



The Historical Society of St. Catharines

P.O. Box 25017, 221 Glendale Avenue, Pen Centre, St. Catharines, Ontario L2T 4C4

Our mission and goal is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and area. The Society was founded in 1927. Our Society is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

Please visit our website: <http://stcatharineshistory.wordpress.com> Newsletter contact: hssc.newsletter@gmail.com

May 2018 Newsletter

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY ST. CATHARINES!



As a small settlement along the 12 Mile Creek, the village of St. Catharines was formerly known as simply “The Twelve” or “Shipman’s Corners”. The village became the Town of St. Catharines in 1845 and prospered with the commercial activity that resulted from the improved rail connections and construction of 2nd and 3rd Welland Canal systems to service the demand for even larger ships. With a population of about 6000 the Town was incorporated as the City of St. Catharines on May 1, 1876. In the years following, St. Catharines has grown through annexation of the surrounding Grantham Township, the towns of Merriton and Port Dalhousie and the rural township of Louth. Today, the city represents a number of distinct communities and neighbourhoods and boasts a population of 133,113 residents (c.2016) and covers a land mass of over 96 square kilometres.

LECTURE PROGRAM – MAY to JUNE 2018

Program Subject to Change

Join us at the **St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre** at 7:30pm on the 4th Thursday of the month from September to November and January to June. Arrive early to visit the Museum before the meeting starts. Learn more about local history through our excellent lecture program featuring a wide variety of expert speakers. Museum staff often present a historical artifact from the museum collection related to the lecture topic at each meeting.

MAY 24 **John Brown House.** Facing Pelham Road near the Short Hills Provincial Park is one of the area's earliest surviving dwellings, designated for its heritage value by the City of St. Catharines. The property was built circa 1810 and is associated with one of Niagara's earliest settlers, John Brown (Braun), a United Empire Loyalist who served during the American Revolution as a provincial soldier.

JUNE 28 Group lecture from the **St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre** staff on preservation of your historical treasures at home. They will describe how to handle and store objects.

This will be the final lecture before the summer break. A new program begins in September 2018 with an exciting line-up of speakers and topics that you don't want to miss.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

THE ST. CATHARINES GATEWAY ANCHOR



In 2004, the St. Catharines Economic and Tourism Services department, with support from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, launched the Heritage Corridor Project, to raise awareness of sites of historical importance. In the small parkette located where Westchester Ave. meets St. Paul St., "The Gateway to Downtown", a small plaque describes the significance of the vintage 19th century ship's anchor as follows:

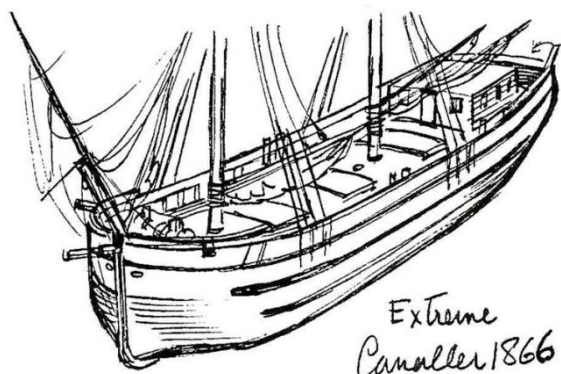
Shipbuilding in St. Catharines – our heritage. *St. Catharines became an important part of the shipping industry due to the building of the Welland Canals and its location between two Great Lakes. Louis Shickluna, a shipbuilder who emigrated to St. Catharines from Malta, began working as a builder in the Russell Armington shipyard, located at the 6th Lock of the first Welland Canal. Shickluna bought the yard in 1845 and began*

constructing and repairing ships, establishing himself as a premier shipbuilder.

Shickluna Shipyards had an international reputation for building some of the biggest and best boats of its time. The Shickluna shipyards built and serviced more than 200 boats in almost 40 years of business.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY OF WELLAND SAILING CANALLERS

March 2018 Meeting



Speaker Dr. Kimberly E. Monk, Adjunct Professor in Maritime Archaeology at Trent and Adjunct Professor in Industrial and Maritime Heritage at Brock University presented an illustrated talk based on her research into Great Lakes shipwrecks and shipbuilding in the mid-1800's. The focus was on our local Shickluna shipyard who designed and built a specialized "canaller" to maximize cargo carrying capacity within the dimensions of the narrow locks of the early canal systems. While there were many shipbuilders on the Great Lakes, the local shipwright Louis Shickluna of St. Catharines built some of

the best known examples of canal ships at that time, propeller-driven vessels as well as sailing barques (barks) and schooners. The Shickluna Shipyard was located alongside the 12 Mile Creek below the Burgoyne Bridge in the flat area currently used as a training facility by the St. Catharines Fire Department. Dr. Monk has proposed a two year project for a land-based excavation at the shipyard and the surrounding historic environment. For more information, visit the official website of the project: <https://www.digmaritime.com/shickluna-shipyard>

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ST. CATHARINES

Held at the St. Catharines Historical Museum, April 26, 2018

President Dave Willer sent his regrets. In his place, John Burtniak conducted the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. There were approximately sixty-five (65) members and guests in attendance. Therefore we had a quorum. The meeting had previously been announced in the newsletter and at prior general meetings.

