September 1994

#### Tim Kingsbury finds John White memento

Tim Kingsbury returned from Ottawa recently with an interesting memento of John White, a giant figure in Milton's history.

An antique dealer in the capital sold Tim a newel post, said to have decorated the staircase of White's home. The dealer reported that the post, a female figure, and other items owned by the Milton MP were obtained from an Ottawa boarding house.

John White was elected an MP in 1851 and held the seat, except for one term, until 1874.

He was also Milton's first reeve and served several years on Halton County Council in that position. His agricultural interests were significant.

### September means a fresh start for us and the Brant Museum

The Joseph Brant Museum in Burlington literally has a new foundation and we'll get to know all about it at our Sept. 15 meeting.

The building has been moved about 100 yeards east. We'll see recent additions and learn about some of the joys and frustrations associated with changing times and places. And we'll have an opportunity to chat about it at lunch following the tour.

We're scheduled to be in Burlington at 7 p.m. Some may find it convenient to go direct to the museum.

The museum is at 1240 North Shore Boulevard. It now he its own parking lot off Lakeshore Blvd., also known as the Beach Strip. Others will want to meet at Hugh Foster Hall for car pooling. We should gather there at 6 p.m.

If you have any questions please call program chair Don Taylor (335-8848)

There's a museum charge of \$5 each for this session.

## Bruce MacNab gets medal for historic Malta Battle

In 1942 King George VI awarded the George Cross to the people of Malta to honour their resistance to the ferocious attacks by German bombers.

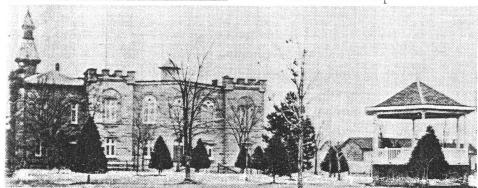
Bruce MacNab, a wireless air-gunner, completed 48 missions in that battle. A few weeks ago to recognize his service the Maltese Government presented Bruce with a silver medal.

Malta awarded the George Cross commemorative medal to 500 Canadian servicemen who took part in the Mediterranean fighting between September 1939 and June 1942.

Bruce was one of nine veterans who received medals from Maltese Consul S. Vasallo at a Toronto ceremony.

It brought back many memories. In March 1943 at Buckingham Palace King George VI presented Bruce with a decoration won by very few – the Distinguished Flying Medal.

Several hundred people attended the June 19 ceremony at the Agricultural Museum when five men entered the Agricultural Hall of fame. One of them was George Atkins of Oakville, an internationally-known farm broadcaster. George spoke to our Society two years ago. Glen Wicks provided the organ prelude for the event.



Victoria Park, with original bandstand, fronts County Court House in 1913 view.

# Victoria Park Square focus of Oct. 20 meeting

Victoria Park square has played an important part in the lives of Miltonians for generations.

At our Oct. 20 meeting Jim Dills will draw on events from his book "Moments in History - Reflections of Aaiton's County Town 1833-1864" to highlight some of the significant events that took place in that square.

Hugh Foster offered four acres to

Halton County in the 1850s as a site for the county courthouse. It was accepted, of course. Victoria Park is part of those famous four acres. Accordingly over the years the area has seen its share of legal and political fireworks as well as more peaceful sports and social events.

And, of course, during the past decade we've seen some spectacular architectural developments.

### Most early photos don't show drudgery of pioneer life

More than 55 members turned out June 16 for a potluck supper and a presentation by versatile Bob Allen.

Bob brought to life many of the stark conditions faced by pioneers in this area. But his audience didn't need much imagination to appreciate how uncomfortable harvesting could be. The Gambrel Barn, our meeting place at the Agricultural Museum, was desperately hot

The speaker, who formerly demonstrated regularly at Black Creek Pioneer Village, and his wife, Rosemary, a teacher in Mississauga, wore everyday clothing of farmers in the mid-1800s. Bob said most women would have owned a single dress. For special occasions they would add long sleeves and a few petticoats.

Perfume bottles worn around a woman's neck would compensate for very occasional baths. Many men and women would soak themselves about once a month.

Photographs taken in the 1850s

# Ed Parsons solves a garden mystery

Jennifer Mirosolin of the Milton and District Horticultural Society was astounded this spring when she unearthed a metal plaque bearing the name of Dick Parsons while digging in the new garden at the Library.

A little detective work came up with the answer. Ed Parsons says the plaque marked the grave of his father in Evergreen Cemetery. The metal originally was fixed to a wooden cross provided by the Canadian Legion. A World War I veteran, Dick died in 1955. Ed thinks youngsters may have taken the plaque from the nearby cemetery. Ed says a second plaque honoring his brother Albert, who was killed 50 years ago in the invasion of France, is still missing.

Bring a friend to a Historical Society meeting.

and 60s give no idea of what people looked like most of the time, Bob told us. There were few if any "candid" shots in those days – to be photographed was a formal occasion and the clothing showed it.

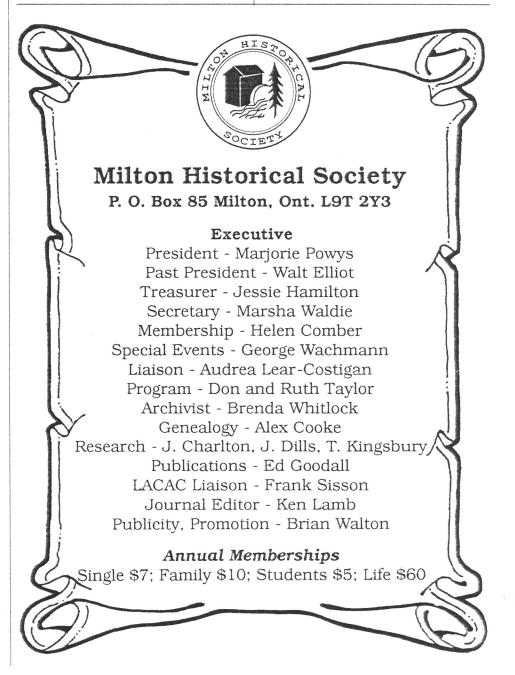
Bob described the role of circuitriding preachers. Their arrival in pioneer settlements meant not only preaching and hymn singing but also music from fiddles, Irish lap harps and the guitar-like dulcimer.

The speaker knows these instru-

ments well. He makes and sells them and - as he showed - plays them well,

Bob displayed many of the wares brought to pioneers by the sutler – a traveling salesman. Bob's stock included lanterns, scissors, pots and pans and medicine bottles.

He speaks widely throughout the province. Bob doesn't have much time these days to appear at Black Creek Pioneer Village but his daughter carries on the family tradition there.



# If you handle frustration well why not try house restoration?

At our May 19 meeting Barry Lee spoke of the trials and tribulations of a 30-year stone house restoration. But he smiled a lot, especially when he told how an early tenant became his wife.

