

Stoney Creek Historical Society

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

NEWSLETTER

May 2007 Edition #41 Circulation: 300 copies

EXCERPTS FROM THE PETER VAN WAGNER DIARIES- PT 3.

Transcribed by Michael Gemmell & Kristen Kerr

Saturday, June 29, 1850

At Stoney Creek with E.P. who took the 26 pounds sterling of wheat money. Came round by Amos' place. Complained today to Williamson of Mrs Boice obstructing the Lake Road with cord wood. Got a dose of colomil and Jalap of Dr. Brown gratis. Watched the sheep until 12 O'clock. PM: came home and took my medicine. Put up a lot of cloves in the afternoon. Warm, wind amiable. Sent Wood a scythe, swath (?), and stone.

Sunday, June 30, 1850

Sick from taking the medicine. Primitive Methodist Field Meeting in our woods. Did not go to it.

Editor's notes: The Primitive Methodist movement grew out of Camp Meetings, all day, open-air prayer and preaching meetings which had been introduced in to England from America. Primitive Methodism was the largest of the Wesleyan offshoots. Primitive Methodists placed great emphasis on the role of lay people. They were sometimes known by the nickname 'Ranthers', because of their singing in the streets.

Mrs Riches and her son Henry (?) here all day. James Hill here. [Slight] shower of rain about ten O Clock PM. Sent a line by Robert Adams to expel the gray stands from the woods. Bates' Boat sailing in front of our house. Quite a turnout at the meeting. Past 4 more rain. More rain and a lot of cloves in Cock. Bad.

Monday July 1, 1850

At Stoney Creek twice today. Bought a scythe from Williamson. Took a fork and rake to Wood, who commenced cutting the negro's lot today and leaving I [?] commenced clearing the ground he should have done a month ago according to our agreement. Learned today that we did not watch our sheep for nothing as the man we expected was seen [runn]ing home towards midnight at top speed. Timothy plowing in the large field. Also [howing] corn. Mortimer Cory chasing birds off the cherry trees.

Continued on Page 4.

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provided by

STONEY CREEK NEWS
SINCE 1944

This newsletter issue has been sponsored
by:
Tom Munn

President's Message

With summer fast approaching, and the many activities that keep us all busy during this much anticipated time of the year, I would encourage all our members to continue to enjoy the meetings and the gifted speakers we have come to enjoy over the past winter months.

The month of June will see members enjoying our annual pot luck picnic, which will take place on Friday June 8th on the lawn at the Erland Lee Museum. The social hour will start at 5:30 PM with supper to start at 6:00 PM. In the event of rain, we will move inside the Drive House. Having been to several of these pot luck gatherings, I highly recommend attending, as the food is fit for a king. This year will be no exception as the funds raised through your 50/50 contributions will provide edibles to what may well be the best of all our picnics.

For those of you, who wish to contribute in memory of Ron Place, please contact Judy Green. To those who have already contributed to this memorial, we thank you for your participation.

The S.C.H.S. library has received several new additions, and these documents are now available to our members. Please contact any member of the executive for information on how to access these books and periodicals. For those of you, who are involved in Genealogy, there is information on local families, in the library.

This coming season will see your executive searching for a programme convener, as Malcolm Hughes has had to retire from this position due to working restraints. The programme convener is responsible for contacting potential speakers for the meetings. Please contact your President if you can help out with this assignment.

I hope to see all of you at the picnic, for those who can not make it, I wish you all a very pleasant summer and look forward to seeing you in September.

Bill Mitchell, President

Historical Society News

Welcome New Historical Society Members!

We extend a warm welcome to:

John and Mary Fraser

Kathy Wakeman

Stoney Creek Historical Society will be contributing \$200 towards the Doors Open Hamilton 2007 project.

Doors Open Hamilton features 60 buildings this year, including four in Stoney Creek: the two museums, Puddicombe Farms, and the St. George's Church.