John Burtniak first called upon Anthony Percival of the Museum, who presented the funeral cards of two young boys who were drowned by a surge of water when the government steamer *Canadian* hit Lock 22 on June 20, 1912. Anthony generally presents an artefact from the Museum in keeping with the speaker's topic.

The minutes of the last annual general meeting (April 27, 2017) were published in the June 2017 newsletter. John Burtniak asked whether there were any changes or omissions. Hearing none, he asked that the minutes be accepted as written. Secretary Elizabeth Finnie moved that the minutes be accepted. John Stevens seconded. A show of hands indicated all were in favour.

Financial Report: In the absence of treasurer Chris Loat, auditor Tom Whitelaw distributed and presented the financial report for the fiscal year 2017. The total operating income was shown to be \$3328.12; total operating expenses were \$3247.33; and total assets: \$15,746.50. Tom read the observations on the financial report for 2017, which indicated that membership fees and meeting donations both exhibited a decline from those of 2016. The society however has substantial financial reserves which could cover almost five (5) years of operating expenses at the 2017 rate. Therefore the society should be sustainable. Both Tom Whitelaw and auditor Carol

Gaspari reviewed and approved the 2017 financial report.

There was one query from the floor, re the book sales. John Brenton explained that the book in question was the re-edition of 'Junius'. The Historical Society had donated funds to Mayholme toward its publishing costs and purchased fifteen (15) copies for sale to our members.

Tom Whitelaw moved, and Matthew Goodman seconded, that the financial report be approved. Carried.

Memberships: Membership director John Calvert reported that while last year's memberships stood at 156, this year there were only 135 members, a drop of twenty-one (21) members. John cited the many expenses the society has, such as room rentals, honorariums, newsletter printing and mailing, as well as donations to various local institutions. He urged everyone who had not yet joined or renewed, to consider doing so. The membership fees are still \$10 single or \$15 per family.

Correspondence: Secretary Elizabeth Finnie read a brief report, stating that the annual return for Ontario Corporations had been submitted to Canada Revenue immediately after last year's election of board members; and the application for an Ontario Heritage Grant had been submitted in June by Chris Loat and Elizabeth, as it is every year. Since February 2018 HSSC has a new email address, hssc.contact@gmail.com. This is to be found on our website and takes the place of personal email addresses of board members. Elizabeth is replying to queries coming in and reports that most correspondence is now coming via this route. Queries are generally requests for historical or genealogical information. These are referred on to the appropriate person or place, or answered if we are able.

Programmes: Programme director Dan Sundy reported that the subjects of the next two presentations will be: May 24, 2018: the John Brown House; and June 28, 2018: Artefacts and how to preserve them, presented by Museum staff/volunteers. Both meetings will be held at the Museum.

Social Convenor: Lorraine and Bill Steinman retired from this volunteer duty last year after many years. Board member Roger Bradshaw is now responsible for supplying the refreshments after each general meeting.

Election: Nominating committee member John Burtniak explained that the board of the Historical Society consists of five (5) officers and eight (8) directors. According to our constitution we can have up to nine (9) directors. John listed all members of the executive: President Dave Willer, Past President Nancy Cameron, Vice President Brian Narhi, Treasurer Chris Loat, Secretary Elizabeth Finnie, Directors (in alphabetical order): Gail Benjafield, Roger Bradshaw, John Brenton, John Burtniak, John Calvert, Des Corran, Dennis Gannon, and Dan Sundy. John thanked all for their participation this year. All are willing to remain in their current positions. Since one more director can be accommodated, John asked for any nominees or volunteers from the floor. Patricia Richardson volunteered. Hearing no further names, John welcomed Patricia as a candidate. John then asked for an "omnibus vote" to elect or re-elect all board members. Wes Turner moved and Dan Sundy seconded. All were in favour.