Barry, a town councillor, was 19 in 1961 when he borrowed \$12,000 from a bank and a skeptical father to buy a rundown farm on First Line, south of Eden Mills. The stone house rested on a foundation built for a log-house that burned in 1865.

Barry had the building skills to do a lot of the work himself, including making mouldings, flooring, windows and cupboards.

# Two members follow 1944 invasion path

Lillian Krywaniuk and her mother, Eveline Howard, spent two weeks this summer on a fascinating but hectic tour of D-Day beaches and other World War II battle sites.

The tour group visited the French coast for a few days before the June 6 ceremonies. On the deserted beaches some of the touring veterans could find the exact spot they fought on 50 years ago. But one U.S. soldier who had had a spectacular escape and who had planned to join the group died a few weeks before the departure. A paratrooper, he came down on a church steeple; photos of the entangled soldier were widely publicized.

The fast-moving tour visited many battle areas including Amsterdam, Nijmegen, and Antwerp as well as heavily-bombed Cologne and the Rhineland.

Lillian's father, Sergeant Major 'albot Howard, a lifetime soldier in the Canadian Army, trained thousands of wartime troops, including The Irish Regiment (Toronto) that served in Italy and northwest Europe.

Often, he says, one of the most difficult decisions is choosing what to save. But it didn't apply in this house because he felt there was nothing inside worth saving.

The Journal

What emerged from Barry's efforts won a Milton Heritage Award this year.

Barry listed a few "do's" and "don'ts" for home-restorers:

- If you can't match something, don't try. Stonework for example, is just about impossible to match. His own two-storey addition is board and batten.
- Don't rush into anything. Take time to study the wealth of material available.
  - Don't be a nit-picker.
- Be wary of experts just about everyone wants to give advice. Your own decisions are best. But Barry gives full marks to his consultant.

Obviously Barry took his own

#### Society Life Member Marie Martin dies at 86

Marie Martin, a life member of the Society, died July 4 in Milton District Hospital, where she had been a patient for some months.

Marie had attended meetings regularly until health problems developed a few years ago. Her late husband, Carl, a direct descendant of pioneer Milton miller Jasper Martin, also had been a staunch supporter.

In recent years Marie had lived in a condominium on Millside Drive, a stone's throw from the historic family home on Martin Street.

Marie was born in Georgetown shortly after her father, L. E. Fleck, came from Indiana to manage the Alliance Paper Mill there.

She leaves three sons and a daughter, all living in Halton or Peel, 12 grandchildren and a great-grandson.

advice about planning carefully. About the only change he would make in his home would be to remove the oak flooring in part of the house.

Barry insists that restoring stone houses is full of frustrations. But it can't be all bad because he recently bought another home and "he's on the road again."

# Sproat/Martin House gets year-long look

For the next year or so a group representing Halton Region will study the many "ifs" and "buts" associated with moving the Halton Region Museum from Kelso Conservation area to the Sproat/Martin House.

The historic building on the millpond was home to several distinguished families, including P.L. Robertson, the inventor/industrialist.

Brad Clements is chairing the Museum's Feasibility Study Steering Committee. George Wachmann, who was active in the earlier effort in support of the Halton Heritage Centre, has volunteered to serve with the new group.

Open meetings will be held over the next few months to get residents' views on the pros and cons of the move.

#### Briefly

- Peggy and Craig Reid had a hectic summer. A high point was the July 30 wedding of Craig's daughter, Anne. She and husband Bob Miersch are living in Burlington until spring when they moveto Lindsay where Bob will take a forestry course.
- It's 37 years and counting for Reta Woodley and a group of friends, all former students of Hornby Public School. The seven women have been holding remember-when lunches each years since 1957.

# Steam Era still powerful after more than 30 years

At our April 21 meeting two veterans of the organization showed why Steam Era is still a powerful show after more than 30 years.

Gordon Hume and Gordon Rayner between them have served more than 25 years on the executive of the Ontario Steam & Antique Preservers' Association.

They described some steamy meetings in the early days of the organization. Strong arguments split the founding group. One of the contentious issues centred on the location of the show. The Agricultural Museum had been considered a likely location before the event settled permanently at the Milton Fair Grounds.

The local event is among the longest-running steam shows in Ontario; Elderton in southwestern Ontario predates it by a year. There are more than 20 such shows in the province, although many now rely heavily on flea markets to draw audiences.

About 15,000 people a year attend the local show over the Labor Day weekend

# OHS holds workshop on family milestones

We're invited to a November workshop on how 19th century families celebrated – or coped with – family milestones. The event will take place Saturday Nov. 19 at Halton Region Museum.

Staff of the Ontario Historical Society will lead discussions on birth, death, marriage and other customs in the 1800s.

Friends of the Museum are sponsoring the event and will serve lunch. Janet Quinton of the Friends says sessions will start at 9.30 and finish about 3.30. Cost is \$10 registration plus lunch.

Please call Janet Quinton (335-1037) for more information.

It still features from 15 to 20 steam engines. In recent years the number has dropped off somewhat mostly because of the age of the owners. Transporting machines to Milton costs about \$20,000 a year.

The largest show – covering more than 400 acres – is held at Austin, Manitoba. It has substantial government financing; the local show is paid for by the Ontario Steam & Antique Preservers' Association.

## Two of our publications are now "history" too

Ed Goodall says two publications we have been selling for the past few years are "gone but not forgotten."

"A history walk in Milton," 2000 copies, appeared in 1989. Two years later came one thousand copies of "Historic Homes of Milton." Although a few copies of each may still be on sale in local stores, our stocks are gone.

Both did well financially; the walking tour booklet was published and the printing largely paid for by the Downtown Business Improvement Association.

A complete revision is being worked on now for the walking tour booklet, but it may have to sell for more than the original \$1 cover price.

## Search for 'who was who' to wrap up biographies

Alex Cooke can't count the number of hours he has spent researching and writing about prominent Miltonians. The result to date: 175 biographies.

And the job isn't finished yet.

Alex and collaborator Jim Dills want our help; they would like suggestions for additional biographies that should be included and source material to prepare them.

Then how should the material be presented to the public?

## Award-winning producer shows us his latest work

Les Meszaros is working hard to finish his latest video in time for our Nov. 17 meeting.

As we wrote this (mid-August) Les was looking for a bagpiper to give a stirring ending to his story about Boston Church (Third Line). The history of the Presbyterian congregation in the Scotch Block dates from 1832.

Over the past few months Les spent many hours in the library researching the story. He credits hiw wife, Mary, with a masterful job in recreating some of the early chapters. Her art has contributed to many of the family-made videos.

Les has produced dozens of works on Ontario subjects, including Lowville, Campbellville and Milton. Early this year we recognized his contribution with a Milton Heritage Award.

