



Remember the Corman House

Stoney Creek Historical Society

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

NEWSLETTER

June 2013 Edition #58 Circulation: 300 copies



Battlefield House 1890's
Note West Wing on left hand side
partially hidden behind tree leaves
(also see sketch on page 7)



Battlefield House 2013

East Wing shown in this
picture added after 1913

see page 5,6,7 for discussion re
how house looked at the time
of the battle June 6th 1813

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Your Stoney Creek Historical Society (SCHS) has had a very interesting and productive year to date.

January saw the official opening of the SCHS Reference Library and Archive. SCHS submitted an application to The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), who in turn sponsored a number of significant developments at our Reference Library and Archive. SCHS volunteers dedicate many hours at our Library and I am greatly appreciative of what they have achieved. Clearly, it is worth a visit.



February saw our Annual General Meeting (AGM), during which our members had an opportunity to provide comments or feedback to our Board of Directors, as well as elect new individuals to the Board. The AGM took place in the East Room of Branch 622 of the Stoney Creek Legion.

March saw the introduction of a new SCHS web site at www.stoneycreekhistorical.ca We are off to a good start, but there is more to do. Our site will be further enhanced and developed.

April saw a motion unanimously passed by the Board of Directors. This motion focused on a meeting location. Effective Wednesday, 4th September, 2013, our meetings will be at 777 #8 Highway, Stoney Creek (former City of Stoney Creek Council Chambers), starting at 7:00 p.m. We will have guest speakers and refreshments will follow.

Our Society has enjoyed and benefited from the generosity of Friends of Battlefield House, Museum, and Park (Friends) during our shared meetings at the Nash-Jackson House in Battlefield Park. My personal note of thanks to President Al Bridge, as well as Susan Ramsay, curator, and her staff for their assistance. Friends will continue to meet at Nash-Jackson on the second Tuesday of the month. SCHS will meet the first Wednesday of the month at the new location. As Al so wisely observed at the May meeting, everyone now has two choices to attend historically focused meetings, instead of just one. Well put Al and much appreciated.

We congratulate Battlefield Park for the great success celebrating the 100th anniversary of opening of the Battlefield Monument, 31st May, 2013. In addition, on that date, a ceremony honouring those who sacrificed their lives during the Battle of Stoney Creek, took place at Smith's Knoll. Although Battle week-end experienced weather challenges, it too was a success as it profiled the 200th anniversary (6th June, 2013) of Battle of Stoney Creek.

SCHS congratulates the Friends of the Lee for their success in the re-opening of the Erland House and Museum.

The SCHS Student Award program continues this year. However, to date, of the three area secondary schools who could apply, we have received only one timely application for the SCHS Student Award. That one has been approved.

Each individual and family has their own history. SCHS endeavours to capture the history of Stoney Creek for current and future generations. You can play a significant role towards that objective.

I thank our members for their continuing support, our volunteers for their unselfish assistance, as well as our Board of Directors for their dedication to SCHS. In the absence of any of these groups, it would not be possible to have a Stoney Creek Historical Society.

Do have a healthy and happy summer.

I look forward to meeting with you in September.

Greg Armstrong

Pres. SCHS

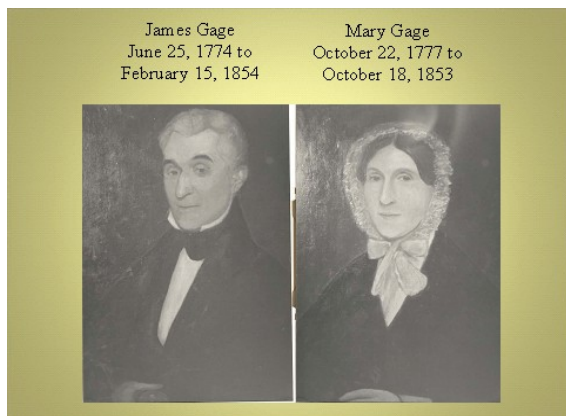
Next regular meeting of the Stoney Creek Historical Society will be held in our old meeting place, at the former City Offices, corner of # 8 Highway and Jones Rd (777 Highway # 8).