Presentation: Elizabeth Finnie introduced the evening's speaker: Dr. Laurence Steven, emeritus professor of English at Laurentian University and former publisher of Scrivener Books. Dr. Steven made a very well researched presentation of the history surrounding the place once known as Turney's Crossroads. Dr. Steven was thanked by Bill Stevens. The annual general meeting ended at approximately 9:15 p.m. with the usual book draw, social gathering, and time to talk one-on-one with our speaker.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Finnie
Secretary HSSC



John Burtiniak



Anthony Percival



Laurence Stevens

2018-2019 HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTORS

The re-elected HSSC board executive:

Dave Willer: President
Nancy Cameron: Past President
Brian Narhi: Vice President
Chris Loat: Treasurer
Elizabeth Finnie: Secretary

The directors are: John Burtiniak, Dennis Gannon, Dan Sundy, John Calvert, John Brenton, Gail Benjafield, Roger Bradshaw, Des Corran and newly elected director Patricia Richardson

The HSSC board is comprised of volunteers who share a keen interest in the history of the region. They meet monthly to plan and provide governance over the activities of the Historical Society to ensure they are aligned with the mission to increase knowledge and appreciation of the history of St. Catharines and area, in a way that will sustain the Historical Society of St. Catharines for many years.

You may contact the Society by email: HSSC.contact@gmail.com

or

Traditional mail:

The Historical Society of St. Catharines
Box 25017
221 Glendale Ave., Pen Centre
St. Catharines, ON
L2T 4C4

TURNEY'S CROSSROADS – A PORTRAIT THROUGH TIME

April 2018 Meeting



Dr. Laurence Steven, retired professor of English and Humanities at Laurentian University presented a historical review of an area once known as Turney's Crossroads, located where St. David's Road crossed Davis Road and the Homer Road just north of Lock 21 of the 3rd Welland Canal and the old Thorold Cemetery. Local roads were established on the traditional trails developed by indigenous tribes. Over time, settlements were built up and included a log church known as "the old German church" alongside Thorold's first cemetery, later replaced by Lakeview Cemetery. Today, the intersection and the remains of the settlements are underwater in the control pond for the Welland Canal flight locks.

WELCOME TO ST. CATHARINES: SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

Recent articles in newspapers and magazine discussing architecture, antiques and historic artifacts, point out that not all 'old' things need be considered of heritage value. As a community builds residences or commercial spaces, bridges or monuments, all these things, in time, become of historic value, sometimes within a generation. It is in that vein, that we should look at the history of the Welcome Signs in St. Catharines. An article on these signs was published in a 2014 issue of this newsletter. The present article should bring us up to date and adds new information.



Most of the 'Welcome to ...' signs in St. Catharines adhere to a pattern and size, but not to specific colour or text. The template for most of the signs was established in 2004. Some say Welcome to St. Catharines with a subtitle below. Others say Welcome to a St. Catharines specific neighbourhood. Most of the neighbourhood signs are augmented with some landscaping or garden plantings surrounding the sign.

A little history is needed. Of the Neighbourhood type, there are signs in Merriton near The Keg restaurant, one for Western Hill on St. Paul St. W near the railway bridge, and in Port Dalhousie at the corner of Martindale

Road and Lakeshore. Another sign in Port Dalhousie is across from Pier 21 Restaurant on the boulevard. This sign does not fit the template that the city used for the others. It is completely different in that funds were raised by a local community group. This colourful sign says 'Welcome to old Port Dalhousie', but includes graphics of rowers and a carousel horse and lighthouse.

At different boundary areas of the city there are neighbourhood signs, one being on Lakeshore Road near the canal bridge noting Malcomson Park, another for Power Glen, a small community on the western end of the city, and a third entering the city at Victoria Lawn Cemetery by the Homer Bridge. More central ones are near the corner of St. Paul St West and Louth close to the Seymour-Hanna Arena and another entering Burgoyne



Woods in Old Glen Ridge. That neighbourhood had the first Welcome sign installed at the corner of Westchester and Glenridge Ave. This sign was in response to what was seen as a threat by some in the community. In 2003, Brock University proposed that a 'Welcome to Brock University' sign be placed at that same corner. A member of the Green Committee, Peter Thompstone, called around and a small group of neighbours acted. They felt that at that time Brock University had little to do with the community. This small group of residents banded together to collect money throughout the neighbourhood to fund a *Welcome to Old Glen Ridge: a neighbourhood community* sign installed instead. All moneys came from the residents. Parks and Rec (of the time) had the sign installed. Plantings around the sign would be kept up by the city.