Provincial guidebooks will be available locally in mid April, with the Doors Open Hamilton guide appearing as an insert in the Hamilton Spectator in late April. Additional information can be obtained through Erland Lee Museum (905-662-2691) and Tourism Hamilton (905-546-2666 or 1-800-263-8590) or www.architecturehamilton.com

Upcoming Speakers

June 8, 2007: no speaker- annual Society picnic
(see President's message for details)

Meetings resume in September 2007

September 5, 2007: Bob Williamson
"All the World is a Stage"

Would you prefer to help us save postage and have your newsletter delivered via email? Please send us your email address via erlandlee@interlynx.net and you will receive the newsletter in PDF or MS Word.

Historical Genealogical Inquires

Members may submit 2 free genealogical queries per year. Non-Members must remit a fee of \$3.00 per query, which will be examined in the order received and researched as time allows, and printed in the newsletter as space allows. Please include Name, Address, Postal Code and phone number. Send to: PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6 or via email to erlandlee@interlynx.net

Historical Society Reference Library

1247 Highway #8, Winona
in Steel Marketplace (rear of plaza building).
M-F, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

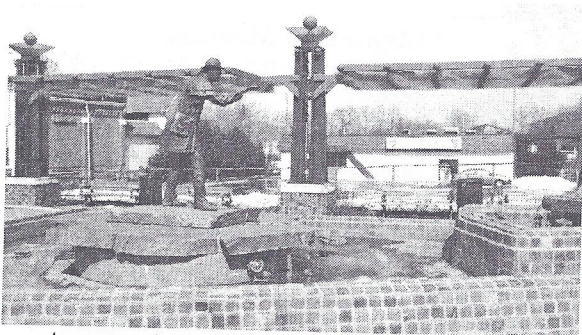
Thank you to K. & P. Orr for providing space for the society's reference library. *Note:*
Photocopying is NOT available.

Anna Orr, Bill Mitchell, and Cheryl Gemmell all have lists of what is in the library.

Memorial for Ron Place

The Historical Society has committed to erect a suitable memorial to the late Ron Place, past President of the Historical Society. Because Ron was a fixture in Stoney Creek, a site at the Olde Towne Square was selected.

A meeting was held in March 2007 with the City of Hamilton. The City plans to place two other plaques at the Olde Towne Square, one telling the story of Augustus Jones (which Ron helped draft) and another about the artist who built the statue. It was the City's suggestion, which has been adopted by the Historical Society Executive, that a third plaque, for Ron, be placed in conjunction with the other two. In effect, the three plaques will line up at the fountain, linking one to the other, to the third.



Augustus Jones statue at Olde Towne Square, a probable "line-of-sight" for the three anticipated plaques, including the Ron Place Memorial.

We are currently pricing plaques, but the costs are expected to run to \$1000+. If you are interested in contributing to the Ron Place memorial please contact the Society Executive (see page 10).

Report from Battlefield House Museum

By Marnie Maslin

In late February, the staff at Battlefield House Museum was thrilled to learn that \$300,000 had been granted to the site from the Provincial Government's Ministry of Culture. This one-time capital funding comes at a time when exciting changes and improvements are taking place at the Museum. Planning has already begun for the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and with the assistance of this funding we will be able to complete two new exhibit spaces, the restoration of several historic rooms and the overall beautification of the site. We invite you and your family to visit us this spring and summer to witness the beginning of these changes and enjoy one of our wonderful special events and programmes.

Doors Open Hamilton

Celebrate the City's rich history and explore its architectural gems and undiscovered treasures. As part of Doors Open, Battlefield House Museum will be open free of charge.

Dates: Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6, 2007, **Time:** 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Re-enactment of the Battle of Stoney Creek

Experience the drama, pageantry, and excitement of one of the most important events in Canada's history. Bring the whole family for games, horse-drawn wagon rides, food, demonstrations, musical entertainment, fireworks, and the Re-enactment itself. Watch the Canada Flag Day Parade in downtown Stoney Creek on Saturday, June 2 at 12 noon.