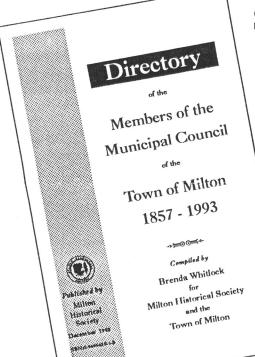
Don't miss this colorful rendition of local history. As usual the program starts at 8 p.m. in Hugh Foster Hall.

#### Briefly noted . . .

- A conscientious Miltonian will be honored at our Oct. 20 meeting. A plaque will be presented to the owner of a home which is at least 75 years old and which has been especially well maintained.
- George and Janet Wachmann are leading figures in plans for a senior rural housing project at Lowville. The proposal is to build about 35 one-storey homes on 139 acres just north of Britannia Road and west of Guelph Line (near Lowville United Church). An interested developer is making tests at the site. George says the project is ideal for people who want to remain in a rural area but who find it hard to keep up with gardening and maintenance chores.
- A public lecture on the history of the Welland Canals will be held Sept. 28, 7.30 p.m. in Knox Church Oakville. Speaker is Dr. John Burtniak of Brock University Library.



April 4 1994



# Society's newest book tracks Councils from 1857

The results of months of research by our archivist, Brenda Whitlock, has been officially recognized.

At the Feb. 21 Council meeting Marjorie Powys presented two books to Mayor Gordon Krantz; the directories contain names of all who have served on the council since Milton was incorporated in 1857. Jack Charlton, Alex Cooke, Jim Dills and Walt Elliot accompanied Marjorie; Brenda was visiting her family in England.

The event was part of our Heritage Week program and Marjorie extended a warm invitation to the Council to attend the Milton Heritage Awards program Feb. 27.

Marjorie said 257 men and women have served on Council in 137 years. Gord Krantz is the 38th mayor of Milton. Marjorie herself was a councillor from 1972 to 1976 and again in 1985. Bruce MacNab served in the late 1940s and Jack Charlton from 1954 to 1962. Mike Ledwith was mayor in 1957. Les Laughren resigned his council seat before the last election.

Current councillors Gerry Brooks, John Challinor, Brad Clements, Rick Day and Barry Lee are Society members.

#### Heritage Groups' advice sought on new Region Museum proposal

Halton's heritage director, Paul Attack, is sounding out our group and similar organizations on a new type of Regional Museum.

Plans for a \$6 million Heritage Centre near the landfill site on Highway 25 were recently cancelled for financial reasons.

Paul describes the new venture as a type of "outreach museum" with traveling exhibits.

Under the proposal the staff of six would move from the present site in Kelso Conservation Area to Sproat House on the millpond. An addition to the heritage building would provide programming space, a meeting room and other facilities. The artifact collection would be stored elsewhere.

Paul says a steering committee will be formed to give advice on the proposal. Approval would have to come from Milton and the Region.

The cost would be modest compared with that of the abandoned Heritage Centre.

## Shoppers like Mall show featuring people from past

Shoppers obviously liked what they saw at our display at the March 5 open house in Milton Mall.

Many stopped to examine photos "People from Milton's Past" and to buy our new Directory to Milton Municipal Councils, and our almost sold-out walking tour guide. About a dozen expressed interest in attending our regular meetings.

Those who greeted visitors at the booth were Alex Cooke, Walt Elliot, Ed Goodall, Ken Lamb, Marjorie Powys, Frank Sisson, George Wachmann and Brian Walton.

# We'll be steaming at April meeting

A hugely successful heritage group will give us their secret of success at our April 21 meeting.

It's the Ontario Steam and Antique Preservers' Association. For more than three decades its members have staged the Steam-Era show over the Labor Day weekend at Milton Fairgrounds. Average annual attendance is over 15,000.

People come from all regions of Ontario and from elsewhere to watch parades and view the exceptional collection of steam tractors and other antique farm equipment.

Our Society recognized the Association at the 1993 Heritage Awards program with the education

Representatives of the group are sure to give a colorful and wide-ranging talk.

#### Questions show keen interest in Dorrie's talk on Heritage

A flurry of post-talk questions showed a lively interest in the Jan. 20 talk by Dorrie Greig, chair of Heritage Milton (LACAC). More than 30 attended on one of the coldest nights of a frigid January.

Dorrie described the role of LACAC (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) and its relationship to the Town Council. The committee consists of unpaid volunteers. They are appointed by the Town to advise Council on conserving heritage buildings and districts and on heritage legislation.

Members questioned Dorrie closely on the meaning of "designating" a property. She explained that the biggest advantage to the property owner was that a designated property becomes eligible for government funding. An owner, for example, could apply for help in repairing a wall or other designated heritage feature.

Almost every "designation" is initiated by a property owner. Often only certain features of the building-windows, doors or the roof line-are designated. These are the only features that

#### Cites book chapters, emphasizes Heritage Week when Society at Council

Jim Dills spoke to the Town Council Feb. 21 following presentation of the councillors' directory by Marjorie Powys.

Jim referred to several chapters in his new book "Moments in History" in stressing the importance of our colorful past. He referred to events which had taken place around the historic building in which council holds its meetings.

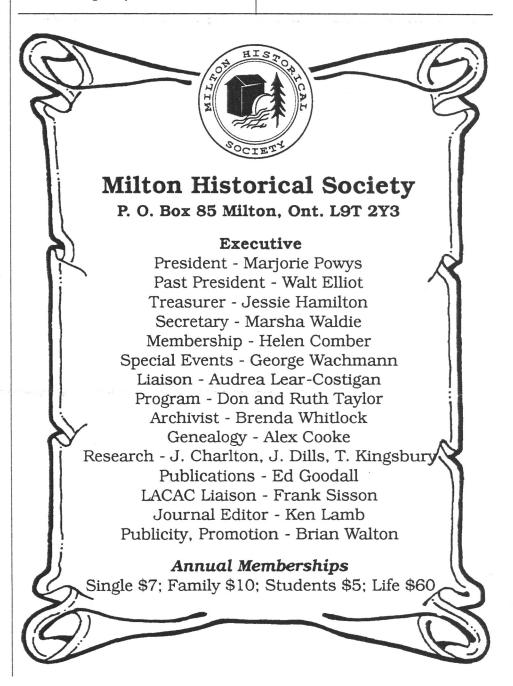
Mayor Gordon Krantz, in acknowledging the presentations by Jim and Marjorie, paid tribute to the Society's efforts. He stressed our role in "saving" the former courthouse which is now the Town Hall. The determination to keep the building as part of our heritage was the beginning of our Society. Jim played a key role in the battle.

are "protected" (require Town approval) when building changes are made.

