- . Oral history has its strengths but historians should always be aware that memory is often inaccurate.

- . In their research, historians should keep asking "So what?" The question reminds them that the significance of a development rests on its effect on people.

- . Writing vies with research as a prime tool of the historian. Donald Creighton ("The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence"; biography of John A. Macdonald) got high marks for writing skill. On the other hand, Harold Innis ("The Fur Trade in Canada") was recognized for historical insight but many critics rated his writing cumbersome. Paradoxically

Queen's Park Nov. 19 See the Arts and Antics

President Walt Elliot is putting the final touches on plans for our unique visit to Queen's Park this fall.

Walt has drawn on his two years as MPP for Halton North to arrange this special outing Tuesday, November 19. We'll meet at Hugh Foster Hall at 9 a.m. for the charter bus trip.

This will get us to Queen's Park by 10.30 and give us time before lunch to view many of the government's historic paintings before lunch in the Legislature.

"At 1.30 we'll be in the Assembly for Question Period," Walt says. "This is usually the liveliest and most dramatic part of the day in the House. We could very well see some bitter exchanges."

In any event, we'll hear several questions and replies before we head for home at 3 p.m.

The cost of the bus will be \$15 each; there will also be a small charge for lunch.

Since we have to book the bus this month we would like to know of your plans as soon as possible. Please book your seat at the September 19 meeting. If you can't be at that meeting telephone Walt at 876-3377 to reserve a seat.

This no doubt will be one of the highlights of our year and we don't want anyone to be disappointed.

perhaps, Pierre Berton- although he writes best-sellers on extensively-researched themes- is not rated high by many professional historians. They consider him a "popularizer" or "story-teller" rather than a historian.

*Invite your friends
to join Milton Historical Society.*

Jim Snow Covers All Angles During Appearance

Jim Snow mounted a wide-angled lens for his talk at our April meeting. He looked at the past, present and future and passed judgment on local, provincial and federal government. He seasoned it all with many warm and personal memories from his recent book "Mr. Jim."

Jim represented this area in the Legislature from 1967 till 1985 and for most of those years was in the cabinet. But he likes to remember that he was the first Conservative to win the poll in Milton Heights.

Following are a few of the points made in a talk that held 40 people's attention for more than an hour:

- . Large investments will be needed for roads and other services in the Milton area to prepare for large population increases in 10 or 20 years.

- . Canada is over-governed at all levels. In Halton, he says, we don't need both municipal and regional governments - one of them should be eliminated. Nationally he favors five "regions" to replace the 10 provinces, the Yukon and Northwest Territories. (After Jim's book appeared, Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells made a similar proposal.)

- . Jim decided to write his book the day after his mother died in 1989; he realized that unless he made the effort a lot of family history would be lost. Jim's mother was a Devlin: for her the world centred on Omagh.

- . His public school teachers in Milton would have rated him the "least likely" author because of problems in spelling and composition. The author leaned heavily on his computer in producing "Mr. Jim".

- . The book title came from his construction company days (Jim started building houses in Oakville at age 18) - his immigrant workers called him "Mr. Jim".

- . Multiculturalism at both provincial and federal levels is a waste of money. Groups can maintain their cultural heritage without

government programs.

. He is in favor of privatizing the CBC. He also would like to see an elected Senate. And he believes that the bilingual program in the federal civil service is discriminating against anglophones.

"Teen-ager" in Her 90s Ethel Lear Has Died

Ethel Lear, Society member and mother of our Liaison Director Audrea Lear-Costigan, died May 10 several weeks short of her 99th birthday.

Ethel had been active until a few years ago. At the funeral service in First United Church, Port Credit, pastor Bev Johnson praised her love of life and described her as "Ontario's oldest teen-ager". The minister had gone to school with Audrea and had known the family for more than 50 years.

A native of Collingwood, Ethel spent most of her life in the Greater Toronto area and moved to the Lakeshore area in 1950. Recently she was with Audrea at her Milton home.

In addition to Audrea she leaves daughter Barbara Skinner of Port Credit.

Former Member Ellen Reid Leaves Over 130 Descendants

When former member Ellen Reid, 93, died in March she left eight sons and daughters, 32 grandchildren and 96 great-grandchildren. Our treasurer, Jessie Hamilton, is a daughter; John McDonald is a grandson.

Ellen (nee Peer) was born in Kilbride and later lived in Moffat and Nassagaweya before moving to Milton. Her children were born while she was farming with her first husband, William Service.

Ellen was active in the community. In the early 1980s she was a member of the Society's telephoning team. And for a number of years she was the busy social convenor for the Club 88 seniors group in Milton.