Dates and Time: Saturday, June 2, 2007: 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday, June 3, 2007: 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Cost:** Adults \$7.00, Children \$3.00, Children 6 and under Free

Battlefield Experience Camp

Children will have an exciting week of living history fun. Activities for campers include nature walks, dress-up day, the Life of a Soldier, dancing, outdoor games, unique arts and crafts, story telling and much more.

Dates: Monday, July 16 to Friday, July 20, 2007
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. **Ages:** 6 to 11 years
Cost: \$120.00 per participant

P.S. Van Wagner diaries continued...

Fletcher and Townsend and John called tonight. Madame La B----- [was?] at Stoney Creek this evening. Raining this evening (9 O Clock PM) Saw Jerry Lee. All his folk [sickly] and having the measles. Heard today that Charles Moore was buried two or three days ago. Robert Waddell's shop has been open in Stoney Creek eight or ten days. Wind southeast.

Tuesday July 2, 1850

Some rain this morning. Cleared off about 10 O Clock AM. The day has been remarkably bilious owing to my lowering the Boat Sails last night. I find that the Boat must be given up or bid farewell to domestic peace. I have eaten scarcely anything today. My appetite is gone. The medicine I took worked me hard and hard winds about the Boat worked me harder. Went to Slabtown in the forenoon. [Howed] corn in the afternoon. Clover still out. Poor prospects for haying. Mrs P. went to Hamilton. Mort Cory shooting birds.

Editor's notes: This is probably Mortimer G. Cory (b.1835). Cory's son, Louis (or Lewis), owned a small farm on modern day Nash Road N., at that time referred to as Corey's Side Road. The road led from the Beach (Van Wagner's Road) to Barton Street past a dump.

Wind west. First English cherries taken to town today. Eight days later than last year at least, possibly more.

Wednesday July 3, 1850

Hauling in cloves. 4 large loads. Day fine. Wind west. Took Brown cow and spoonie to his Majesty at my fathers.

Thursday, July 4, 1850

The Glorious Birthday of the United States. Hauling in hay in the forenoon. Went to Slabtown for my plough. Paid two dollars and three quarters for new share to Condi. The plough was made by Gusney (?) and I have worn out one of his poor shares which was made out of boiler plate when it should be made from thicker.

Editor's notes: The Adam Condi(or Condy) blacksmith shop was one of the first in Bartonville ("Slabtown"), on the corner of King St E, Hamilton and Rosedale Ave. It was converted by the family into a garage in the 20th century. The building still exists at 1878 King St E.



Condy's blacksmith shop (Quang's Auto), 2007

English cherries and milk cures all the rage these days. I ate plenty today at my fathers. Rain about 1 O Clock PM, which corn and hay in the swale took the benefit of. Wind west. Williamson schooner at the wharf loading boards. This morning early espied a small schooner at the wharf loading Mrs Wright's furniture, who is going to live at Allan's house. Spoke to Joel Utter to cradle for me this harvest to which he agreed. He has two bullets in his left arm which were lately fired in by some blockhead playing with a Revolver pistol. EP putting his cordwood on board the schooner that landed Wright's goods.

Indignation Meeting

At Stoney Creek, In the Drill Hall, July 3, 1897

To protest against the action of those members of the township Council who refuse to allow the Girder rail to be changed to a "T" rail through the Village of Stoney Creek, thereby preventing the farmers and fruit growers of the township and districts adjoining from reaping the many advantages to be derived by having a competing express and freight service operated over the H.G. & B. trolley line.

As every farmer and fruit grower is deeply interested in this matter, it is urgently requested that everyone be present to look after his own interests. Chair taken at 7:30

E.D. Smith, F.M. Carpenter, M. Pettit, W.M. Orr, J.W. Smith & Sons, A.D. Lee, Ira Van Duser

A Family Tradition: From Winona to Ghana

By Michael Gemmell

Public service must run in the blood. The Honourable John Willson, one of Winona's earliest notables, is known for his work in crafting Ontario's first School Act (1816) and for his very early attempts at extending rights to women (1831).



