



Remember the Corman House

# Stoney Creek Historical Society

PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6

# NEWSLETTER

September 2015

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King St. Stoney Creek looking east sometime before 1927 when electric rail cars were discontinued.

Lower left picture looking east, shows the grocery store of John Lee in 1923 and the building to the right of that was Lee Hardware. This grocery store was originally owned by John Clough ( see awning ) and later years around 1940's by James Twaddle, who sold to Ada Barnes when Mr. Twaddle became post master. It was torn down in the 1950's and became the vacant lot beside Lee Hardware which is now Britannia Cleaners. Lower right picture looking west at the same 2 bldgs.





## The Fire at Lee Hardware Store

written by Jean ( Twaddle ) Baine

Do you remember where you were on the night of January 7, 1939 ? Stoney Creek had a memorable event that took place on King Street.

I was roused by the sound of our telephone and my father telling my mother that he'd need to hurry down to his grocery store : right next door stood the large building "Lee Hardware Store" and it was on fire!

I have been unable to retrieve much information about this fire.

Bette ( Weedmark ) McCabe recalls looking out her home's front window and feeling the intense heat from across the street. She adds that buildings suffered smoke damage and occupants were obliged to re-locate for some period of time.

Harold Parker was able to share his experience, living nearby in his grandparents house on Mountain Ave N. beside those of Mr. Jim Reid and Mr. Herb Boden. Harold can vividly remember the sparks blowing toward these houses. They sprayed the roofs with water from their garden hoses. Luckily their homes were safe through their combined efforts.

I was unable to garner more details : how did the fire start ? what results ?

Please share any more details you have.

**Wednesday September 2, 2015 at 7:00 pm**

Speaker: Stu Chapman

Topic: Studebaker, the History with Stu Chapman, former Studebaker executive (1964-1966) and author of "*My Father The Car: Memoirs Of My Life With Studebaker*"

**Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

Speaker: Rob Hamilton

Topic: Understanding Hamilton's Architectural History: A Journey, Serendipity and a Quest to Uncover the Architectural Legacy of William Palmer Witton.

**Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

Speaker: George Thomson

Topic: Beach Canal Lighthouse History with George Thomson, the Vice-Chair of the Beach Canal Lighthouse Group and great-great grandson of the Beach Canal Lighthouse keeper of the 1850's.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Stoney Creek Historical Society (SCHS), I welcome all of you to the 2015-2016 season. We have arranged for a series of monthly meetings which include a roster of informative as well as entertaining guest speakers. We meet the first Wednesday of the month, at the Municipal Centre, 777 #8 Highway, Stoney Creek. My thanks to those who will be speaking, to those who arranged for the guest speakers, and to those volunteers who provide treats and refreshments after the meetings.

Ontario Archive Awareness Week took place from April 8 through 12, 2015. SCHS participated on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at the Municipal Centre. The achievements of our Reference Library and Archive were showcased. A question and answer period followed. My thanks for the support given by those who were present. As you appreciate, the purpose of SCHS is to capture and preserve the History of Stoney Creek for current and future generations. Our volunteers have made significant progress towards that end.

In June, 2015, the Power House, 1 Jones Street, Stoney Creek, graciously provided their extraordinary premises for a SCHS social event. SCHS members who attended were treated to a historic tour, appetizers, and a very accommodating staff who make the evening very special. On behalf of SCHS, I extend our great appreciation to the Power House for their generosity.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, SCHS was present at the Hamilton Heritage Recognition Awards. We were pleased that the Power House was recognized and was a recipient of a well deserved "Heritage Property Conservation Award". Our congratulations!

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, Grand River Cruises, in Caledonia, hosted many SCHS members. The event included entertainment, a full course roast beef dinner, and of course an enjoyable afternoon cruising the Grand River. From subsequent accounts, a good time was had by all.