To date the only Milton house protected is owned by James and Patricia Douglas at 100 Victoria Street. (See "Historic Homes of Milton" page 65.) Several public buildings, including the present and former town halls, are designated.

Dorrie showed slides of several older streets. These showed how the heritage character of a neighborhood can be changed by modern homes of markedly different style from the original buildings. Dorrie felt this was a subject on which the Town Council could now get advice from Heritage Milton.

For the past several years Heritage Milton has been compiling photos and records of Milton's heritage buildings (75 years or older.) It has completed the inventory of urban buildings and expects to finish the rural records within a year. Federal funding has enabled the committee to hire a summer researcher for this work.



# Lots of activity, huge cast at Heritage Awards program

The main room was barely big enough to hold those who squeezed into Hugh Foster Hall Feb. 27 for our fifth annual Heritage Awards program.

The event is jointly sponsored by our society and Heritage Milton (LACAC).

Apart from the colorful presentations there was plenty to see – and hear. Town crier Ralph Wilding qualified both ways. He was resplendent in a British army officer's dress uniform of the mid 1700s. His bell-ringing and his

voice have lost none of their vigour since last year.

Pianist Laurie Walker also matched his stylish 1993 performance.

An unusual feature was a segment highlighting the importance of the Grand River. It is the largest river system in southern Ontario; the northern part of Milton is part of drainage its area.

Both the Canadian and Ontario governments have recognized the Grand as a

Heritage River. Barbara Veale showed a video and spoke briefly about the lasting values of the Grand. Barbara is manager—policy and resources, Grand River Conservation Authority and a lead player in the river's heritage program.

Archie MacRobbie, GRCA chair, presented coffee-table books to Heritage Milton (LACAC) and the

Society. The photos of the Grand River Valley by John De Visser are stunning.

The sunny, mild weather was perfect for Jim Dills' historic walk in downtown Milton. He got back to the Hall just in time to accept his award from Mayor Krantz.

Six displays throughout the Hall stressed various aspects of Ontario's heritage. Ours showed historic Milton personalities. Other displays were mounted by Heritage Milton (LACAC), Halton Region Museum, Grand River Conservation Authority, Halton County Radial Railway Museum, and award winners Jane and Barry Lee.

Helen Comber and Ken Lamb represented the Society on the joint organizing committee. Others who helped stage the event included Ed Goodall, Lillian Krywaniuk, Walt Elliot, Marjorie Powys, George Wachmann, Jessie Hamilton, Tim Kingsbury and Mabel Parker (Nassagaweya), Dorrie Greig and Don Pelz, both of Heritage Milton.



- Photo by Graham Paine, Courtesy Canadian Champion Heritage Award winners from left to right are Jane and Barry Lee, architectural; Dr. Leslie Meszaros, photography, Jim Dills, writing, and Brenda Dolling, education.

#### Second place plaque memento of Brookville Hall

Mary Lynn and James Williams took home a handsome plaque as second place winners in the architectural category at the Heritage Awards ceremony.

They have lived in their Guelph

Line home north of Brookville for 18 years. Their plaque was mounted on a section of a roof truss from the historical Brookville Hall. The plaque was presented by Dorrie Greig, the chair of Heritage Milton (LACAC).

## 1993 Heritage Award Minners

#### Jim Dills - Writing

The specific work related to the presentation was Jim's book, "Moments in History; Reflections of Halton's County Town 1833 - 1864". It was published last year.

But this was just the most recent of Jim's many heritage contributions. He played a leading part, along with Alex Cooke and Jack Charlton, in producing "Historic Homes of Milton" and our walking tour guide. He has written and contributed to numerous other heritage articles and publications.

We also know him as a speaker as do many other organizations.

Jim is a founding member of our society and was its first president. He formerly was publisher of *The Canadian Champion*.

Jim's award was presented by Mayor Gordon Krantz.

#### Brenda Dolling - Education

Brenda, a teacher at Percy W. Merry School on Britannia Road, was the guiding spirit in a most unusual students' history book.

A charming crayon-colored cover introduces 60 pages of information about the students' home communities of Drumquin and Omagh. It quickly became a best-seller; more than 300 copies have been sold.

Fellow teacher and collaborator Judy Eberspaecher and seven Merry School students came to share the triumph.

Brenda believes that producing a book is an ideal way for young students to learn about our heritage. She spearheaded a similar project earlier when she taught at Palermo.

Brenda is a niece of Eleanor Coulter, a Society member now living in Lacombe, Alberta. Eleanor, a native of Lowville, is a heritage author on Halton topics. Their families have made their homes in this area for six or seven generations.

Brenda accepted her award from Cathy Taylor, representing MPP Noel Duignan.

#### Jane and Barry Lee Architectural Restoration

Restoration of their farm home and buildings in Moffat has taken 33 years. And Barry jokingly described the effort as an acid test of their marriage. They obviously passed and found the project worthwhile.

Their property is on First Line north of 28 Side Road in the former Nassagaweya.

The Lees benefited from advice from noted architect Napier Simpson. But Barry, who operated a construction firm, and Jane did a lot of the work themselves. A display in the Hall showed various stages of the restoration as well as the scenic views enjoyed by the family.

Many friends from Nassagaweya attended as well as fellow Town Councillors Colin Best, John Challinor, Brad Clements, Marion Howard, and of course, Mayor Krantz.

Dorrie Greig, chair of Milton Heritage (LACAC) and a resident of Nassagaweya, made the presentation.

#### Dr. Leslie Meszaros Photography

Leslie has been making heritage films and videos for more than 40 years. Many of these – made for the Ontario Ministry of Education – have been widely shown in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada.

Some of his general subjects include the battle of Stoney Creek in the war of 1812 and the work of Egerton Ryerson, an epic figure in the history of Ontario education.

In the past few years he has been busy in the Halton area, including videos of Milton, Campbellville, Lowville and the Stewart house in the Scotch Block. He is now planning a video about Drumquin; at the awards ceremony he discussed this project with fellow award winner Brenda Dolling.

Leslie has been active for many years in heritage and museum groups in Dundas and Waterdown.

Marjorie Powys, our Society president, presented the award.

#### Search is on for significant contributors from Milton's past check your records, diaries, photos, letters for information

Alex Cooke picked up some additional names to consider for his current project, at the last meeting. He has written over 150 biographies of Milton people reaching back to the earliest times.

The biographies are being assembled for publication in book form as a future project. All those who played a part in community life are eligible for consideration. It's particularly helpful if you have infor-

mation available to contribute. Talk to Alex at the next meeting if you can provide any background.

Written material or detailed records are really helpful.

# Many memories, big attendance at "L. M. Montgomery" night

Fifty members and friends crowded into Hugh Foster Hall Feb. 17 to reminisce about noted author L. M. Montgomery.