Date Wednesday September 4th at 7 pm. Speaker Dr Christian Lei will talk about Sara Calder, the woman behind the building of the Stoney Creek Monument

Please note new place, date and time.

James Gage and Family (submitted by Kevin Lee)

It is well known that what is now known as Battlefield Park was the original site of the James Gage farm, where a decisive battle in 1813 took place which forever changed our country. What is lesser known, except to the descendants of the Gages, is the family itself.



James Gage was born June 25, 1774, the son of Mary Jones and John (or James) Gage in Greenbush, New York . James' father was killed in the Revolutionary War although it is lost in history what side he was on, if he was Captain John Gage who fought for the British and died at the Massacre of Wyoming, or James Gage who died as an American private at Fort Clinton in 1777. Unfortunately, these records are lost in time.

The death of her husband left widow Mary to fend for James and her daughter Elizabeth. Mary brought her two children to Lake Ontario in about 1790 to the area which is now known as Stoney Creek near her brother Augustus Jones, who was Chief Surveyor for the crown and between herself and son James applied for land grant for crown land. Widow Mary

Jones received a land grant on May 6, 1796 for 200 Acres, and James 175 Acres. The land acquired by Mary and James was next to land acquired by her sister Suzannah Jones, who married William Gage from Rathlan Island, Ireland, (John's brother), who also immigrated to the Colonies and later Stoney Creek.

James married Mary Davis (B. Oct 26, 1777 North Carolina, D. Oct 18, 1853 in Hamilton, Canada West, daughter of William Davis and Hannah Phillips of Mount Albion. James and Mary had 10 Children, many of them marrying into local pioneer families. Many of the offspring of these families went on to be successful pioneer businessmen and had a role in building up Stoney Creek, Hamilton and Burlington.

James, besides operating a store on his property, was also a successful businessman in other areas as well. In 1810 he purchased from the Brant family property in what was then known as Wellington Square, what is now Burlington, Ontario. He and his sons, Joseph, Andrew and Asahel, operated among other things a steam flouring Mill and a Warehouse and Wharf, and later numerous Lumber, Flour and feed Mills in Halton County. James and Mary lived in their later years in Hamilton, along with their daughter Mary and her husband A T Newberry. James passed away February 15, 1854, Mary almost a year earlier on October 18, 1853. Both are resting in Hamilton Cemetery on York Street in Hamilton, not far from the front entrance and offices.

Children of James Gage and Mary Davis:

Asahel Gage b. September 28, 1798 in Stoney Creek,

d. July 1, 1861. Married Nancy McCollum, had 9 children

Catherine Gage b. August 26, 1800 in Stoney Creek, d. April 02, 1871, in Stoney Creek, married William Freeman of Halton County, October 13, 1825, they had 9 Children

Andrew Gage b. February 9, 1802 d. June 29, 1876 in Wellington Square married Martha Willson Apr 21, 1824, they had 4 children

Elizabeth Gage b. January 25, 1805 d. May 12, 1892 married Lewis Dennick Birely on May 18, 1826, they had 6 children

James Philip Gage b. June 10, 1810 in Stoney Creek, d. April 02, 1883 in Lyons, Iowa, Married Mary Jane Davis November 24, 1836, they had 8 children

Ann Eliza Gage b. June 22, 1821 in Stoney Creek d. July 27, 1897 in Hamilton, Ontario, married Levi Beemer, they had 9 children

Sarah Gage, d. January 1, 1842, m John Galbreath, they had one child

Keziah Gage married John Triller, they had two children

Mary Gage married A. T. Newberry, issue unknown

Joseph Gage married Alice Daniel, issue unknown

STONE CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE
NEWSLETTER JUNE 2013

In the last several weeks, we have had inquiries for the following:
A fellow in Milton has restored a 2-team gravel wagon said to have been used by the Village of Stoney Creek circa 1900. He contacted us to see if we could confirm that information. We sent him a photocopy of a wagon photo that we have but it was not the same one. We have invited him to visit our site to view our holdings of minutes and bylaws from the early years to aid in his research.