SCHS has made some practical and appropriate changes. We have implemented a nominal increase to our membership fees, and will be extending current editions of our Newsletter to SCHS members. Older editions of our Newsletters are available on our SCHS web site at [www.stoneycreekhistorical.ca](http://www.stoneycreekhistorical.ca)

I continue to receive compliments on the quality of our Newsletter. The pictures are a source of great interest. If you have suggestions or perhaps articles of interest suitable for our Newsletter, please let us know. We will be pleased to review your input with you.

Similarly, please take a look at our web site. We are most interested in developing it to be as useful and as informative as possible. We value your feedback and comments.

Our Reference Library and Archive volunteers do an exceptional service. Many answered inquiries result in a donation to SCHS. Thanks for your ongoing support.

It's an honour and a pleasure to be President of SCHS. This is only possible due to the tremendous support extended by the SCHS Board of Directors, and SCHS members.

Due join us at our meetings. I know that you'll be glad that you did.

Greg Armstrong  
President- SCHS.



# MURDER IN SALTFLEET in 1801

*By Kimberly Hurst UE Sixth Great-granddaughter of Bartholomew London UE and edited by Douglas Green UE fifth Great-grandson of Bartholomew London UE*

On February 17<sup>th</sup> 1801 Bartholomew London was murdered. A murder so unbelievable that, if not the recorded truth, couldn't sell as fiction in a dime store novel.

Born in New Jersey, circa 1730, Bartholomew London made his way in life as a farmer. He had land on Scott's Mountain in Greenwich Township, Sussex County, New Jersey and was the father of six known children.

At the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, Bartholomew remained on his land in what was then known as West Jersey. He was a Loyalist. He believed in the King and was recruiting men for His Majesty's Services for which he was jailed on more than one occasion. He suffered greatly as a result of his imprisonment. His health suffered and he lost property for his loyalty to the British government.

Sometime between 1778 and 1782, he removed himself and his family to Monongalia County, Virginia. It is here that we find him in the Continental Census of 1782. Perhaps he was being harassed or threatened by his neighbours due to his loyalty to the Crown. In 1783 a dispute was settled between the borders of Pennsylvania and what is now known as West Virginia. The area in which the London family now resided was to be called Redstone Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

In 1789 Bartholomew left Pennsylvania with his son Richard, daughters Mehitable and Jane and quite possibly another son, Bartholomew, whom it is believed died in 1797. Jane's husband, Enoch Moore, and their four children also traveled with him as he headed for Upper Canada. They arrived in Saltfleet Township, which was located in Wentworth County in Upper Canada, sometime after June of 1789.

The names of Bartholomew London and Richard London as well as Enoch Moore were placed on adjoining lots in Saltfleet. There they began clearing their land and building crude homes to sustain them through the long cold winter that lay ahead of them. Bartholomew was granted land for his loyalty to the Crown. In a document dated 20 October 1794, Judge Nathaniel Pettit, a member of the first Upper Canadian parliament at Newark, stated that he had known Bartholomew London and that the Patriots in New Jersey had indeed imprisoned him. Bartholomew maintained his farm in Saltfleet on Lots 18 and 19 on the 3rd. Concession and was close to all of his children. Grandchildren also surrounded Bartholomew in his new home. *( both sides of Millen road from # 8 hwy south to the escarpment )*

Richard lived on the 200 adjoining acres, Lots 16 and 17 on the 3rd. Concession of Saltfleet. He married a young lady named Maria and they had seven children: Jeremiah, Magdalena, Susanna, Elizabeth, John, Daniel and Anna. *( both sides of Dewitt road from # 8 hwy south to the escarpment )*

Bartholomew's daughter, Mehitable, and her husband, William Disher, lived not far away from him in Pelham, Welland County. Mehitable had a son by William Disher, and he was named Bartholomew after her father. After William's death in 1811, Mehitable married for a second time to Andrew Whitsell.

