

Remember the Corman House

Stoney Creek Historical Society

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

NEWSLETTER

May 2009 Edition #47 Circulation: 250 copies

A History of Cope's Lane

Michael Gemmell

Cope's Lane has long been a private window to Lake Ontario. This road, private for the past 75 years, is situated in the Broken Front, Lot 12. This Lot was farmed by the Biggar family in the mid 19th century.



*John Cope's cottage, c1980
Now the site of Waterview Village development*

Christopher Biggar (1819-1890) had been born in Saltfleet to UEL parents and took up farming at Fruitland. He married Ann Dean, from another local farming family, and had nine children. Sanford Dennis Biggar inherited the land from his father Christopher in 1890.

[Continued on p.3]

This newsletter has been sponsored by
Dorothy Reid

Welcome new member!
Joyce Brown

The President's Corner

As I mentioned in the last President's Corner, the many items that will keep your Executive and members busy for the balance of 2009 and on into next year, are now shaping up and many are now happening.

We will be moving our meetings to the Nash-Jackson House this September. After meeting with the Executive of Friends of Battlefield, we have decided to join forces and meet on the second Tuesday of each month, sharing our speakers. The Treasurers of both groups will formulate a plan to meld the memberships while still maintaining separate accounting.

With the Annual Picnic Supper set for Friday June 12, 2009, we will be joining the Friends of Battlefield for this outing, so that we can meet each other, and enjoy the evening together.

The City of Hamilton has ordered the furniture for the S.C.H.S. Library and I have been told it should be in place by late summer. When this happens, we will start to move the mass of material from 99 King Street basement, and make some of it, once again available, to members and persons seeking information about Stoney Creek.

The members of the Executive have already started the sorting and cataloguing of items and our newest member to offer her help is Jennie Foley. She has taken on the task of photographing many of the items, and setting up a record system for both computer literate users, as well as a carded system for those who have chosen not to be intimidated by electronics.

As a point of interest, it has been decided, that the new Library, in addition to having a regular collection of published books, will also house archival material such as unpublished books, photos, or printed matter.

The S.C.H.S. has also acquired a

collection of artifacts (3-dimensional items) which, unfortunately, we will be unable to display, due to space restrictions. These items will, for now, remain in storage. In the future, it may be possible to show them, from time to time, in an area of the Nash-Jackson House designed for temporary displays.

It is our goal this year to encourage members to consider the possibility of serving on our Executive Committee. Further information is available from any present member, who would be pleased to explain the nature of the various positions, pointing out the rewarding experience it can be, to get involved in the organizational part of the Society.

We will be awarding scholarships again this year to graduate High School students who have excelled in History. For those new members who may wonder what your Society does besides having great speakers and enjoying tasty snacks afterward; we have been donating cash scholarships to the top History students at Cardinal Newman, Saltfleet and Orchard Park High Schools, for as long as I can remember.

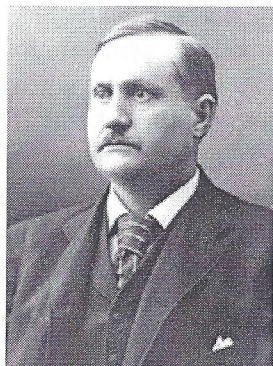
On Saturday June 6, during the Battle of Stoney Creek Re-Enactment Celebration at Battlefield Park, S.C.H.S. will be selling books by renowned author and journalist James Elliott. We will have copies of Mr. Elliott's brand new book – 'Strange Fatality' as well as two previously published books:

'Billy Green and the Battle of Stoney Creek, June 6, 1813' and
'If Ponies Rode Men: The Journeys of Robert Land 1777-1791'.

Your Phone Committee will be in touch with details for the Annual Picnic, and I hope to see you all there. Have a wonderful summer, and plan to bring a friend to the September meeting. I am sure they will enjoy it just as much as you.

Bill Mitchell, President

Cope's Lane History (continued)



SD Biggar, 1905

SD Biggar was born in 1861, in Saltfleet, was educated at the University of Toronto and moved to Hamilton in 1881. He was married in 1886 to Charlotte Armstrong.

From 1901 to 1904 SD Biggar served as an Alderman. He was elected Mayor in 1905 and served until 1906. During his tenure he had to deal with the bitter Hamilton Street Railway Strike. Biggar became famous for reading the Riot Act on the nights of November 23rd and 24th, 1906.