We have been assisting a family who is researching the history of 1 Jones Street, Stoney Creek as well tracing the lineages of the families who have lived there. It is their hope to restore this house and have it designated as an historical property.

A year ago we provided family information to a woman who is researching the Gage/Olmstead families and we were recently able to answer a second request from her.

As always, if you have information or photographs that would help us in our research, please contact us.

We were invited to join with the Niagara area Historical Societies to share information (both historical and operational). We have already discussed various methods of recording family histories, including personally entering data for wills, land purchases and sales; buildings, crops grown. Historical Societies included are Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln and Stoney Creek. Their hope is to join forces for ordering purposes. There are only two suppliers for Archival materials and shipping charges are often more than the small order placed. We have already met in January and April at Grimsby Historical Society. We will be hosting the next meeting June 13 at 605 Hwy. No. 8.

Ross Garry is progressing at a very good rate photocopying all of the newsprint in our files. The family records are finished and Ross is working with all of the Stoney Creek business and Church files that we hold. This is a continuing effort and we could not manage without the help of Ross Garry. Larry Mitchell and Peter Kennedy are well on their way to completing the photographing of the Land Registry Ledgers. If you joined us at our Open House in January, you would have seen the method used.

By the time this Newsletter is delivered, we will have our own digitized records of the Minutes and Bylaws for Stoney Creek and Saltfleet. We purchased the reels from the Ontario Archives last year and the City of Hamilton records department, under the direction of Lisa Barroso, has prepared them for our use.

It is our hope that all of our volunteers will continue to progress at this rate. It will mean that we will have even more records, photographs and information available to assist with inquiries. Anyone who would enjoy helping us is welcome to come to the Reference Library to speak with us.

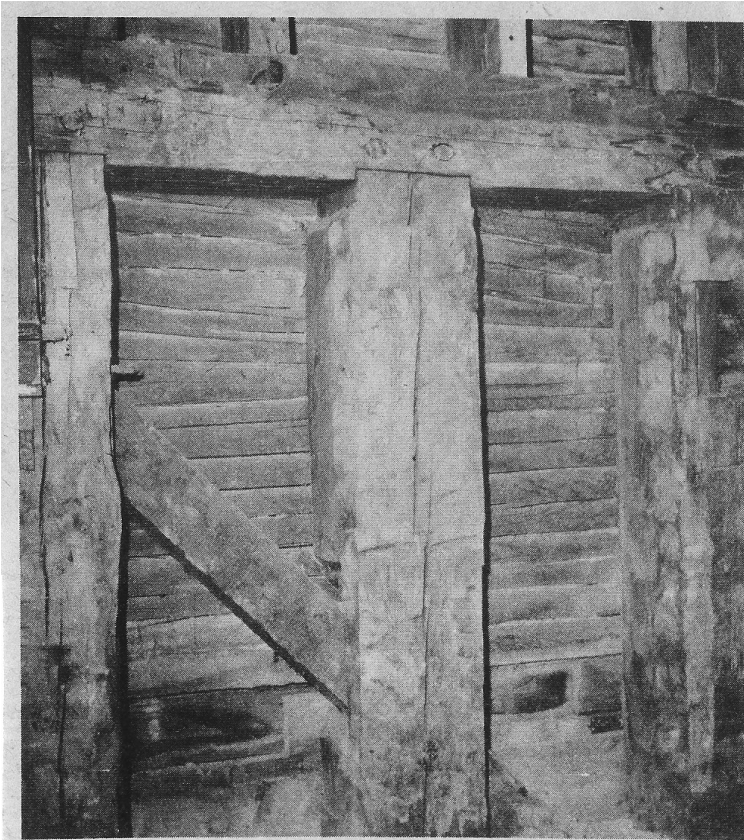
We invite everyone to stop by Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. to view our Reference Library and Archive.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CAN CONTACT US THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

archives@stoneycreekhistorical.ca please disregard prior email addresses available. Thank you.