The Honourable John Willson

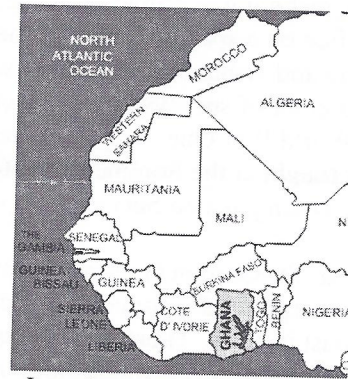
It appears his great-grandson, Gordon Guggisberg of Cambridge, following in his great-grandfather's footsteps, helped create the modern state of Ghana with liberal attitudes and progressive policies.

Today, 75 years after Guggisberg's tenure as British Governor of the Gold Coast (modern Ghana), he is one of a very few white men honoured for their contributions to establishing the African nation. This legacy is all the more remarkable in that it is largely untainted by a colonialism hangover.

The name "Guggisberg" first appeared in a Women's Institutes' scrapbook which had been assembled in the 1930s. The fragment was tantalizing and elusive, reading only "The former governor of Gold Coast was born in Winona". The Women's Institutes are renowned for their foresight in scrapbooking decades before it became fashionable and their early work in assembling village-level histories of many small places across Canada often provide the backbone of much historical research done today. The Tweedsmuir histories, as these scrapbooks are known, can be found in the hundreds in museums, archives, and libraries, often at the local level. In the case of the Erland Lee Museum, the museum has scrapbooks from Women's Institute branches that previously existed in Winona, Stoney Creek, Community Beach, Saltfleet, Binbrook, King's Forest.

Ultimately the scrap of history which started this research project turned out to be inaccurate, but the journey to make that conclusion was a fascinating one and turned up a considerable amount of interesting history on one of Winona's well known citizens in the process.

The first step was establishing who the former governor in question might be. This turned out to be relatively easy in the age of the internet, as the British governors of the colony Gold Coast (now Ghana) were easily found. It turns out that one, Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, was a Canadian by birth.



Location of Ghana, in Africa

Unfortunately his biographical information seemed to have no connection whatsoever to Winona. Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (who always seems to have gone by "Gordon") was born in 1869 in Galt (now Cambridge), Ontario to local merchant Frederick Guggisberg. Gordon's father, Frederick, was a self-made man, his own father having died in a debtor's prison when he was 14 years. Frederick was apprenticed into a merchant business at a young age. By the time he was an adult he was a partner and subsequently owner. Unfortunately for the future governor, his father also died young, from cancer, at age 34.

After Gordon's father died, the family moved to England in 1879. He entered the Royal Military Academy and became a member of the Royal Corps of Engineers. He was for some years captain of the Royal Engineers' cricket eleven, and was a fine player of polo, racquets, golf, and football (soccer). In 1900 Gordon Guggisberg published The Shop: The Story of the Royal

Military Academy and, under the pseudonym "Ubique", Modern Warfare, in 1903.



Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, 1908

In 1902 Guggisberg was employed under the Colonial Office on a special survey of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti, and in 1905 was appointed director of surveys in that colony. Serving in World War One, Brigadier General Guggisberg fought at the Somme in 1916 and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1918.

After the war, Sir Gordon Guggisberg was appointed governor and commander-in-chief of the Gold Coast in 1919. There he was responsible for the creation of the deep water harbour of Takoradi, and the 1923 commissioning of Korle-Bu Hospital in Accra, the finest and most modern institution of its kind in colonial Africa at the time. Close association with native Africans during his survey work convinced Guggisberg that the native Africans were capable of attaining the development levels of Europe.

"My practical experience... during the last twenty-seven years has convinced me that what individuals have achieved, in spite of ill-selected systems of education, can be achieved by [Africans] generally, provided we alter our educational methods"

-Gordon Guggisberg, 1929

He founded Achimota College for the training of native teachers and instructors; it was to become the largest and most complete establishment for the education of native Africans. The aim of Guggisberg's whole policy was the development of the country by and for the native rather than for

the benefit of European capitalists. In 1928 Guggisberg was appointed governor and commander-in-chief of British Guiana, but owing to failing health he was obliged to leave the colony in 1929.