SD Biggar's brother, Emerson Bristol Biggar (1854-1921), was a noted journalist and writer around the turn of the 20th century. He wrote one of the earliest histories of the Battle of Stoney Creek and a biography of Sir John A. MacDonald.

Cope Purchase of Biggar Estate

SD Biggar passed away in 1920. In 1921 Arthur Cope (1867-1946), through the legal firm of AM Lewis and WF Schwenger, purchased the S.D. Biggar estate for \$10,750 from Biggar's widow, Charlotte, and her daughter, Anne M Biggar. Anne Biggar later established a trust fund with the Hamilton Community Foundation.

In the 1920s, the area was fairly remote. Barton Street was a real country road lined

with operating farms and wooded areas on both sides. An electric radial car ran from Mary Street in downtown Hamilton, east along Main to Queenston Road to Highway #8, and on to Grimsby and Beamsville. All the neighbours on Jones Road were active farmers who grew a variety of fruit for a living.



Cope's Lane site, 1923 topographic map

Note the Charles Carpenter house (dot on the left) and the Christopher Biggar house (dot on the right)

The Copes built a California style house with white stucco. There was originally an ice house attached. The main house had a two car garage in the 1930s and a timber crib pier out into the lake. A fine well, about three feet in diameter and lined with red clay brick for drinking water, was located behind the main house.

In June of 1922, Arthur Cope purchased additional land from JD Beasley for \$8,700. Beasley was selling the land for Frank S Day.

On June 17, 1922, JD Beasley wrote to Lewis and Schwenger:

Re: the sale of my lake front property to Arthur Cope have made no agreement with MR. Brown, the owner of the adjoining lands in regard his using the lands conveyed to Cope. Mr. Brown called on me about the grape vines, fruit trees, etc., which he stated he had cultivated on the lands and informed him that Mr. Cope had purchased the lands from me and that I could not make any arrangements with him and that he would have to see Mr. Cope. I act for Frank S. Day

and have no knowledge of any agreement between Day and Brown. I am informed by Mr. Day that there was no such agreement.

*Yours Truly,
JD Beasley.*

Up the east side of Jones Road from north to south were Kilgour, Lees, Padget, Jacob, and Rouse.

To the immediate west was a property owned by Douglas Chilman. Chilman had a timber crib pier at the foot of Jones Road.

To the east, was a large two story white frame house belonging to the Gerhardt family.

All the property west of the drainage ditch (tunnel) was in assorted fruits- pears, plums, apples, peaches, cherries, and grapes. During the 1920s, Arthur Cope had the bush east of the drainage ditch cleared and planted in grapes.

The Scow

An early attempt at erosion control was the acquisition of the "the scow", a derelict barge from Burlington Bay. Abe Hand, a fisherman from Winona, was hired to tow the scow to Fruitland.



Abe Hand, 1938

The Hand family's business was located at the foot of Winona Road on the lakeshore. They fished out of open boats which had gasoline engines, about 20 feet long with an 8 foot beam. When not in use, the boats were pulled

up on the shore beside the net racks. Fishing was done with gill nets and the catch consisted mainly of white fish, lake trout, and herring.

If at any time the beach front owners wanted fish, they would wave a white cloth from the pier in front of the main house when the fishing boats were returning home. The fishing boats would land at the pier and a fresh fish selected. A whitefish of about 1.5- 2 feet long cost 25 cents. The fishermen would clean it on the spot before sale. The head was left on the fish in order that it could be easily carried by hooking a finger through the gills.

