

History

MILLBROOK & CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2012

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'Tis the season...



Can we help you with your gift-giving list? CD sets of 'This Green & Pleasant Land – Chronicles of Cavan Township' with a fully searchable index, are available for \$20 plus shipping. Produced in 1990, this is a fascinating and well researched compilation, encompassing 170 years of local history with hundreds of photographs and 130 family histories.

'Significant Architecture of Millbrook' is a beautiful photographic inventory of heritage homes and properties in Millbrook, and is also available for \$20.

The gift of a subscription to MCHS, \$15 single or \$25 for a family membership, includes regular newsletters and free admission to all our events. A great deal!



Needler's Mill, April 19, 1981, from the collection of Reg McKnight

Options presented on the future of the Millbrook dam, pond and Needler's Mill

The MMM Group is currently conducting a Class 1 Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Millbrook Dam, which has been designated 'high hazard' by the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA). On December 4, three options were presented to the Community Liaison Committee which includes representatives of local interest groups and property owners living adjacent to the study area. Two of the three options included removal of the dam and the third described a new dam, five times wider than the current weir. The options ranged from removal and partial infilling of the pond to the creation of a smaller pond next to a re-established stream bed.

The study stated ORCA's intention to divest itself of Needler's Mill. In a meeting held the previous week between ORCA CAO Allan Seabrooke, Save the Dam Mill Pond co-chair Janet Honsberger and Historical Society president Celia Hunter, Mr. Seabrooke indicated that the sale of the mill would be most easily accomplished if the purchaser was either a public entity such as the municipality or a foundation or trust. *(continued page 4)*



Aftermath of the 1975 Millbrook explosion, from the photo collection of Reg McKnight. The windows of the Millbrook School were blown out and blackboards were impaled with shards of glass.

Catching the genealogy 'bug'

by Paul McKnight, Indialantic, Florida

My father, Reg McKnight, and my mother, Madeline McDowell, were born and raised in the Millbrook/Cavan area. I weathered Hurricane Hazel in John McKnight's Fallis Line farm. I remember bowling at Melburne McDowell's bowling lanes.

My Dad became very interested in photography as a hobby and took thousands of pictures - most of them had to do with family gatherings with my grandparents, aunts and uncles. And because we were the ones that moved (to Midland and then Orillia) it seemed that we were obligated to attend all the family gatherings in Millbrook and so most the pictures were taken there.

After Dad passed away I took an interest in his photos but first I had to get them transferred off 35 millimeter slides which he had stored on those circular Kodak carousels. By that time we had moved to Connecticut so I had to arrange to get the slides across the border. Once done, I began to post these photos on Google's Picasa which supports face recognition and before too long I was putting names and faces together.

It seemed the next logical step was to start building a family tree that traced my heritage and at the same time add faces to the names as I had done in Picasa. It was through the family tree project that I connected with Morley Connell in Ottawa and Karen Hannah in British Columbia. Mabel McKnight (my

Dad's mother and my grandmother) is a Connell, her mother is a Hannah. Karen pointed me to the Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society web site. From there I volunteered to do some indexing.

Indexing is a rush! I see a grandparent on a village council, an estate auction for a passed away relative, a grandparent who owned a bowling alley. I see the names that I heard about when I was kid - Armstrong, Fallis, Edmunds, Larmer and of course McKnight and McDowell. It's a blast from the past and a way to connect the dots that my father started when he took all those pictures.

Paul McKnight has kindly provided copies of some of his father's photo collection to the Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society. Thank you, Paul.



Tom St. Mary of Eastpointe, Michigan has sent us copies of a number of photos from his collection, including this one of William Gray taken in 1895 by G. G. Green Photographer, Millbrook.

Read all about it!

Recently Mildred Hooten donated a nearly complete collection of newspapers covering news in the village and surrounding area between March 1983 and November 2012. Mrs. Lola Thexton has also donated her late husband Clayton's collection of Millbrook papers which has helped to fill some of the gaps in our collection.

Thanks to the generosity of Mildred and Lola, our collection of local newspapers has now grown to more than 2000 issues of what has been variously called The Millbrook Chronicle, The Millbrook Reporter, The Millbrook-Omemee Reporter, The Millbrook and Omemee Mirror, The Mirror Reporter and the Millbrook Times; The Millbrook Highlighter, The Ripple and the Green Hills Gazette.

