



Remember the Corman House

Stoney Creek Historical Society

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

NEWSLETTER

February 2014

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Joe Johnson young brother of Graham Johnson



A turn of the century gathering at the Jones house in the days before the porch was closed in.

Story copied from an article by & with the permission of Paul Wilson

There's an old house that's been worrying the Hamilton Heritage Committee for months now, ever since the death of retired bachelor postman Graham Johnson.

He lived at 1 Jones Street in Stoney Creek, the house where he grew up. That address is now on the heritage committee's list of endangered buildings. It's just off the main drag and goes by two names.

One is Locust Lawn and the mighty locust trees are still there.

The other name is the Jones House. But which Jones? There were lots of them out there. *(continued page 4)*





GIGANTIC SALE OF USED BOOKS

**STONEY CREEK MUNICIPAL OFFICE
777 HIGHWAY #8 AT JONES ROAD**

THURSDAY MAY 8 10 am - 8 pm

FRIDAY MAY 9 10 am - 5 pm

SATURDAY MAY 10 10 am - 3 pm

**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING BOOKS FOR OUR SALE.
DONATIONS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED TUESDAYS AND
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**TUESDAYS AND
THURSDAYS FROM 1-4 PM**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Our Stoney Creek Historical Society (SCHS) has now entered a new calendar year, which from all indicators, will prove to be most productive, and rewarding. On behalf of our Board of Directors, our Best Wishes for Good Health and Happiness throughout 2014.



As many of you appreciate, our community has lost a good and decent man, **Bill Mitchell**. Bill was a dedicated and hard working individual, not only for our Society, but for many other worthy organizations, Seniors Outreach (SOS) in particular. Bill could always be counted on to contribute his time and energy in a most unselfish manner. He was passionate about our history, and played a paramount role in the development and sustainability of SCHS. Bill was a past President of SCHS, and a valuable member of our Board. Even in difficult times, Bill was there to help if his health allowed. Bill's example remains with us. He will be missed.

As previously shared, our SCHS meetings are at 777 #8 Highway, Stoney Creek (former City of Stoney Creek Council Chambers), starting at 7:00 p.m, the first Wednesday of the month. We have arranged for a number of dynamic and engaging Guest speakers. As always, refreshments will follow our meetings.

Recently our members have been issued copies of proposed amendments to our Constitution. These will be reviewed at our March 2014 meeting. Once reviewed, a vote will held for their potential approval.

We're having a **BOOK SALE**. This is a large scale undertaking, and much planning has been invested to ensure its success. A large volume of books has been amassed, and all are in very good condition. If you have books to donate, please let us know, or take them to our Reference Library and Archive, located at 605 #8 Hwy, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-4 p.m. The book sale will take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, 8th, 9th, 10th of May 2014. Wednesday of that week, 7th May, is reserved for members of our Society who will be present for our regularly scheduled meeting.

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. Please consider sharing that history with us.

Again, 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. Of special note, are the volunteers at our Reference Library and Archive.

Do join us at our meetings. Come on your own, or bring a friend. Either way, you'll likely make some new ones.

Greg Armstrong
President – SCHS

On February 19, 2014 at 5:30, The MacNab Circle will meet at the **Scottish Rite**, Hamilton to mark MacNab's 216th birthday. After a sumptuous meal of roast beef or salmon, our guest speaker is Rick Hill, coordinator of the Indigenous Knowledge Centre of the Six Nations Polytechnic Institute in Osweken. A renowned expert on Native Study, the War of 1812 and their treaties with the Crown, Mr Hill will also bring replica wampum belts which illustrate the agreements.

All are welcome its a great way to spend an evening in February!

For further information please call 905-875-4607 or e-mail jollyjt@hotmail.com

(continued from page 1)

Some have said Augustus Jones built this house. There's a statue to Augustus in the Stoney Creek Town Square. He was a United Empire Loyalist who came north in 1787 and made a career surveying thousands of acres in these parts.

House could date back to 1830's

Some say – and this is probably the better theory – that his nephew Stephen Jones built the house in the 1830's. Around 1900, the house left the Jones family hands. For decades the Smiths lived there.

And in 1950, the Johnson family began its long reign. Murray and Bernice Johnson, who for years ran stores out Binbrook way had eight children.

The Jones House is an historic oasis that's just steps from downtown Stoney Creek. The house in which they raised them had fireplaces in the living room, kitchen and basement and an old stone smokehouse out back, hooks still in place for hanging the meat. The Johnson's made a few changes, including closing in the front porch. It still leads, however, to the original front door.

Graham stayed on

Murray died in 1985, Bernice 13 years later. She left the house to all the children, but it was Graham who stayed on. He was a man with some clutter in his life – not a problem, because he was alone and the house had plenty of room.

Maintenance was never a high priority. Some 30 years ago, there was a visit to the house as part of a land-use survey. From the report: “Although presently in a state of disrepair, the house has a tremendous potential for displaying one of Stoney Creek’s earlier homes in the centre of downtown.”

Graham died this past February, age 72. More than ever, the house was at risk.