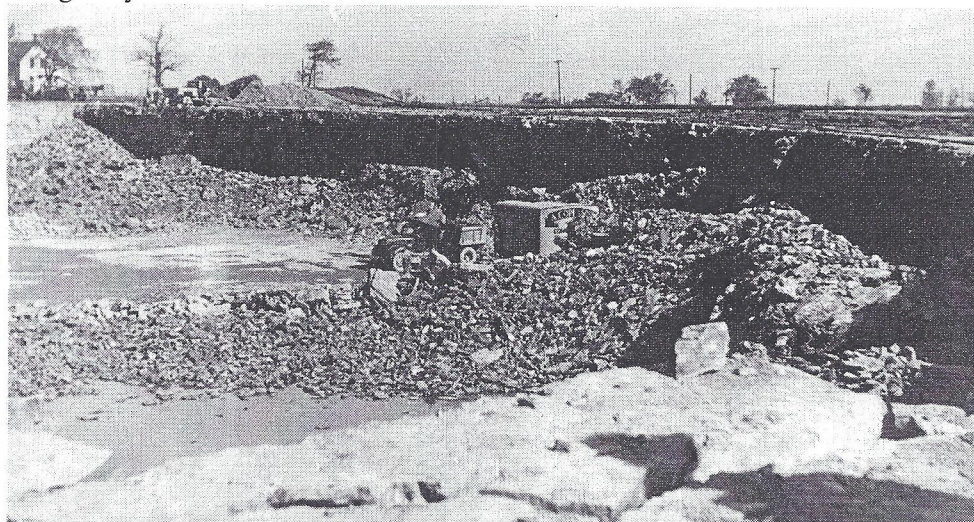


Winona Women's Institute ladies on Hand family's boat, 1912

An east storm developed during the tow, and the boat had a difficult time getting the scow to shore, and secured to the bank in front of John Cope's cottage. Because of the delay caused by the storm, the operation had to be carried on in the dead of night.

The scow did an excellent job of shore protection until it began to rot out and break up. The sand beach on the property was at the scow. By the mid 1930s, the scow had disintegrated to a point where all that remained was the bottom of the hull with a few timbers jutting out of the water. The family fished for perch around the wreckage.

Stone to construct more permanent piers and breakwaters came from A Cope & Sons quarry at the top of Highway 20.



Cope Construction quarry, 1950

Arthur Cope had three cottages built in 1922 at the west end of the lane for his children, Flo, Lil, and Harold. The cottages were two stories with hip roofs and resembled small barns. Originally built for summer use, they had no electricity. They were built in the middle of an apple and cherry tree orchard, and Lil and her husband, William Schwenger, spent much time grafting various types of apples.

Rain water was collected in a common cistern between the houses and hand pumps in the kitchens supplied water for cooking and laundry. Toilet facilities were found in outhouses behind the cottages. The cottages were subsequently enlarged and upgraded.

One of the houses, belonging to Harold, was destroyed by fire in January 1946, caused by a spark in electrical wiring. At the time of the fire, a pregnant Dorothy Cope had to drive to the nearest farm house on Jones Road to call the Fire Department. According to David Cope, Dorothy did not at that time have a

Driver's Licence, but she managed to start the car and drive out the lane to the nearest home. The house was replaced by a pre-fabricated Halliday Home (from Burlington, ON).

The pre-fabricated home was completely replaced in 1954 with a brick home. The pre-fabricated home was moved to the rear and east of the property where it now sits. (34 Cope's Lane)

John Cope's cottage was destroyed in 2008 when Marz properties began building the Waterview subdivision. A few trees from the Lakefront Property still survive in 2009.

Cope's Lane, which began its life as a private dead-end road, seems destined to become a through road between Jones and Glover.

With files courtesy of:

- *Cope family history*
- *Erland Lee Museum*
- *Saltfleet, Then and Now*
- *Hamilton Public Library Special Collections*

Thanks to Art Cope

Erland Lee Museum News

On Saturday March 28, the Erland Lee Museum celebrated spring's return with its annual Pancake Breakfast served with local maple syrup. We could not have asked for better weather. This year we tried something new: the maple syrup was served warm by the Peach Festival Queen, Lisa Bifano and Peach Princesses, Alissia Salciccioli and Asia Lynn Mastroianni. Everyone enjoyed this new twist! Guests enjoyed a performance by History on Parade, and a ham radio broadcast by the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club.

Thanks to Battlefield Optimist Club, E.D. Smith Foods Ltd., Fortino's-Fiesta Mall, Tim Horton's-Rymal & Hwy 56, Bulk Barn, Heritage-Hill Plaza, Metro Supermarkets, and our Women's Institutes' volunteers, we had a successful Pancake Breakfast. Thank you to all who attended to support the birthplace of the Women's Institutes.

On **May 23rd**, we are planning a **Victorian Tea**. Tea will be served on the lawn **from 2-4 p.m.** surrounded by the Lee's gardens and guests will enjoy live entertainment.

The Erland Lee Museum is also the location of the **Winona Horticultural Society's Anniversary Celebration**; A Garden Party, will be held on Saturday **June 13th** from **1-4p.m.** Winona Horticultural Society invites everyone to help celebrate its 80th anniversary.

The Erland Lee Museum's E.D. Smith exhibit, "**Jam and Service: 125 years of E.D. Smith's Fruit Production**" has been re-installed and will run until the end of August.

We are currently conducting research on local Blacksmiths in Saltfleet Township for an exhibit scheduled to open in the summer. If

anyone has information or pictures to aid in this research, please contact the Museum.