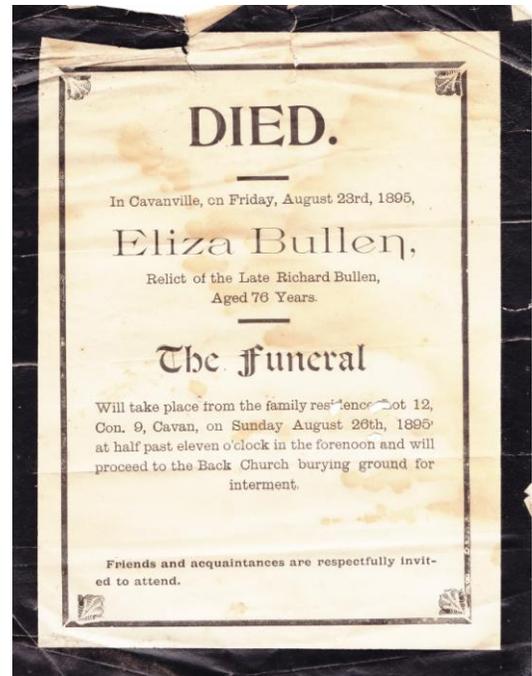
As part of the ongoing work of reorganizing and cataloging our collection, that was undertaken this year with the help of a grant from the Cavan Monaghan and Millbrook Legacy Fund through the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough, we have created a list of the papers we hold. While the collection is large there are many gaps which we would like to fill. If you have old papers that you would consider lending for a short period, please let us know (millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com). We will have an opportunity, in January, to borrow equipment which will allow us to copy papers and, once copied, we can return the paper to you.



Indexing on the Night Shift

One of our volunteer indexers finds time on breaks during the night shift to enter data for our Indexing Project and writes the following:
by Ryan Grant:

"I've always enjoyed genealogy and looking through old newspapers, especially an area where my ancestors came from. I get great pleasure helping out with this indexing project as it will make other's search for their ancestors much easier and it capture's a snapshot of their daily lives back then one would otherwise never know about. Newspaper clippings add a great element to one's family tree and can uncover a vast array of wonderful facts, stories and obituaries."



George Wilson has kindly donated a wonderful collection of funeral notices. The Back Church burying ground refers to the cemetery at St. John's Church, Ida.

Coming Events

MCHS is planning several events in the new year. To celebrate Heritage Week, plans are underway to spend the afternoon of February 21st at Millbrook Manor, sharing stories and comparing notes. We hope to begin the afternoon with reminiscences with special guest Ron Gardiner and Manor resident Lola Thexton. The gathering will be held in the ground floor common room, and all are welcome. The stories will become part of our Historical Collection, as we launch our Oral Histories project.

On Thursday evening, March 21st, we look forward to welcoming Mary-Cate Garden, an archaeologist working in heritage studies. She will give a presentation called "Landscapes of Loss: things left behind", in which she will describe the many artefacts found on properties scheduled to be demolished to make way for a major transportation infrastructure project in Southern Ontario.



Andrew Pamerter, heritage carpenter and instructor in the Heritage Carpentry program at Algonquin College was our featured speaker on November 22nd in the lounge at Centennial Place. We also had a very successful event on October 25th at St. Thomas Parish Hall, when Dr. Carl Benn gave a fascinating illustrated talk on '1812 – The Big Picture'.



Ella Tytler of Millbrook was the delighted winner of our Baltimore Album Quilt, pictured here with Quilts 'n' Critters owner, Diane England. The winning ticket was drawn at this year's Scarecrow Festival. Thanks to Quilts 'n' Critters and Bear Essentials for looking after ticket sales. We wish Diane all the best in her retirement.



The mural envisioned by the late Lavern Gibson, was formally dedicated at the opening of 'Christmas in the Village' events on December 6th.

MCHS embarks on Oral Histories Project in 2013

Recognizing the wealth of recollections that our Seniors have, in 2013 we plan to record many of those stories and memories and add them to our Collection.

We currently have one voice recorder and hope to be able to purchase two more. This project will begin in January.



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Save the Dam Mill Pond, whose slogan is "My Millbrook includes the Mill, the Dam and the Pond" meets December 12th to discuss the report by the MMM Group. The consultants have requested feedback by mid-January. To find out more about the report and join in the discussion, visit www.savethedammill.com or e-mail admin@savethedammill.com.

Your comments and questions are always welcome.

Please contact us at:

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