But the memories weren't about "Anne of Green Gables" and her many other books. They centred on her role as Mrs. Ewan Macdonald, wife of the Presbyterian minister at Norval from 1926 to 1935.

Three members of the Norval Women's Institute had vivid memories. Norma Thompson emphasized that "L. M." always dressed beautifully. With her impeccable hats and gloves, she was very much the sophisticated woman.

Mary Maxwell and Dorothy McLean also put "L. M." at the head of the best-dressed list. They agreed, too, on her love of gardens and the scenic beauties of Norval. And they added some fascinating tales about government spending to promote the author as a tourist attraction.

They shed light on bitter religious feelings that came after many Presbyterian congregations joined Methodists to form The United Church of Canada in 1925. (The Macdonalds moved to Norval after their former congregation in Leaskdale, near Uxbridge, voted to join the "union.")

As a girl Dorothy McLean wondered why "L. M." repeatedly ignored her on the street. And 60 years later she still bristles at how Rev. Ewan Macdonald pointedly excluded her while lavishing attention on a friend.

Dorothy eventually decided she was being treated as a non-person because "I was not a Presbyterian."

But she has fond memories of the many concerts, garden parties and other wents in which "L. M." played a leading role. And, like others, she found "L. M." an excellent story teller.

Mary Maxwell told of Keith Webb's encounters with Prince Edward Island tourist officials. Keith, a Norval nurseryman and a relative of "L. M.", was raised on the Webb family farm.

Keith's father sold the P.E.I. farm for \$6,000. The tourist people kept the house in its original state but demolished the barn and other buildings. The government later re-created the farm unit as a major tourist attraction. Cost: \$4,000,000.

Craig Reid warmly recalled four years he spent in "L. M.'s" bible class for young men. He remembers her as a "very elegant lady" and a great teacher.

Bruce MacNab told of his family's role in founding Norval. He also described the current controversy about

#### By Popular Demand

Treasa Lamb, with a recipe from the Norval Women's Institute, baked "Montgomery" cookies for the coffee-break at our Feb. 17 meeting. These cookies were often served to visitors to the Norval Presbyterian manse almost 70 years ago. L. M. Montgomery knew them as Boston cookies.

In response to requests from members here is the recipe:

- 1 cup butter or Crisco
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/2 tbsp. hot water
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup chopped dates or raisins
- 1 cup walnut pieces

Cream butter, sugar and eggs. Add baking soda dissolved in hot water, half of flour, salt and cinnamon. Add remaining flour with nuts and fruit. Mix well. Bake in 350° oven until moderately brown. Makes nearly 6 dozen.

public access to a pioneer Norval cemetery.

The Norval Women's Institute displayed several scrapbooks with many photos of "L. M." in church and social settings.

Craig Reid presented certificates to the Institute and to Bruce MacNab to express our thanks.

## Executive of Society greets new members

Three new members were elected to our executive at the Jan. 20 meeting.

Marsha Waldie is our new secretary, succeeding Tod Laing. Marsha and her mother, Edna, own a historic home on James Street. The Waldies operated a blacksmith shop in Milton for more than a century.

Brian Walton now is in charge of promotion/publicity; Jennifer Passfield stepped down several months ago. Brian and Alison joined the Society late last year. A Kitchener native, Brian has been living in Milton for 15 years. As a permanent supply teacher, he has taught in most of the district schools.

Ruth and Don Taylor have succeeded Craig Reid in arranging our programs. A Ford employee, Ruth is the daughter of member Laura Dixon; her Halton roots go back to the early 1800s. Don, a native of Oakville, is a retiree of the Ford plant there.

#### Harry Kilgore Passes

Harry Kilgore, the father of member Ann Ptolemy, died in mid-January.

Born in 1900, Harry was an active "senior" senior. On his 90th birthday he easily completed a walk of several miles with a group from the Milton Seniors' Centre.

# Millpond still shallow water but tradition and history deepen

Like many Ontario towns Milton's past is closely linked to its millpond. But in many respects our pond is not like the others.

At our well-attended March 17 meeting three speakers told us why; they painted a fascinating picture of what the pond has meant to the community for some 170 years.

The artists were Jim Dills, Uta Parks, a landscape architect with a Guelph firm (Wendy Schearer Landscape Architect Ltd.) and Doug Thompson, the town's manager of parks services. Laura Dixon sharpened the focus with a display of mint-condition postcards.

Jim's slides and comments dealt with many aspects - economic, industrial, political and picturesque. The pond's idyllic appearance could mask messy political feuds.

Uta Parks, formerly of Milton and Hornby, detailed work done at the pond since 1990 under a \$600,000 program. (The province contributed \$300,000.)

Milton is unusual in valuing its millpond tradition. Other towns have buried their ponds to create building lots, Uta said.

Her central idea for Milton was to re-inforce our millpond heritage. Uta referred specifically to the lookout, fences, steps and heritage gardens added to the Livingston Park area north of the pond. These echo the "glory days" just before World War 1 when paying crowds travelled here to enjoy canoeing on the pond.

Uta took similar pains with improvements to Centennial park on Martin Street. A key change here is the more accessible shoreline. Limestone was used to reflect Milton's links with the Niagara Escarpment. The sundial in Centennial Park also is a symbol of tradition.

Doug Thompson described some

of the issues affecting the pond's water quality. Tests have shown the quality is generally good. The "dirty" look is caused by the bottom-feeding carp. They stir up the bottom. (Carp pose the same problem at Coote's Paradise, Royal Botanical Gardens, where a huge project is underway to restore water quality.)

Doug explained that any attempt

to deepen the pond would be very expensive. Another factor is a stipulation by the Ministry of Natural Resources; no additional water may be diverted from Sixteen Mile Creek without conducting a lengthy environmental assessment.

Doug said the idea was to preserve the "postcard quality"; the ban on swimming and motorboats remains.

# Mill Pond a jewel in the centre of town touches past, provides 'space' for future

The water of the Sixteen Mile Creek was first harnessed to drive a grist mill in 1822. The contour of the land was different and part of the pond covered the present Rotary Park but it provided the commercial core that led to the development of Milton.

After the first mill burned in 1855 a new building was constructed; the present earth embankment was built to confine the water.

But very early the recreational aspects of the pond were evident. Curling may have been the first sport and the pond attracted flocks of birds too.

Local sportsmen were charged in 1871 by Joseph Martin for taking birds out of season. The case was tried before Mayor Freeman and Magistrate W.D. Lyon. One of those charged, William Panton, county clerk, produced the mangled remains of a very wet duck that was obviously tame. Since the identity of the duck could not be proven the charge was dismissed. But Joseph Martin closed the pond to the public.

With the purchase in 1908 of the John Sproat house on Margaret St., Thomas Livingston initiated new interest in the pond and his park lands.