For more information on all of our upcoming events please see our website:
www.erlandlee.com, or call 905-662-2691.

Meaghan FitzGibbon
Curator

Battlefield House Museum Events

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.

Date: Sat. June 6 and Sun. June 7, 2009

Time: 10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Sat. and 10:00 am - 4:30 p.m. Sun;

Cost: \$8.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children.

100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE GAGE/WESTBROOK FAMILY REUNION - ARE YOU RELATED?

The descendants of James & Mary Gage, and Elizabeth & John Westbrook, first assembled in Battlefield Park in 1909, to honour Mrs. Gage and her children James & Elizabeth, who settled on this property in 1789. Come and meet the extended family of James and his sister Elizabeth with this multi generational gathering. Experts to help you research your own family tree will be on hand to advise those interested in researching their roots. A re-creation of popular Edwardian festivities will be part of this event.

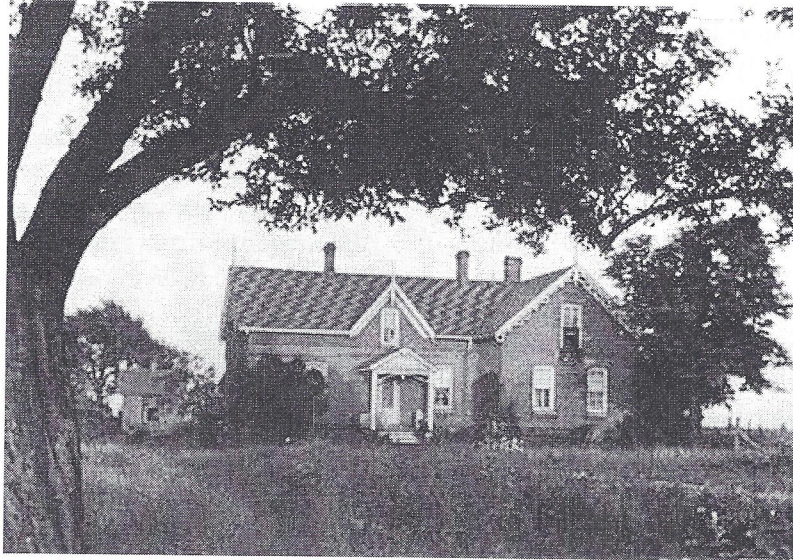
Date: Sunday, August 23, 2009

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$0.00 per person. Free outdoor event. Regular admission rates apply to the Museum.

TOUCH AND GO AT ELFRIDA

By Don Grove



Cline House, Elfrida, c.1940

In 1939, my Mother and Father bought a farm from the Cline family and we moved to the farm that spring. The farm was located on the North East corner of the junction of highways 20 and 53 at the village of Elfrida.

The Second World War started in the fall of 1939. December of 1939 saw the founding of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). No 10 Elementary Flying Training School was set up near Mount Hope. Officially the school opened on October 9th, 1940. This lasted at Mount Hope until August 29th, 1942, when it was moved to Pendleton, Ontario.

The student pilots at Mount Hope could fly either a Tiger Moth or a Fleet Finch, and used a field across from our farm to practise what I call "Touch and Go". If I recall correctly, the idea was to fly in as though they were going to land, and as the wheels touched down, they would gun the motor and take off. They would be doing this all day long.

I was ten years old at the time, and was fascinated seeing these planes flying about. My friends and I would ride over on our bikes and spend hours watching. One time, one of the planes developed motor problems, and had to land. The pilot let us sit in the cockpit until he saw another plane coming. As it was one of the instructors, we had to scramble out on the ground.

I remember one time when one of the planes crashed. It was a real mess, and I do not know what happened to the pilot. The Military Police would not let us anywhere near the plane.

My Father had a contract with the RCAF to remove the hay off the "Touch and Go" fields for a couple of years. This was real exciting for me as we would be cutting, raking and loading the hay as these planes were zipping in and out.

One time I was driving the tractor and we were pulling the hay wagon with the hay loader behind. My brother Marvin was moving the hay around on the wagon, when suddenly a plane came bouncing along beside us. Apparently, when he gunned the motor to take off the motor quit. He was bouncing beside us, going about 20 feet in the air with each bounce. Each bounce was getting lower and the plane was almost on the ground, when it ran into the fence at the end of the field. When the plane hit the fence, the front stopped but the tail kept moving. The plane was almost straight up in the air but then crashed back down. The poor pilot must have been scared to death. We saw the pilot climb out of the plane, so we knew he was okay.