During his short tenure in 1928-29, Guggisberg introduced drastic administrative reforms and devoted himself energetically to the problems of maintaining and improving the system of drainage and irrigation upon which the sugar and rice cultivation of the colony depended. He also promoted immigration and peasant settlement and the development of the production and marketing of rice. His failing health meant a return to England, where he died in 1930.

In 1973 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the construction of Korle-Bu Hospital in Accra, the Ghanaian government honoured Guggisberg with the erection of a large statue, a rare tribute paid by a post-colonial government to one of its colonial governors.



Gordon Guggisberg statue, Ghana

This was a good tale, especially about an orphaned Canadian boy who "did good". But where was the Winona connection and why did the Women's Institutes of the 1930s see fit to remember Guggisberg?

Where the story got interesting was that in 1868 Frederick Guggisberg married Dora Louise Willson of "Oak Grove", Ontario. By no mere coincidence, "Oak Grove" was name for the John W Willson farm, where Winona Park Road is today.

John W Willson was the son of the Honourable John Willson. After his death in 1889, John W Willson's home became the famous Winona Park Hotel (lasting until 1928). John W. was Inspector of Licenses (in particular liquor licenses) in Wentworth in the mid 1800s. His reports from that era, which are mentioned in a July 25th, 1913 Hamilton Herald article, amusingly refer to the fact that Willson wasn't getting much cooperation from the innkeepers of the day, and that John W came to the conclusion that Hamilton was a pretty bad place.

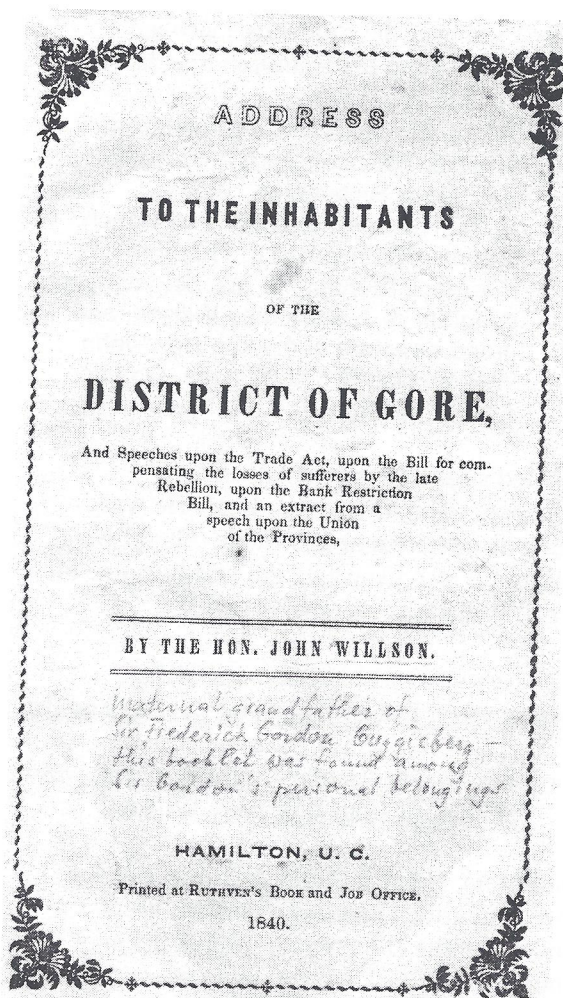
The missing link was establishing that Dora Louisa Guggisberg, Gordon's mother, was related to the Willson family of Winona. None of the usual published sources referred to Dora Louisa as a daughter of John Willson. But her own handwritten bible from the 1860s, passed down to descendents in England around 1930, and then subsequently to the United States in the late 20th century, read "Dora Louisa Willson, daughter of John Wellesby Willson".



Dora Louisa (Willson) Guggisberg

There were other several clues scattered throughout the Guggisberg family history.