An aggressive promoter, he erected a band stand, refreshment stands and park facilities on his lands. In 1912 he

leased the pond from the Martins and put canoes for rent on the water.

Sunday School picnics of up to 400 came from the city to utilize the park facilties.

But Livingston could gain no tax concessions from the town and he closed the park to the public, choosing to rent the facilities to groups.

It was during the Livingston era that promotional post cards were circulated extolling the qualities of the park.

Livingston died in 1913 and the property remained in the hands of trustees until it was purchased by P.L. Robertson as his residence in 1917.

The millpond continued as a source of power for the mill until the mill, then under the management of Robin Hood Flour Mills, was burned in 1963

The company gave the mill pond to the town in 1964 and a frame house on the Martin St. bank was purchased and removed. The town moved ahead to develop the land on Martin St. as Centennial Park, in recognition of the 100th anniversary of confederation.

In 1975 the town purchased the former Robertson/Kernighan house and grounds to add to the developing 'central park' initiative that focuses on the pond.

The area is now publicly owned.



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# Society plays strong role in two New Year's events

More than 300 people helped bring in Milton's new year at two traditional celebrations.

Students from Percy W. Merry public school starred at both the midnight bell-ringing in Victoria Park and at

the Mayor and Council's levee in the Town Hall.

The history book created by the sixth-graders last year provided the theme for both events. Students Lisa and Steven Ilczyszyn toiled and tolled at midnight. The following afternoon Tom Csakvary and Andrea Kovacevich joined Lisa and Steven in a skit based on the book about Omagh and Drumquin.

There were many other players. Mayor Gordon Krantz was centre stage at both events and George Wachmann was behind-the-scenes director; Len McNeil led the midnight singing and with Helen, greeted guests at the levee. The Kinsmen provided late night refreshments.

Other members who took part included Jean Butts, Ann and Walt Elliot, Ed Goodall, Jessie Hamilton, Eveline Howard, Lillian Krywaniuk, Treasa and Ken Lamb, Audrea Lear-Costigan, Marjorie Powys, Janet Wachmann.

A quartet from the Halton Youth Symphony matched last year's triumph. And many levee visitors fell in love with Marjorie Powys' century-old coffee urn. Her mother bought it at an estate sale about 50 years ago.

Councillors who greeted and guided visitors were Colin Best, Gerry Brooks, John Challinor, Rick Day, Art Melanson and Brian Penman. Brad Clements planned to attend but was snowbound in Owen Sound.

M.P. Bonnie Brown was among those greeting friends.

# Society uncovers happy Christmas recipe: carols, cider, calories at the Combers'

More than 30 of us crowded into Helen Comber's living room Dec. 16 for an old-time Christmas party.

Betty Jo Stover, on an 1880 vintage grand piano, kept us respectably in tune during dozens of carols. Lloyd Early added variety by reading two of his poems to a most enthusiastic reception.

Marjorie Powys confirmed her reputation as an analytical thinker and problem-solver by winning the jumbled-word contest. The rest of us took solace in smoothly-spiked apple cider and dozens of cookie varieties.

Helen apologized for the absence of her husband, Bob. As principal percussionist with the National Ballet Orchestra, he was beating the drums for a Toronto performance of "Nutcracker."

The Comber home on Mill Street (See "Historical Homes of Milton" page 44) was built in 1880 by retired farmer Thomas Bowes. Unfortunately he lived there less than a year before he died. Helen and Bob have owned the home since 1984. They had built a substantial addition as an apartment for family members. Now that these members have moved the Combers are busy integrating the added space into their home.

#### Dorrie Greig to tell about Heritage changes on Jan. 20

At our Jan. 20 meeting Dorrie Greig, chair of Milton Heritage (LACAC), will describe the new projects initiated by her group.

Milton Heritage is an advisory committee to Milton Council made up of volunteers appointed by Council.

Dorrie's attitude is reflected by the present name of the organization: she added the "Heritage". Dorrie felt this would be easier for people to understand than the official "Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee." Who could argue that?

During the year since Dorrie's election, Milton Heritage LACAC has taken on a more proactive stance on heritage issues. She also has encouraged stronger co-operation with other heritage groups, including our society.

She'll give us her views on these topics as well as on continuing projects, including LACAC's photos and records of scores of homes and business buildings in Milton.

#### Attention please 1994 fees due

Our 1994 membership fees are now due. If you cannot attend our Jan. 20 meeting please mail a cheque to our membership chair, Helen Comber.

Your continuing membership helps us continue to serve.

The address is Milton Historical Society, P.O. Box 85, Milton, L9T 2Y3. Fees remain the same: Single \$7; Family \$10; Students \$5; Life \$60. Cheques should be made out to the Society.

### When the book is written the job is only half done

Jim Dills is deep into the "other life" of an author: selling his new book, "Moments in History".

The night after he spoke at our October meeting, Jim greeted people again in Hugh Foster Hall - this time at a reception given by his family. More than 100 book-buying friends attended.

In mid November he spoke to about 30 members of the Nelson Women's

## Oct. 1 means history for local students

The first of October was "local history day" for 27 students at St. Peter's School

Teacher Lou Masi marched the grade sixers to the Town Hall for a 10 a.m. start. Ken Lamb then guided them on a 90-minute walk through Victoria Park, the jail yard garden and around the renovated millpond trails. The session ended with a discussion on Milton's past, present and future in Sproat House.

After lunch the class returned to Town Hall where Mayor Gordon Krantz gave them a tour of the restored building with emphasis on both modern conveniences and its historic roles since the 1850s.

## Executive to be chosen at our January meeting

Electing our 1994 executive will be part of our Jan. 20 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall.

Nominations chairman Walt Elliot eagerly awaits your help. As of mid-December at least three positions were unfilled: chairpersons for publicity, programs and oral history.

If you know of a promising candidate please get his/her OK before putting the name forward at the meeting. Better still, why not nominate yourself?

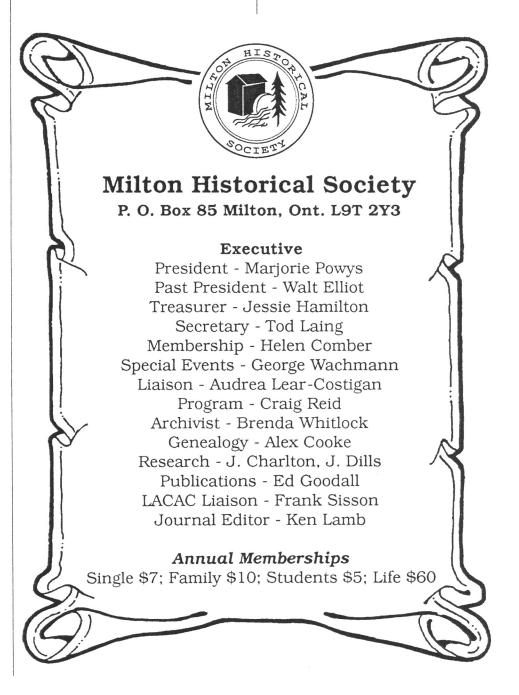
All positions are open for nomination. It has been a long time since a position was contested, but, hey, voting isn't illegal!

