



THOROLD and BEAVERDAMS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2 Vine Street, Thorold, Ontario L2V 4V3

www.tbhs.ca

Preserving Thorold's History

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Bob Sagness, Author

WELCOME BACK

Welcome back to post-holiday life: in time for another election to decide the fate of our province for the next four years!

Pages five and six of this month's newsletter pay tribute to a special local lady, please read about her and her achievements...

SPEAKERS for 2011

September 28: Movie Night

October 31: The Churches of Merritton, John Burtniak

November 28: The McFarlane Family, David Hemmings

December: T.B.A.

January 2012: Annual Meeting, plus Show and Tell

COMING EVENTS

Provincial election, Thursday, October 06...make your vote count!

A Victorian Christmas (tentative December 03)

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE

June - 54

July - hiatus

August - hiatus

BRAIN TEASER

What is the only English word with four double letter pairs in a row?

See answer on page four.

GUEST SPEAKER for JUNE and our PIE SOCIAL, MAYOR'S CANADA DAY PICNIC and our EIGHTH ANNUAL PICNIC

June 27: The triple combination of our annual Pie Social, guest speaker Alun Hughes and his timely topic, The Battle of Beaverdams gave us one of our largest monthly turn outs with 54 people in attendance. Once again Alun showed us that history needs to be thoroughly researched and that research verified by more than one authentic source...not recorded hearsay. He showed us how many historians over the ages have differing views and facts about the



same event that took place hundreds of years ago.

Thanks to Alun's geography background and his diligent work with retired Brock University archivist and member John Burtiak, we can now safely say that the locations they identified as the battle ground and the surrender spot for the

Battle of Beaverdams are the true sites where these events took place on June 24, 1813. Thanks Alun and John for your detective work on this historic Thorold event.

June 27: Our annual Pie Social after the above speaker. WOW... it was once again an elaborate feast! Our members and guests had an overwhelming choice of; rhubarb crumble, strawberry and rhubarb pie, apple pie, pumpkin pie, scones with fresh whipped cream, home made cookies and of course David Griffiths fresh Ontario strawberries with yogurt, all of this washed down with punch, tea or coffee. Thanks everyone for your special treats.

July 01: A sea of Thorold residents dressed in red and white packed Beaverdams Park this year for the Fifth Annual Mayor's Canada Day Picnic. Our tent and display of Thorold artefacts and historical documents was once again a star attraction at the picnic. I am sure visitors to our tent would have stayed for hours, asking questions sparked by our display, discussing old times, people and places in our township's and city's history. Many of them regaled us with anecdotes of times and places long past and gone forever, some with a longing for those old days. It's good that people can reminisce and tell us "youngsters" how it was when they were young.

July 09: With the temperature a balmy 27 degrees and a gentle breeze, twenty-five people enjoyed sitting under the shade of the huge maple tree

next to Robson House at Morningstar Mill and enjoyed a potluck lunch at our Eighth Annual Picnic.

ANOTHER CANADA FIRST FOR THOROLD GETS RECOGNITION...

The Thorold Reed Band first took up their instruments when Canada was not yet a country...the band was founded in 1851! They are the oldest continuously operating band in Canada.

The band and its current conductor Brian Williams were recognized by both the Niagara Region and the City of Thorold for its entertainment and service to the community and beyond. Mayor Ted Luciani presented Mr. Williams with a certificate and plaque during their final summer concert in the band shell at Beaverdams Park this September.

MEMBERSHIP HAPPENINGS...

- The work has started! Last month our executive gave the go-ahead to David Burke to start creating our new web site. It should be up and running in three or four weeks.
- We grateful acknowledge the annual support of the City of Thorold as we received their grant for 2011.
- Bob Upper is working on a CD on which he is entering almost all of the photos we have in our archives, some of which have never been on display. When finished it should contain almost 500 photos from our collection. Later this year the CD will be available for sale.
- The executive are planning a special event for early next year, celebrating the Battle of Beaverdams. More to come in next newsletter.
- A good idea that we may want to copy! The Welland Museum recently held a "*Famous Son and Daughters*" party and silent auction fundraiser to honour their celebrities from Welland and Pelham. What do you think?