Another time when we were walking to school, there was a Harvard Trainer in the corner of the field. Sometime earlier that morning, the pilot must have had engine trouble and made a forced landing. There

was an Air Force man with a rifle guarding the plane, so we did not go near.

We sure missed the action when they moved the School away.

Editor's notes:

The Cline House once stood on the NE corner of Highway 20 and Upper Centennial Parkway, roughly across from the modern Elfrida Fortinos Supermarket. Mike's Auto Parts is on the site in 2009.

The Cline family purchased the land from Alexander Milmine in 1815 and lived here until 1939. This house was probably the second Cline house on the site, and may have been built in the 1850s. John P. Cline (1817-1901) and his wife Hannah (1817-1905) are the likely builders, passing it down at least three generations before it was purchased by the Grove family in 1939. The house was destroyed c.2000

Upcoming Historical Society/ Friends of Battlefield Speakers

Sept 8, 2009: Jean Baxter

The Facts Behind the Fiction:

Loyalist Experience During the American Revolution

Oct 13, 2009: Sylvia Wray

Celebrating 20 Years:

The Story of the Flamborough Archives, People, Projects and Partnerships

Visitors & New Members Welcome!

Meetings are held at
the Nash-Jackson House on the
2nd Tuesday of each month.

Beginning at 7:30 p.m.
September to June
Coffee and Refreshments follow.
Info: 905-662-2248

**S.C.H.S./Friends of Battlefield
Annual Picnic**

June 12, 2009
Battlefield Park
6:00 pm

Sponsor a Newsletter

Would you like to sponsor an edition of the Newsletter? A \$30.00 donation helps with the expense of printing and mailing the Stoney Creek Historical Society Newsletter. A tax receipt for this donation will be issued. Please contact Judy Green at 905-662-4065 to help sponsor a Newsletter Edition.

Would you prefer to help us save postage and have your newsletter delivered via email? Please send us your email address via **judyag1@hotmail.com** and you will receive the newsletter in PDF or MSWord .

Historical Society Research Queries

Members may submit two free queries per year. Non-members will be charged a \$5.00 fee in advance per query.

Queries must be submitted in writing, not by phone. Queries will be accepted by snail mail and email. If submitting by snail mail, queries should be typed or printed clearly (maximum 50 words). Please include return contact information.

Queries will be researched in the order in which they are received, as volunteers' time permits. Query responses may be published as part of the Society Newsletter as space permits.

Stories, News, or Queries can be sent to:

Michael Gemmell
248 Summerhill Ave. Hamilton, ON. L8K 3N7
905- 549-5949
mgermell@sympatico.ca

Next Newsletter will be issued Wednesday, October 7, 2009.
Deadline for Submissions is Friday, September 18, 2009.

Stoney Creek Historical Society 2009 Executive

President	Bill Mitchell	905-664-4576
Past President	Bill O'Reilly	905-662-2248
1 st Vice President	Greg Armstrong	905-662-6269
2 nd Vice President	Wendy Klassen	905-662-1524
Treasurer	Judy Green	905-662-4065
Recording Secretary	John Fraser	905-667-3688
Correspondence Secretary	Dorothy Reid	905-664-6355
Director	Mary Lewis	905-643-3665
Director	Mary Place	905-662-8856
Director	Kathy Wakeman	
Newsletter Editor	Michael Gemmell	905-549-5949
Archives	Cheryl Gemmell	905-549-5949

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATIONS

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

Address: _____

_____ Individual membership \$ 10.00 annually
 _____ Family membership \$18.00 annually
 _____ Business Membership \$25.00 annually

Email: _____
 Receive newsletter by email? Y/N

Name(s)

Send to: Stoney Creek Historical Society
 PO Box 66637
 Stoney Creek, ON
 L8G 5E6

Phone Number:

For information on Memberships,
 please call 905-662-4065

Please accept my additional donation of _____ to the (check one)
 General Fund _____
 Museum Fund _____
 Publication/Education Fund _____

Members Business/Institution Directory:

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
Dr. Keith Miller		304-15 Mountain Ave S.	(905) 662-2312
Erland Lee Museum	Meaghan FitzGibbon	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	Mario Figueroa	38 King Street East	(905) 664-3360
Royal Canadian Legion	Branch 622	12 King Street East	(905) 662-4171
Simpson & Watson LLP Barristers and Solicitors		950 King St. W. Hamilton	(905) 527-1174
Winona Gardens	Georgina & Jeff Beattie	1381 Highway #8	(905) 643-2161