City council approved the installation of the sign on May 13, 2004 and Minutes of that meeting state that "the proposed sign has been designed as a template to be used as the standard for similar uses on municipal property. The welcome sign can be used to recognize the neighbourhoods that exhibit a distinct identity or history through the city. The design, size, colour and graphics will be consistent through the entire parks system." While the template was approved, the exact colour and graphics was not formalized. One will note that many are dark green with golden brown colouring, others are black, some dark blue.

Evidently that first community sponsored sign in Old Glenridge received a positive response. Once the Old Glenridge sign was in place, the one at Victoria Lawn and at Malcomson Park swiftly followed. They are remarkably similar in size, colour etc. The template seems to have been a good one. It is believed that the city paid for these next two signs, while we know that the ones designating Merritton and Western Hill had local businesses and organizations help with the funding. Merritton and Western Hill signs were both installed in 2011; however city staff has been unable to identify exactly when the others were put in place. Kristen Sullivan and Peter Leyser of city staff have both been helpful in assisting with this update. Leyser pointed out that signs that denote a wine trail were likely a Provincial initiative, probably funded by the Wine Council of Ontario. As of this writing, these are the only signs this writer is aware of. If there are others, the Historical Society might wish to know.

May the good work, on making St. Catharines a welcoming community, continue.

Gail Benjafield, long time Historical Society of St. Catharines member, current Board member. With thanks to Peter Thompstone, Kristin Sullivan and Peter Leyser for their input and assistance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Event information and links to external websites are provided as a courtesy for members of the Historical Society of St. Catharines (HSSC). The HSSC is not responsible for the delivery of content from third parties. *Event details and future schedules may be subject to change.*

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| May 17, 2018
7:30pm | Camp Kosciuszko: Why Colonel Butler would be spinning in his grave. Richard Merritt lectures at the Niagara Historical Society & Museum in Niagara-on-the-Lake. |
| May 26, 2018 | Grimsby House Tour: Timeless Treasures. A memorable day celebrating local architecture, décor and history. Every house has a unique story. Contact the Grimsby Historical Society at 905-309-0796 for more information. |
| May 27, 2018
2:30pm – 5:00pm | Great Men and Staunch Ships: Investigating the Shickluna Shipyard, a presentation by Dr. Kimberly Monk held at Rodman Hall at 2:30pm following the AGM of the Canal Society of Canada. The presentation concludes with Professor Monk leading interested people down the hill to the Shickluna site where she will discuss the site and the plans for the anticipated archeological dig. |
| May 27, 2018
12:00pm – 4:00pm | Arabella's Pie Social and History Fair. Come one, call all to Arabella's Pie Social & History Fair at the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum! Enjoy a slice of homemade pie with hot or cold beverage at Arabella's Tea Room! After you sample pie, discover traditional skills at the Niagara Antique Power demonstration and the museum's Blacksmith Shop. |
| Until November 2018 | Doing Our Bit: World War One from St. Catharines to the Western Front
To commemorate the 100 th anniversary of the end of the first World War, the St. Catharines Museum exhibit showcases the wartime experiences of St. Catharines residents at home and at the front.

Camp Kosciuszko: The Polish Army at Niagara Camp, 1917-1919
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and Historical Society exhibit is on until November 2018. The Museum is open 1 – 5pm everyday during the winter and admission is free for NOTL residents. |

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FOR SEPTEMBER 2017 through AUGUST 2018

Consider a membership with the Historical Society of St. Catharines. Your Society membership renews annually in September for the upcoming season. Annual Membership Dues are only \$10.00 for an individual or \$15.00 for a family. The Historical Society puts your membership dollars to work as research and support for projects that align with our mission of increasing knowledge and appreciation of St. Catharines and local area history. HSSC members will also receive the newsletter 4 times a year.

Thank you for being a member!

Make cheques payable to: The Historical Society of St. Catharines

Membership dues can be paid at any HSSC Meeting, or mail to:

The Historical Society of St. Catharines
P.O. Box 25017, 221 Glendale Avenue, Pen Centre
St. Catharines, Ontario, L2T 4C4

Your membership information will not be shared with any other group or business. If you wish to receive a membership card, notify John Calvert at: jcalvert57@hotmail.com. We are also now sending the newsletter to members by e-mail, so we ask that you provide your e-mail address on the membership form.

For your record: Renewed on: _____ Cheque in the amount of: \$ _____

Remove the form below and return with your remittance

The Historical Society of St. Catharines

Membership Dues for year September 2017 through August 2018

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | (\$10) | <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | (\$15) | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code / Zip Code: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

- ☐ I would like to receive the Society Newsletter, meeting reminders and notices by e-mail
☐ I would like to receive the Society Newsletter by print