There are six surviving siblings – five sisters, plus Joe Johnson of Mount Hope, executor of the estate. He was born in 1955, grew up at 1 Jones.

House has to be sold

“I would love to bring the place back myself,” he says, “but I can’t afford it.” His sisters are scattered across the country and not interested in taking up residence. So the house will have to be sold. Half-a-dozen No Trespassing signs now line the property.

Joe is there most days. He’s going through the home carefully. “For me, it’s a matter of respecting who was here before.” He’s not yet ready to conduct an inside tour, but does hope to have the house ready for sale by next spring.

There’s been talk of designating 1 Jones under the Ontario Heritage Act. Some get scared by that. Not Joe. “It’s the only way to protect it,” he says.

(*Stoney Creek News Jan 23 2014 City designates former home of August Jones*)

But what if somebody came by with a really good offer, wanting to knock the place down and use the well-situated corner lot to build a mega home or some trendy townhouses?

Joe knows just what he’d say to that interested party. “My answer would be, ‘Well, you’re not getting the property. So goodbye.’”

Wedding Day for Jemima Pew and Abram Lee (Abram Lee was the father of Erland Lee)
copied from the diary of Peter Van Wagner (of Van Wagner's Beach)

“Wednesday October 10th 1855

Oh! Eventful day – who can tell what a day will bring forth

The greater part of the day was occupied in hauling rails for a fence above the east end of the orchard. Thinking from what we accidentally heard that the long expected wedding was about to take place this evening. I wrote to Jerry Lee to come down about five o'clock and bring his family with him. That we might attend the wedding and disappoint Jemima & Abram for they did not want us to attend and had tried to keep the great event a secret. Jerry & his crew arrived in good time. We drove down the shore and hove to at Jones marsh. I put Gordon Weirs coat & hat on so that I should not be known and walked past EP's (*Elias Pettit, Peter's father in law*) to see if the coast was clear. I found all right & ran back the teams were put to their top speed through the sand and we had just time to unload the women & children and put our horses in the stable leaving our carriages in the barn yard when his Highness Abram arrived in company with his brother in law Dewitt & his wife, five of our party lay behind the gate post among the pigs when Abram drove the gallant old Spot to the wagon house. It was dusk and we managed one by one to creep away unnoticed and went round by the back way into the house. Mrs Dewitt was the first to find out there were spies in the house. As soon as Abram got wind of what was going on and that his secret wedding was discovered he was in a great rage and swore vengeance against all concerned. He sent for Mr Lowe the minister to come up stairs and perform the Marriage ceremony in the bedroom in the presence of Sam Freel & Mrs Dewitt. As soon as our party found what was going on we went to the stair door and fastened the party above. We then sat down and ate the wedding supper. The splendid Brides cake was nearly all eaten and then hid.

After supper was over the next performance was to take the Sevastopol wedding party in the chamber accordingly the minister was allowed to pass out. Jerry Lee with the sleigh bells and Sydney Biggar with the large cowbell commenced the attack. Abram fought valiantly he aimed a blow at Sydney which just grazed his forehead. He was more successful with the next blow and struck the cowbell nearly splitting his hand the parties then came to close quarters Gordon Weir holding the candle. I hissed Jerry on, he seized Abram round the body and attempted to carry him down stairs at this moment Dewitt interfered and pushed Jerry & Abram back from the head of the stairs. Sydney now lent a hand and came near helping Dewitt down stairs. He however caught by the railing and saved himself. Abram made several ineffectual attempts to bite Jerry but finding himself in the hands of a giant he agreed to go quietly down stairs where he and Jemima came into the room below they were greeted by an uproarious shout of laughter. This added so much to his mortification that he faintly gnashed his teeth with rage no person wished them joy or took any more notice of them, then they would of an unfortunate day with a tin kettle tied to his ---- to make sport for others.

The remainder of our party who could not eat at the first table were walking into the good things in earnest the brandy we took down had been passed round and Abram was offered some. He tested it and although it was of a good quality of pale brandy he pronounced it whiskey. After the second table was cleared. The fragment with the exception of the remains of the Brides cake were scraped together to make up a supper for the chivalrous bed chamber wedding party. Abram objected to eating in the presence of his vulgar persecutors and accordingly wished us all to leave the room. Abram snapped at the crumbs as a crazy pup does at his tail looking as though he had swallowed one devil and was making ready to swallow another, or as a surly child takes medicine after getting a licking. Jemima tried to look pleasant smiling with that side of her face next those left in the room while the other side was frozen stiff by being next to Abram. Poor Mary Ann Freel had been invited to the wedding for no other purpose than to wait on them did the business up with that scornful indifference that people give food to beggars.

While Mrs Pettit standing at a respectful distance ends around to smooth down the wrinkles in her face with her hand and gave such a deep sigh as though her last friend had been laid in the grave. E.P. (*Elias Pettit*) Sat in a corner musing. Mary Ann's body looking as solemn as an owl and as wise as an old cow chewing her “cud” occasionally giving vent to a half suppressed sigh as much as to say things go off badly tonight.