THE GAGE HOUSE AT THE TIME OF THE BATTLE:

WAS IT A LOG HOUSE OR WOODEN FRAME?



This is a rare picture. It is taken on the second floor and shows how far up the original walls extended. Note above the

horizontal beam the wall is 2 inch' x 6 inch studs with lath and plaster. Below extending about 4 feet up are the hand-hewn beams.

If the Gage house not built till 20 years after the battle as some suggest.

Why are the beams hand hewn when Adam Green had a saw-mill in operation at the time of the battle?

The hand hewn beams would suggest this house was built long before the battle.

In 1974, Stoney Creek News showed pictures of the house renovations and the original one storey house had hand hewn wooden beams (logs) coming up about four feet through the now second floor, so the original ceiling in the one storey was much higher and could have had a loft. Maybe the hand hewn was Elizabeth's interpretation of logs ?

Elizabeth Gage Birely who was 8 at the time of the battle says in a June 12 1889 interview in the Hamilton Spectator that her father's house (James) was a log house and American officers stayed there.

Did she say log house or was that a misprint by the Spectator?

Did she say log house meaning it was a wooden house versus stone or brick like she lived in now?

76 years after the fact how reliable is Elizabeth's memory at 8 years old? She never said in an 1852 interview anything about the house being logs. Nowhere else have I read that the family hid in the loft; all have said the cellar. That is before the 2003 book called

(*Stoney Creek the Skeletons in its Closet*)

Elizabeth also said in this newspaper article that the Americans took 20 barrels of whiskey from the cellar but James Gage her father only claimed for 10 gallons taken in his official request for compensation. Elizabeth also said the American soldiers killed all the cows and sheep they could lay their eyes on. James Gage only claimed for 3 calves and 1 sheep.

James Gage claimed also for “3 rooms in my dwelling house occupied as barracks by part of the 100th Regiment, 54 days at 5/ per day Oct to Dec 1813 (*3 extra rooms in rough hewn log house ?*)

He also claimed for the use of the barn and 2 out houses (*store and original log house ?*)

Elizabeth's account has the summer wool kept in the loft and they hid there. Why would they hide in the loft if a stonewall cellar was available? (*oops full with 20 barrels of whiskey*)

Was it Elizabeth's memory that was playing tricks on her after all those years or was it the misinterpretation of the Spectator reporter? (*maybe a little of both*)

Robert Waddell son in law of Elizabeth said General Winder & his staff stayed in the Gage house.

Emerson Bristol Biggar states in his books (1873 and 1893)

Adam Green's “water power saw-mill which supplied lumber for several dwellings that were erected or were being built in the neighbourhood. Among these James Gage's house and store, still standing on the site of the battle ground were of quite respectable dimensions so much so that they were appropriated by the two American generals and their staffs as head quarters for the night, while Gage and his family were relegated to the cellar”

“Generals used Gage house as headquarters” In Biggar's 1873 version “General Winder was captured by Major Ogilvie coming out of the Gage house”

Would the American Generals be using a log house for their headquarters?

“The road which was not graded at the hill as now” suggests this is a new road cut straight through along the concession line from the bridge in downtown Stoney Creek. Where as the original Indian path (road) turned up going south of the Gage house, went south of the cemetery and curled back before the ravine on the south side of king st and nash road. (*on high ground to remain dry and not through the cedar swamp recently cleared.*)

Why would the Gage house be built facing the south if the main road was always to the north.

If the house was not built before the battle why wouldn't they have it built facing the now main road King street to the North. How many old farm houses were not built facing the road?