Daughter Jane and her first husband, Enoch Moore, had four children together, the eldest being Charles from whom both Kimberly and I are descended. Thomas was the second son and Sarah was the oldest daughter. The baby of the family was Mary. She was born on 15 June 1789 before their arrival in Upper Canada. Enoch Moore's name was placed on Lot 20 on the 3rd Con. and Lots 14, 15, 16, and 17 on the 4th Concession of Saltfleet.

Enoch Moore left for the United States on family business sometime between 1791 and 1798 and was never seen or heard from again. The disappearance of their father posed a great problem for the children of Jane and Enoch. Their father had not petitioned for the 500 acres of land he had been allotted in Saltfleet before his departure and this land now lay unclaimed. Bartholomew had taken up the fight for his grandchildren, and he was in the process of applying for the 500 acres of land for his four grandchildren when he was murdered.  
*( Lot 17 on 4<sup>th</sup> Concession was deeded to Mary in 1844. She had married John Lee in 1808 and this is the site of the present day Erland Lee home )*

This is where the story of the infamous Mary Osborne London begins. By 1798 Bartholomew had hired a housekeeper by the name of Mary Osborne. Having already had two sons, William and Nathaniel Osborne, by her first marriage, the young widow of 28 found herself expecting her third child. This child's father was none other than Bartholomew London. Having no other choice but to marry her, he did just that, and they had a daughter, Hannah, on 5 April 1799. It would appear that all was well.

In the fall of 1800, Bartholomew decided to hire a farmhand to help around the farm as he was getting on in years and wanted to take on less. His new farmhand would be George Nemires, 28, late of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and an old acquaintance of one Mrs. Mary Osborne London. Within two months, Bartholomew's new wife, Mary, and the new hired hand, George, started a torrid affair. By January Mary had reported to her husband that she was pregnant with his second child. She stated later that "knew not who the father of her child was."

Bartholomew, having written his will, gave Mary and her children the principal part of his interests while excluding, for the most part, the children of his first wife. This will was dated 4 May 1800. Mary knew she would be well taken care of and the plot to murder her elderly husband begins. In her first attempt, Mary had stirred up a heated argument between herself and Bartholomew. George, pretending to avenge the abuse bestowed upon Mary, struck Bartholomew on the head quite severely with a shoe hammer.

In a few weeks, Bartholomew was nearly recovered from this attack. Not being successful, they decided to poison him. George, disguising himself as a Mr. Kerr of Long Point, went to a neighbouring physician in Ancaster for a poison named Vitriol. He told the doctor it would be used as a cure from an old sore. He asked the doctor at that time if the amount he had given him would be enough to poison a man. The doctor told him no and that he would need a larger amount than what he had prescribed. George then asked the doctor if he would prescribe a larger dose, but the doctor replied to him that had had been given a sufficient amount for his needs.

George returned to Mary and that dose was given to Bartholomew without the desired effect. George then went off on foot in the middle of the winter to Canadiagua, New York, for additional poison. In ten days George returned with two ounces of arsenic and one ounce of opium. Two more doses of the mixture were administered to Bartholomew in whiskey and still he showed no signs of illness.

The third dose was administered to Mary's husband, and this was the last dose needed to end his life. Suspicion began to circulate rapidly throughout the small community and the physician, who prescribed the initial dose of poison, recalled the earlier enquiries when he arrived at the London home to find the man he recognized as Mr. Kerr of Long Point.

Both Mary Osborne London and George Nemires were taken into custody for the murder of Bartholomew London. They were jailed while they awaited their trials, which were held on the 14th of August 1801 in Niagara-On-The-Lake. The Honourable Judge Alcock presided over the case of the two star-crossed lovers. At half-past nine in the morning the Attorney General addressed the jurors praying that "God would assist and direct them in their deliverance." Several witnesses were called to testify and even though they could not prove who actually had administered the poison, the jury had no choice but to deliver a guilty verdict.

With the verdict before him, Judge Alcock had to pronounce the sentence in accordance with the law of the land. Both Mary and George were to be executed on the 17th day of August in the year of 1801 for the murder of Bartholomew London. The judge remarked the coincidence of the time, which was exactly six months to the day of the final dose of the poison.