Institute at Nelson United Church and in late September he spoke to the Friends of the Museum on the choosing of Milton as the County Town.

Several weeks later more friends found Jim at a "book signing" in the Milton Mall book shop. Others have learned about "Moments" from the Milton Champion, the Burlington Spectator, Burlington Post, Nassagaweya News, Acton Tanner and other Halton papers, the Halton

Heritage publication and the Ontario Historical Society bulletin.

Halton stores selling the book include Smithbooks Milton Mall, Harris Stationery and Spice O' Life in downtown Milton, Smithbooks Oakville Place, Harper Books Campbellville, Oxbow Books Georgetown, Different Drummer Oakville. And of course, Jim has a personal supply for which he is selling signed copies. He can be reached at 878-6061.



#### Seven home owners get Heritage Awards

Our program to recognize people who have made special efforts to maintain their heritage home is off to a good start

At our Nov. 18 meeting framed certificates were awarded to seven owners of homes at least 75 years old: Carl and Alan Brooks, 41 James St.; Jan and John Howard, 5059 Steeles Ave.; Gloria and Larry Johnson, 7682 Tremaine Rd.; Lynda and Jonathan Leaver, 66 Victoria St.; Gail and James Pearson, 99 Mill St.; Betty Jo and Ted Stover, 107 Mary St.; Edna and Marsha Waldie, 24-26 James St.

Mayor Gordon Krantz spoke briefly about the Society's role in spearheading the drive to save the old courthouse, which is now the Town Hall.

The heritage certificates were presented by the seven Society presidents who have served since its formation in he mid 70s; Jim Dills, Val Grimshaw, Don Hayward, Len McNeil, Ken Lamb, Walt Elliot and Marjorie Powys.



Seven past presidents were on hand to present certificates to seven home-owners whose preservation and enhancement of homes of more than 75 years old was recognized. Standing are Past Presidents Jim Dills, Val Grimshaw, Don Hayward, Len McNeil, Ken Lamb, Walt Elliot, and Marjorie Powys the current president. Seated are James Pearson, Gail Pearson, Ted Stover, Betty Jo Stover, Edna Waldie, Amelia Randell (mother of Carol Brooks) and Marsha Waldie.

### Society tapes war memories for 50th anniversary

The Society is well into a recording program to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II next year. Our executive approved the project at its November 2 meeting.

Ed Goodall and Ken Lamb started interviewing just before Armistice Day.

Appropriately enough Bruce MacNab, Society member and one of the first Miltonians to go into action in the Second World War, was the first to talk into the microphone. Bruce served in Wellington bombers over Germany, the North African desert, Malta and else-

where.

Bruce's family has lived in the area for several generations. The MacNabs used to farm where the Maplehurst complex now stands.

Three others were interviewed before the new year. Ken Marshall, believed to be the first Miltonian to win his pilot's wings in World War II, flew Spitfires in Europe, including Dieppe, and India. Jack Dawkins, of the Seniors Centre, was an Observer on torpedocarrying planes and dive bombers. Mike Ledwith served with the Navy in Canada and the U.K.

We are on the lookout for a wide range of war experiences. If you want to give us some of your own recollections or nominate someone else, please get in touch with Ed or Ken. And if you want to conduct interviews don't be shy. Brenda Whitlock has guaranteed space in our archives for the resulting tapes.

## Norval's Montgomery legacy highlights February meeting

For about 10 years, ending in the mid 1930s, author L. M. Montgomery ("Anne of Green Gables," etc.) lived in the Presbyterian manse in Norval. Her husband, Ewan Macdonald, was the minister.

Recently three books have been published containing entries from the author's journals, including many fascinating details about the Norval years.

At our Feb. 17 meeting we'll have an

opportunity to discuss that period - Craig Reid remembers the author as a Sunday School teacher. We'll hear about the present, too. The "Montgomery Christmas" project has just been launched as a tourist attraction.

And Alex MacNab will have his own contribution. His family was among the town's earliest residents and for some years the community was known as "McNabsville."



Milton Model School Class of 1890

This historic picture of "The Modelites of Milton" was provided by Frances Clements. Standing in the back row, left to right: Mr. Simpson, Miss Henderson, Miss Shain, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Campbell, Miss McCranie, Miss White, Miss Evans, Mr. Black. Seated, left to right: Mr. Powell, Miss Nelson, Vina Coulson, Miss Regan, Mr. Hilts, Miss Murry, Miss Lindsay, Miss Lawson and Mr. Gray (Principal).

## Face of Fall Fair changes but rural roots remain

Ismey Bird, our Sept. 16 speaker, showed us why the fall fair has remained popular in the face of a drastic drop in the original farm audience.

Ismey has long been a strong force in the Georgetown fair, one of the earliest in Ontario. It began in 1856, four years before Erin's. Milton's began in 1853.

In the early days the fair marked the end of the harvest for isolated farm families. It was a time for socializing - a "dress up" occasion. Today, Ismey says,

the event has to attract the town dweller. That means brand-name entertainers and demolition derbies.

But fair exhibitors are strongly committed to tradition.

"We have been trying to introduce new categories. But it's not easy, "Ismey says. Finding enough volunteers to put on the fair is also a challenge.

Ismey - quoting a report by Roy Downs, former Canadian Champion editor- reviewed the history of the Milton Fair. The site grew in stages from 1864 to 1951. The 2000-seat concrete grandstand was built in 1959. The three-day Class "A" event draws about 20,000 spectators.

Ismey spoke of efforts to get more children to take part. In one recent example children made butter by shaking a small canister of cream. Ismey knew this was a hit when an eight-yearold girl insisted she would have her guests make butter at her birthday party.

## The Milton Model School class of 1890

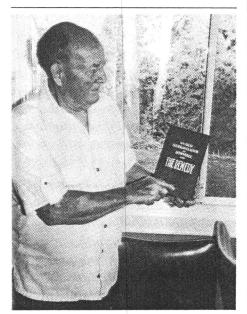
The picture on the previous page, on loan from Mrs. Frances Clements, reminds us of the leadership role the County Town of Milton played in the development of Ontario's educational system.

John Graves Simcoe upon his arrival in Upper Canada in 1792 immediately evinced a strong interest in education and recommended that a University be established in York (now Toronto) and that Grammar Schools be established in Kingston and Niagara.

In 1855 a Grammar School (High School) was established in Milton.