Ad Woodley Recalls His Early Days Here

Our archives now has a tape of Ad Woodley's recollections of Milton in the 1920-40 era. A few samples of Ad's memories:

A dressmaker came to the Woodley farm to make shirts for the young boy from material bought by Ad's mother. The trouble was Ad couldn't stop squirming during the fitting.

"Keep still you little bugger," the dressmaker warned, "or I'll stick this needle right through you."

As newcomers the Woodley family attended a service at Knox Presbyterian Church. As soon as they sat down a woman tapped Ad's mother on the shoulder. "You're in my seat," she said.

The Woodleys moved. After the service Mrs. Woodley vowed she would never enter that church again. As far as Ad knows, she never did.

Ad also recalls when stores closed for Saturday ball games and when neighbors came together for barn-raising and posthole-digging bees. Ad's tape includes dozens of other Milton customs during the period between the two World Wars.

Why not follow Ad's example? Borrow the Society's tape recorder and record your memories for future historians.

Arrange Now!

Do you have a special interest in Ontario Legislature's question period. If so Walt Elliot (876-3377) would like to hear from you.

During our November visit to the Legislature, the entire group will attend the question period for the regular 30 minutes allotted to visitors.

But if you have a deep desire to attend the full 90 minutes Walt will make special arrangements for you.

Coming Soon

Volume One: Historic Homes of Milton

to be published by
Milton Historical Society

60 homes of Milton dating from 1832
along with the families associated with
the property. Text by Jack Charlton and the
Research Committee of Milton Historical
Society. Photographs by Rex Sutcliffe
Reserve Your Copy Now

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES

- ☐ FAMILY \$10.
- ☐ SINGLE \$7.
- ☐ STUDENT \$5.
- ☐ LIFE \$60.

Please Mail to Milton Historical Society, P.O. Box 85, Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3

A Word of Appreciation

We would like to thank:

> **Len McNeil** for donating an old map of Halton County showing the positions of rural schools, and also for back issues of *Ontario History*.

> **Adeline Mackay** for donating old photographs of the Milton Pressed Brick Company, the World War 1 Soldiers' Reception parade in 1919, and a magnificent panoramic view of the Brick Company taken, we imagine, during the 1920s from the top of the Escarpment.

> **Donald E. Kennedy** for the 1991 supplement to *The History of Knox Presbyterian Church*, compiled for the 100th anniversary of the present church building.

> We are very interested in enlarging our holdings of photographs, programs, letters, electoral lists etc. If you have anything you would like to donate, please contact one of the Executive. We ask only that the items are relevant to the history of Milton and area.

**Brenda Whitlock, Historical Society
Archivist, 876-4989.**

Ireland House Portrays 150-Year Family History

Ireland House, off Guelph Line in Burlington, officially opened May 20. Exactly one month later more than 30 Society members toured the living history museum to admire the results of four hectic years of research and restoration. The City of Burlington, the Province and fund-raisers have to date contributed \$600,000 to the project.

The Ireland family (from England) lived in the spacious Georgian farmhouse from 1837 to 1987. The rooms are decorated to represent several periods; about 90 per cent of the furnishings came from the Irelands.

Although the suburban homes are within 100 yards of the house on one side, rural atmosphere is achieved by a heavily treed lot of four acres. Dozens of mature evergreens were recently transplanted to a nearby golf course to restore the original lawn and improve the view of Lake Ontario.

The prominent, prosperous and party-loving family once owned about 1000 acres in the area.

About half a dozen paid staff and 70 volunteers work at the museum. Plans call for a start this fall on an interpretation centre; other projects over the next few years include historic gardens, and building or restoration of farm buildings.

Society's Canada Day Visitors Love Historic Home Contest

A contest based on Milton's historic homes was a solid hit at the local Canada Day celebration.

Jim Dills mounted a photo display featuring Rex Sutcliffe's photos of 14 plaqued homes, each photo bearing a number. Contestants tried to match a list of street addresses with the photos.

Some enthusiasts worked about 30 minutes on their entry - one even had a friend use a close-up lens to identify a street address in one of the photos. Close to 50 people entered the

contest; no fewer than 12 had a perfect score.

The contest helped promote our book "*Milton's Historic Homes*" to be published this fall. An advance-order form was attached to the contest entry.

Marie Sutcliffe, setting the historic theme in an ankle-length 19th century dress, was in charge of the display. Tod Laing and Ken Lamb helped greet visitors and Walt Elliot dropped by often from an adjoining display where he was wearing another hat as head of Milton's United Way campaign.