A little gem with a ring of truth!

My forgetter's getting better, but my rememberer is broke,
to you that may seem funny, but to me, it's no joke
For when I'm 'here' I'm wondering, if I really should be 'there'
and when I try to think it through, I haven't got a prayer!

At times I walk into a room, then think, what am I here for?
 I try to remember and wrack my brain, but a zero is my score.
 At times I put things away where I think they will be safe, but gee!
 The only person they are safest from...is me!

When shopping I see someone, say 'hi' and have a chat,
 when the person walks away I ask myself, 'who was that?'
 Yes, my forgetter's getting better, while my rememberer is broke,
 and it's driving me plumb crazy, and that ain't no joke.

LIVE, LOVE & LAUGH A LOT

BRAIN TEASER ANSWER

The word that has four double letters in a row: Subbookkeeper

Our Society is a member of the Ontario Historical Society. We meet the last Monday of the month at 7:30 pm, at the museum at 2 Vine St., Thorold; with a guest speaker, followed by refreshments.



The museum is open year round to the public on Saturdays 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and by appointment at other times. Admission is free. Phone (905) 984-4435 or (905) 227-1632 for further details.

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

A FAMOUS THOROLD PERSON THAT DESIRVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Esther Summers; teacher, farmers wife, homemaker, historian and genealogist.

At age 98 and a life long resident of Thorold since childhood, Esther Summers has a memory for details of people and events that many “younger” people would envy.

Born on a farm in Earlton, Ontario on June 03, 1913, she was the fifth of eight children. Upon the family moving to Niagara, Esther attended Stamford Collegiate Institute, then Hamilton Normal School. She first taught at Allanburg School in Thorold from 1932 to 1934, then married Roy Summers in September 1934. They had four children. She supply taught at Central School and L.G. Lorriman Public School from 1950 to 1969. Her extended family has grown over the decades to the point where she now has 13 grand children, 17 great-grand children and one great-great-grandchild.

As with many a seniors, living by herself in the family farm house on Beverdams Road, (known as the Christmas Card House because of its unique architecture) it became too onerous and she recently moved to Lookout Ridge Retirement Community, in Fonthill. However, as always, Esther is still happy to meet visitors just about anytime to talk about the people and history of our area.

What got her hooked on history? “It started in 1956 when I was asked to do a local history of the Decew Falls Women’s Institute chapter and since then everything just snowballed and I love it.”

Mrs. Summers' special field of knowledge and interest is the people and settlements of the Niagara Peninsula before the War of 1812, the war itself, Laura Secord, and the rebellion of 1837.

Since the late fifties it has been open house almost daily at her picturesque home. Visitors have included historians, genealogists, students, teachers, professors, librarians, family and friends all seeking local history. The guest book that sits on the dining room table has names of visitors from all over the world!

Over the years she has been credited as a source in more than 40 books and has lectured to hundreds of audiences. Her legendary knowledge of Laura Secord led to a one woman television documentary in 1984. She also collaborated on a one hour television program about Thorold.

On my visit to her house for this article, before she moved to the retirement home, I was impressed to see room after room with shelves filled with reference books and historical documents, plus four rows of lateral files stacked five high, just chock-a-block full of resource material...and she has most of that information in her head which she can instantly bring forth. Some have endearing called her as a “walking history book.”

Esther has received literally dozens of provincial and national plaques, certificates, awards and medals for her works on Niagara peninsula history and the genealogy of its residents.

She is a life member of the Niagara Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society and has answered thousands of genealogical information requests at her own expense. She is the official historian of the City of Thorold and has a city street named for her, in addition we are pleased to tell you she is a life long member of our Society.

While I am talking about her many honours, she was also Thorold’s Senior Citizen of the Year in 1994 and a year later the Ontario Senior Citizen of the Year!

Esther says that, “helping others and sharing her knowledge makes her life interesting, exciting and rewarding.”



The Christmas Card House



1930 photo



2010 photo



1934 Wedding Photo



1988 CBC Television Interview with Roy and Esther