By 1816 the legislature of Upper Canada undertook to provide for elementary education in the province of Ontario as we now know it. By 1843 county superintendents could issue certificates to teach and model schools were being provided in many county towns of Ontario such as Milton. By 1844 property owners who could muster up approximately 20 children ages 5 to 16 years were asking for permission to become a school section.

The Common School Act of 1846



Bruce MacNab passed along the copy of P.L.Robertson's book from brother Alex MacNab of North Bay who donated it for our archives. It's a further addition to the growing resources in the archives.

established Model Schools in certain districts and additional normal schools for the training of teachers throughout the province.

By 1877 Grammar School graduates with senior matriculation could attend a normal school and graduate with a first class certificate. Those graduates with junior matriculation could go to normal school and qualify for a second class certificate. In that same year model schools began issuing third class certificates.

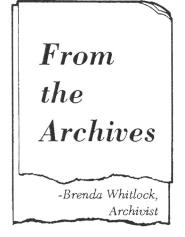
It follows then that all graduates of the 1890 Model School Class shown in the picture (page 4) were fully qualified to teach in elementary schools in the province.

By 1908, when there was a sufficient

number of normal schools located throughout the province to accommodate all students interested in becoming qualified teachers, the Model Schools were abolished.

Of special interest to Milton residents is the fact that the second lady seated in the front row, left to right, is Vina Coulson who is Mrs. Allan Clements' mother. It would be interesting to hear from any others who can trace back a relationship with any others in the picture.

-By W. L. McNeil, retired Superintendent of Elementary Schools 1958-68, Superintendent of Secondary Private Schools 1968-74, Former President of Milton Historical Society.



During the summer, the office set-up at the Sproat House has been improved by the addition of a second-hand bookshelf, desk, table and typewriter. The Society's filing cabinet, previously kept at the Milton Public Library, has been moved to the Sproat House making the cataloguing of archival material and the filing of newspaper clippings much simpler.

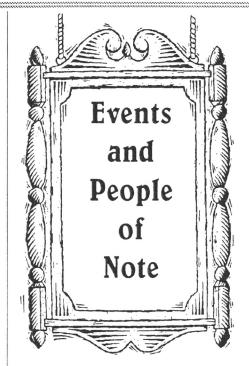
During the past few months Mrs. Dorothy Edwards has given us some of Eleanor Coulter's books for which we

thank her and Len McNeil has passed on to us photographs and letters relating to the Cobban/Freeman families which have proved most valuable. We must also thank Alex MacNab (of North Bay) for donating a copy of the book written in the 1930s by P.L. Robertson, World Reorganization or Downfall and the Remedy. Our collection of material on both Mr. Robertson and the Robertson Screw Factory is getting quite extensive and we are always pleased to receive more items.

Our most recent donation is a complete copy of the 1957 Milton Centennial edition of The Canadian Champion for which we thank Tom Howard.

We are always looking for items connected with Milton's history and local families. We unfortunately have no room to handle such things as furniture, but if anyone has paper items such as letters, diaries, photographs, books etc. that they would like to donate to the Archives we would be very pleased to hear from them.

- Centrepiece of our "booth" at the Sept. 11 Open House in Milton Mall was a photo display marking the 100th anniversary (1993) of telephone service in Milton. It was based on Jim Dills' extensive collection with additions from the Historical Society's archives. Jean Butts, Jim Dills, Ed Goodall, Jessie Hamilton and Ken Lamb were booth attendants.
- A juvenile spray-painted the Victoria Park bandstand and war memorial in September. Fortunately workers were able to remove the word "Flatline" from both locations. Ruth Allen has fond memories of the bandstand. She was struck by a structure on a trip to Bermuda. Ruth sketched it; later a similar stand was built at Halton Manor. It was later moved to Victoria Park to make way for building of Allendale.
- Streetsville Historical Society has completed a list of blacksmiths who worked there from 1823 onwards. In 1873-74, the peak period, Streetsville had nine smiths.
- In Oakville the historical society is working with senior computer students at Oakville-Trafalgar High School to set up a data-base for the Society's collection. The Oakville group supplied 12 historic photos from its collection for a calendar being produced for MPP Gary Carr.
- Marshall Neilson of the Esquesing Historical Society has completed 33,500 entries of births, marriages and deaths from the Georgetown Heralds 1951-1992. This is Volume 4; it will be avail-



able from Geoff Canon, Georgetown Library. Price is \$25.

- Lillian Krywaniuk suffered a broken wrist in a house fall. Lillian had the cast removed shortly before Christmas and was working on getting flexibility back in her left hand.
- Tod Laing, after several years on the executive, has resigned; she plans to move to Hamilton. Tod recently received her end-to-end badge from the Bruce Trail Association. It tells people she has hiked the entire 750 km of the Trail from Queenston Heights to Tobermory. She joins Treasa and Ken Lamb and several hundred others who have hiked the whole Trail since it was officially opened more than 25 years ago.

- Craig Reid, snowed under by various chores, has stepped down as program chairman of the Society. For similar reasons Lou Bradley has given up the post of oral history chair.
- Ken Hassard and Lou Bradley have volunteered to record war-memory interviews for our 1995 project. Ken will interview fellow Navy veterans; Lou will concentrate on interviews with women; Ken Lamb and Ed Goodall are the "generalists."
- Marjorie Powys has been elected chair of the fund-raising drive for the Milton Seniors Activity Centre. In about three months the Centre is scheduled to move from its current location on Charles Street, (Canadian Legion) to the remaining wing of the former Halton Manor. This includes the auditorium and the chapel. The Town, Halton Region and the Province have contributed more than \$600,000 to remove the chimney and make other renovations. Marjorie heads the seniors' drive to raise an additional \$50,000.
- Marie Martin is recuperating at home after suffering a fractured hip. Marie spent more than a month in hospital.
- In a new book by Dorothy Turcotte, "Places and People on Bronte Creek," Laura Dixon appears in two photos taken almost 70 years apart.

Laura was in the grade one class photo in 1913. The same six students were photographed at the 1980 reunion.

#### Catch the new wave on historic mill pond

Our millpond - its past and its future - will be the focus of our March 17 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall. As usual the program begins at 8 p.m. sharp.

Our pond has a versatile and romantic past. It played an essential role in establishing our community as a milling centre and future town. But it had many other roles - skating rink, pleasure park for boaters, fishing hole, and source of

ice for home refrigerators and milk houses.

Members will have an opportunity to recall their experiences and show photos and postcards.

As for the future, consultants for the Town are studying how we may best benefit from the millpond. We'll hear about the various possibilities as well as the improvements recently completed.

### The Journal

A re-design of The Journal has been undertaken with this issue. Readers will note the first use of photos, a three column format and a new nameplate - all part of the evolving desktop publishing that makes it possible.

The first issue was February 15, 1985 so we also end another year.