During the time he was confined to the jail, George would say "that if they died, another must die." He implied that there was another who was also responsible in his own way for the death of Bartholomew. A man living in the neighbourhood was partially to blame for this incident. George alluded to the guilt of the neighbour on more than one occasion and stipulated that the neighbour's brother was in no way responsible for what happened to Mr. Bartholomew London.

George also stated that it was Mary that he wanted and not the husband's estate. She had pushed him to do it and even suggested that he shoot him but not to use his own gun. He was to borrow the neighbour's gun, the man who George felt should also hang for this crime. George also confided that Mary had frequently confessed to him that she had poisoned her first husband. She took out the hellebore from a chest where she had kept it to show him. It seemed she was not stranger to this deadly game.

Subsequently no other charges were laid in this case and the two participants already found guilty were to be "hung by the neck until dead and their bodies dismembered." As Mary made her way up the scaffold, she cried out to the crowd, "May this be a warning to you all." She prayed to God to have mercy on her soul and both were very quiet for the time leading up to the dropping of the floor, sending them both to their final resting place.

Mary left behind two young sons from her first marriage, Nathaniel and William Osborne, as well as two young daughters, Hannah and Catherine London. Where the two boys were reared is still a mystery. But William Osborne can be found in the War of 1812 Muster Roll of Capt. Abram Nelles' Flank Company from the 24th of July to the 24th of August 1812. No mention of Nathaniel has been found to date.

It is believed that Hannah was reared in the home of Mehitable London and Andrew Whitsell. According to Andrew's will, there was a Johannah Lunnen living with him and his wife. Hannah would be the half sister of Mehitable London. Where Catherine was taken, is up for discussion. Perhaps her much older half sister, Jane Moore McDavid, took her in and reared her. No evidence has been found supporting this.

**Mary Osborne London** had the distinction of being the first woman to be hanged in Upper Canada.

## **RESEARCH LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES NEWS**

Our thanks go to Jean Craig Jefferson whose recent donation of photographic negatives taken during her years at the Stoney Creek News has enhanced our collection of Stoney Creek pictures from the 1960's. Without contributions such as this, our ability to capture Stoney Creek's past would be impossible.

Also, our Research Library and Archives holds over 60 audio cassettes about the early days of Stoney Creek as told by residents of Stoney Creek. The tapes were made between 1965 and 1997. Recently, we digitized these cassettes so they are now available to listen to on computer in our Library and Archives. Please visit us at 605 #8 Hwy to access these items and more.

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### Member Business Directory

Britannia Cleaners	Ed Strecker	17 King Street East	(905) 662-4971
Bertram & Barry Insurance Ltd.		6 Lake Ave. S	(905) 662-8645
Cerello and Associates	Karen Cerello	42 King St. E. Unit 4	(905) 662-2848
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Royal Canadian Legion Br. 622		12 King St. East	(905) 662-4171
Smith's Funeral Home ( Stoney Creek ) Limited		454 Highway # 8	(905) 664-4222
The Powerhouse	Graeme Tosh	21 Jones St.	(905) 930-7381

Please contact *Doug Green* by telephone at ( 905 ) ( 662-4065 ) or by email at [newsletter@stoneycreekhistorical.ca](mailto:newsletter@stoneycreekhistorical.ca) or [dgreen136@cogeco.ca](mailto:dgreen136@cogeco.ca). If you have questions or answers regarding our newsletter content or contributions or if you wish to receive your copy of the newsletter via e-mail. Help us reduce mailing & printing costs.

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***DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE HISTORY OF STONEY CREEK***

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WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AND LOOK FORWARD TO YOU ATTENDING OUR MEETINGS.

Historical Society Research Queries

Please contact via email:  
[archives@stoneycreekhistorical.ca](mailto:archives@stoneycreekhistorical.ca)

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