One of the descendents, Daniel Guggisberg of California, owns a pamphlet of Ontario School Act legislation from 1840 with the Honourable John Willson's name on it. His family, however, claimed it was handed down from Gordon's grandfather.



Note the (incorrect) claim that this pamphlet came from Gordon's grandfather.

But the Guggisberg descendants also had newspaper clippings about the sudden death of Gordon's brother, Frederickson Guggisberg, in 1891 in Sabinal, Texas. He died at an obscure Texas ranch owned by a family called Thorburn, whose name appeared on the inquest papers. Frederickson's death was an accidental poisoning, from drinking carbolic acid. In Daniel Guggisberg's words,

"Apparently Frederickson was 17 years old; perhaps something one might call a "fancy pants", out there in the Wild West".

Frederickson seems to have been dared to take a sip of poisonous liquid. His body was returned to Galt for burial.

By itself: just another interesting, if tragic, story. But the real breakthrough came when it was determined what the "W" in John W. stood for.

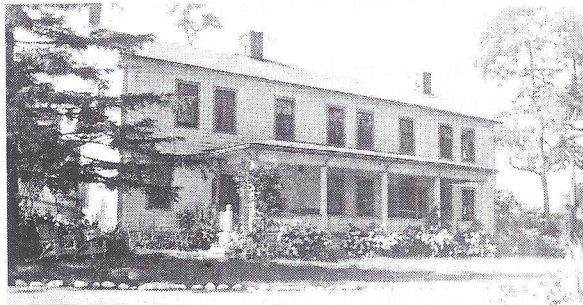
The first link was the following marriage announcement from the Hamilton Spectator:

[Married] At St. Mark's Church, San Antonio, Texas on April 7, by the Very Rev. Dean Richardson
J. W. Thorburn, of Wavertree Ranch, Sabina, eldest son of J. Thorburn Liverpool, England, to Maude, youngest daughter of J. **Wellesley** Willson, and grand-daughter of the late Hon. John Willson, Oak Grove, Winona, Ontario.
April 21, 1890

This find suddenly gave a reason for a Guggisberg to be in Texas in 1891: He was visiting his maternal aunt, Maude (Guggisberg) Thorburn. It also identified the middle name of John W Willson.

When presented with the above marriage announcement, Daniel Guggisberg rechecked the 150 year old bible and agreed: the correct inscription, in Dora Louise's cursive script, was in fact: "daughter of John Wellesley Willson".

This eureka moment led to the direct linkage between Gordon Guggisberg and his great grandfather, the Honourable John Willson of Winona, whose Oak Grove farm still exists today: as the LIUNA Gardens banquet centre.



*John Willson house, Winona, c1960
(now LIUNA Gardens Banquet Centre)*

It proved the validity of the tiny scrap of paper kept by the Women's Institutes in the 1940s as to the history of Winona.

And what of the claim that Guggisberg was from Winona? This red herring probably comes from an error in the press: a 1926 speech by John S Mckinnon to the Empire Club in Toronto, lauding Guggisberg as a progressive colonial administrator.

The quote:

"A building that was particularly interesting was that of the Gold Coast, and you will be interested to know that its Governor was an Ontario boy, born near the little village of Winona -Sir Gordon Guggisberg-whom I had the pleasure of meeting on many occasions."

It would appear that he didn't know Gordon Guggisberg quite as well as he claimed.

Erland Lee Museum Report

By Michael Gemmell

The museum recently concluded its annual spring kick-off pancake breakfast. Over 210 visitors braved the weather, enjoyed a look at the sugar bush and chatted with our guests, the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club. With great support from the Battlefield Optimist Club, Piller's Meats, Green Mountain Farms, and Fortino's Fiesta Mall, the event brought in over \$1100 towards the museum. Thank you!

Congratulations to Shirley Davidson of Winona who recently completed her library training hours at the museum, cataloguing Winona and ED Smith-related material.

Upcoming Events:

May 24th, 7 pm, at the museum.

The 110th Annual Stoney Creek WI Charter Branch meeting features a short talk on **Raw Milk and its Sale**. This discussion about health was near and dear to Adelaide Hoodless' heart over 110 years ago. How strange to have to fight her battles again! Free. Refreshments.