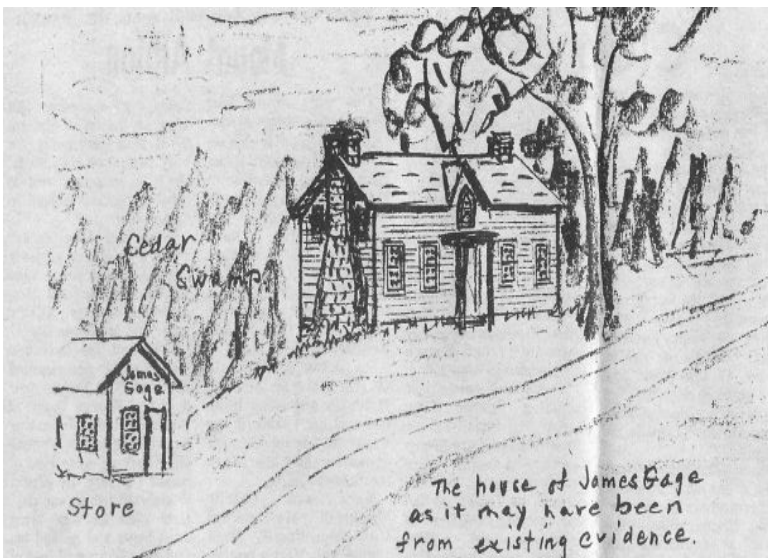
(*front door entry to stairs up to second floor, back door to cellar steps*)

Accounts in Souvenir book and programme when renovating in 1900 era

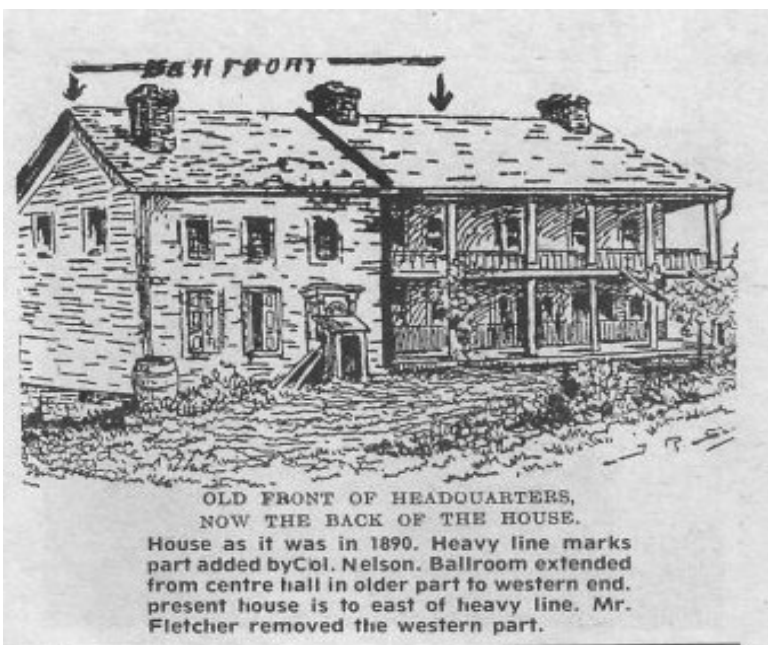
“Since the Women's Wentworth Historical Society has commenced to renovate the old Gage house, many marks of the battle have been found. In one corner of the porch a hole made by a five pound cannon ball has been found, and in one of the beams of James Gage's old store a spent cannon ball has been discovered”

“**The late Daniel Dewey**, who died in 1887 at the age of ninety years, came to Canada from the United States in 1818, five years after the battle. In coming from Niagara to Hamilton he stopped to examine the battle field. His children have often heard him describe the place as it was then. He found bullet holes in the Gage house and also in the trees and fences and said the house and surrounding plainly showed the effects of a severe fight and no other house in the vicinity showed any marks of the struggle”

The Gage's commodious farmhouse became the principal stopping place for travellers by land between Niagara and York. Over the years prominent Methodists, including Elizabeth Field and itinerant preachers such as James Coleman; starting in the late 1790's William Case, Joseph Sawyer and Nathan Bangs. Reverend William Case made his headquarters at the commodious house of Mr James Gage and stayed there quite awhile around 1821 according to the book “Case and his Contemporaries”



Sketch by Milton Watson of Gage house at the time of the battle.
1 1/2 storeys



Sketch by Milton Watson of Gage house 1890

2 storeys with west wing

both pictures appeared in a Stoney Creek News article wednesday august 1st 1973

Special thanks to Carolyn & Fred Briggs as well as Joyce & Robert Brown for handing out the Billy Green books to the students attending the History in Action Day on Thursday May 30th at the Battlefield park.

Again thanks to William John Green dressed as (Billy Green) for selling our Billy Green books on June 1st & 2nd during the celebrations.

Link to new Billy Green article on-line in the War of 1812 Magazine (The Napoleon Series)

<http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2013/Issue20/Green.pdf>

Updated Wikipedia page on Billy Green the Scout (has links to Balderdash books etc.)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Green

From Battlefield House Museum

The Bicentennial of the Battle of Stoney Creek has been commemorated and this four-day event was a resounding success. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our hard-working volunteers and to all of those folks who came out to support and enjoy the event.

We invite you and your family to join us this summer at one of Battlefield House Museum's special events. Please call us at 905-662-8458 for more information.

Bicentennial Family Picnic

Sunday, July 21, 2013, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

George Hamilton Day 2013 - The Life and Times of Sara Calder

Monday, August 5, 2013, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sara Calder Day

Tuesday, August 20, 2013, 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

From Al Bridge, President of the Friends of Battlefield House Museum:

“We will miss seeing all of the SCHS members at the monthly meetings and hope that everyone will see fit to join both worthwhile organizations. I would also like to report that the Friends of Battlefield have contributed to the Museum over the past year by having the plaques at the Battlefield Monument restored and by purchasing a storage cupboard and a new runner for the stairs in the Museum. Finally, we would like to invite one and all to join us at the Bicentennial Ball on Saturday, November 2, 2013. Please call the Museum at 905-662-8458 for more information.”

Stoney Creek Historical Society Board of Directors

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Committee Chairs / Co-ordinators

Archives: Nancy Capstick
Sue Heatherley archives@stoneycreekhistorical.ca

Telephone: June Guzar
Membership: Judy Green

Newsletter: Jean Baine, Kevin Lee, Doug Green
Programming: Kathy Wakeman
Social: Bev Gray, Carolyn Briggs

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
Chamber of Commerce	Dave Cage	21 Mountain Ave. S	(905) 664-4000
Dr. Keith Millar		304 – 15 Mountain Ave S	(905) 662-2312
Donald V. Brown Funeral Home	Julie Brown – Webber	36 Lake Ave. Dr	(905) 662-2948
Flowers by Dianne	Dianne Black	9 King St. West	(905) 664-6621
Queenston Stationary	Mario Figueroa	38 King St. East	(905) 664-3360
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

Please contact *Doug Green* at dgreen136@cogeco.ca if you wish to receive your copy of the newsletter via e-mail. Help us reduce printing costs

Membership Application / Renewal / Donations

Yes: I would like to acquire / renew membership in the Stoney Creek Historical Society. _____

Name (s) _____ Receive newsletter by e-mail? Yes ___ No ___

Address _____ Please send to: Stoney Creek Historical Society

P.O. Box 66637

Phone Number _____

Stoney Creek, ON

L8G 5E6

E-mail _____ Please check one: New membership Renewal

Please indicate your preferred membership option: Individual: \$10.00 Family: \$18.00
Business \$25.00

** Please accept my additional tax-deductible donation of \$ _____ to assist the work of the Society

space reserved for address label

Historical Society Research Queries

Please contact via email:
archives@stoneycreekhistorical.ca

Please Help Us Manage Newsletter Printing Costs

A \$30.00 donation helps with the expense of printing and mailing our newsletter. If you would like to become a sponsor, please contact our Treasurer, Judy Green at (905) 662-4065 receipts are issued for donations.

This newsletter issue is sponsored by courtesy of Councillor Marie Pearson