May 26th, 2-4 pm Come for a little bit of **Pomp and Circumstance: A Victorian Tea** at the museum.

Cotton Gloves and Clotted Cream, Oh My!

June 3rd, 6-9 pm "**Sports Final**"— a new **Murder Mystery Dinner**. Stoney Creek reporter Ed Kreegle is going to miss his deadline...

A Blast from the Past:



Grassie blacksmith shop, Mount Albion, c.1940

Editor's notes: This photo comes courtesy of the late Fred Embleton (1919-2003). The building itself dates to 1848, when William Grassie purchased a piece of land from Henry Spera and opened a blacksmith shop in the village of Albion Mills (or Mount Albion). His son, Charles, took over the shop in 1899. Grassie died in 1920. The lot was purchased by the Embleton family.

At the time of this photo, the former Grassie blacksmith shop had been converted into a drill-bit sharpening shop, owned and run by Robert Embleton. Embleton ran a well-drilling business and lived in the adjoining house.

After the death of Robert Embleton in 1973, the City of Hamilton purchased the shop and surrounding farm in preparation for the construction of the Red Hill Expressway. The other homes in the picture were demolished, but the stone shop survives in 2007. It has lost its roof and is surrounded by chain link fence, hemmed in by highway ramps, cut off from old Mud Street. But the surviving shell still reminds us of the pre-existing village and what has been lost.

Stoney Creek Historical Society Executive 2007

<i>President: Bill Mitchell</i>		<i>1st VP: Greg Armstrong</i>	<i>2nd VP/ Newsletter Michael Gemmell</i>
<i>Correspondence Secretary: Anna Orr</i>		<i>Past President: Bill O'Reilly</i>	<i>Treasurer: Judy Green</i>
<i>Director: Mary Place</i>		<i>Director: Jim Reid</i>	<i>Director: Mary Lewis</i>
<i>Program: Malcolm Hughes</i>	<i>Archives: Cheryl Gemmell</i>	<i>Social Convenors: Betty and Mike Petis</i>	<i>Recording Secretary: Harriet McInnis</i>

YES! I would like to acquire/renew membership in the Stoney Creek Historical Society.

_____ Individual membership \$ 10.00 annually

_____ Family membership \$18.00 annually

_____ Business Membership \$25.00 annually

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone Number : _____

Email: _____

Send to: **PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6** or call **905-662-4065** for more information.

Visitors and New Members Welcome!

Meetings are held at Stoney Creek City Hall,
Saltfleet Room
1st Wednesday of each month
beginning at 7:00pm.
September to June

Coffee and Refreshments follow
Info: 905-662-2248

www.stoneycreekhistoricalsociety.701.com

Sponsors of individual Newsletter editions (\$30.00 donation) receive a charitable income tax receipt. Call 905-662-4065 for info.

Greg & Susan Armstrong 2007
27 Charles St.
Stoney Creek On. L8G 1X7

Members Business/Institution Directory:

Appraiser/Quiltmaker/Lecturer	Judy Lyons	1231 Hammond St. Burl.	(905) 639-2441
Britannia Cleaners	Ed Strecker	17 King Street East	(905) 662-4971
Chamber of Commerce	Dave Cage	21 Mountain Avenue South	(905) 664-4000
Connection Key Travel	John and Mary Fraser	889 Barton St., Unit 2	(905) 643-7444
Erland Lee Museum	Michael Gemmell	552 Ridge Road	(905) 662-2691
Flowers by Dianne	Dianne Black	9 King Street West	(905) 664- 6621
Forsyth Hagar Accounting	Anne Forsyth	42 King Street East, Unit #2	(905) 662-2848
Queenston Stationery	Thao Khac Phung	38 King Street East	(905) 664-3360
Royal Canadian Legion	Branch 622	12 King Street East	(905) 662-4171
Winona Garden Shoppe	Georgina & Jeff Beattie	1381 Highway #8	(905) 643-2161

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