While Jane Van (*Peter's wife*) looking mischievously devilish at Abram like a cat torturing a mouse, gave him some sharp cuts with her tongue which he returned with the vindictiveness of a tiger. Jerry by this time was looking more serious evidently ashamed of Abram. Jane Weir was tottering about like a person trying to balance themselves on a pea and thinking about nothing. Gordon was evidently endeavouring to

reconcile matter in his own mind but was unable to do so. Sydney Biggar was thinking about the gable end of a barn and John Benson looked like a spaniel dog just drawn out of the water the hair hanging close to the sides of his head puffing away at a short stemmed pipe to help the Brides cake digest

Mary Ann Lee seemed the most sensible person in the party stood backed up against the kitchen table. The minister was pacing back and forth over the kitchen floor trying to appear as much neutral as possible. Aunt Mary was jogging her child to sooth the pain of a boil it had on it's neck, the two Irish boys looked as wild as hawks believing "Ameriky" the gravest country in the world. Old Bul lay as a sort of fancy mat at the kitchen door with his forelegs crossed growling at each person as they passed long splice. Dewitt strode about the room as a great over grown boy and his wife looked like a dignified Queen of mice and minnies. Albert (*Albert E Carpenter Peter's stepson approx 10 years old*) looked silently on wondering what would come next or why the party should act as they did and occasionally turning his head to hear some remark with which he was frizzled to understand how it applied to the case. Some of the children were asleep and some were peeping at Jemima's dress. For my own part I was endeavouring to fasten the pictures in my mind as the most ridiculous I had ever met with."

STONEY CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Now hold their meetings on the first Wednesday of the month,
back at our previous site the former Stoney Creek city hall # 8 Highway and Jones road.

Start time of 7:00 pm

Note time, date and location

Up Coming Speakers

February 5th speaker Marilynn Havelka : "The Ruthven's Thompson and their involvement in World War 1"

March 5th speaker Bob Marentette : Canadian Art Original or Reproduction

April 2nd speaker John Aikman : Hamilton Wentworth District Board of Education Archives

May 7th speaker John Nixon : Toy Soldiers

FRIENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD meetings held at the Nash-Jackson House

up coming speakers.

Tuesday February 11th at 7:30 pm "Chocolate: A bittersweet History"

Tuesday March 11th at 7:30 pm "Irish Immigration"

Tuesday April 8th at 7:30 pm "Spring is in the Air"

Tuesday May 13th at 7:30 pm "Celebrating Queen Victoria"

HONOURED GUESTS AT BANQUET



The above picture shows charter members of the Stoney Creek branch of the Women's institute, which last night celebrated its 40th birthday. They are, back row, left to right: Mrs. Walter Ptolemy, Mrs. George Glidden, Mrs. Fred Madden, Mrs. Selby Corman, Mrs. Margaret Neil, Mrs. Clara Thompson. Front row: Mrs. Nettie Lee, Mrs. Gertrude Beaumont, Mrs. G. W. Millen, Mrs. J. B. Davis. Inset in lower left is Mrs. Thomas Dale, 1937 president of the organization.

picture from Hamilton Spectator Friday February 12th 1937

The Women's Institute

By Jean Baine

It all began when I unearthed a well-worn cookbook compiled by "Stoney Creek Women's Institute". A brief history of this organization appears in the early pages. From further search I learned much about the "Mother Institute" founded in 1897.

It began when Mr Erland Lee attended a "Farmer's Institute" meeting and was impressed with the address given by Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless. As the F.I. was planing a "Ladies Night", Mrs. Hoodless was invited to speak. At this event she suggested that the women form a similar society and this was met with such enthusiasm that on Feb. 19, 1897 the first "Women's Institute" was formed. The purpose was to meet the needs of rural women and its motto is "For Home and Country". I am proud to know that my maternal grandmother, Jeanetta (McNeilly) Millen was one of the founding members. Mrs John McNeilly was the first treasurer.

This vital organization soon spread across Canada and then to other countries around the world where they thrive today. On a personal note, a pen pal whom I corresponded with from New Zealand was thrilled to learn that I was born and raised in Stoney Creek. She was the president of Gisborne, N.Z. "Woman's Institute".

I am grateful to Jenny Foley, a member of "Stoney Creek Historical Society" for the experiences she has shared with me as an active member of the Binbrook W.I.

Each meeting opens with the "Ode" which begins

"A goodly thing it is to meet
In friendship's circle bright ..
No unkind word our lips shall pass,
No envy sour the mind,

The members gain useful information from the monthly speakers, where topics range from home economics to community affairs and much more. For example, when roads became used by vehicles, it was the W.I. who instigated the idea of providing a white line down the middle of the road to keep traffic moving safely.

(continued next page)

It is difficult for many of us to picture the primitive circumstances under which our ancestors lived. How grateful we must be to this thriving organization for their insight and enthusiasm.

To learn more about one of Stoney Creek's claim to fame, you may visit the "Erland Lee (Museum) Home" at 522 Ridge Rd. Mr Lee was co-founder of the W.I. (along with Mrs Hoodless) and his former home is maintained by the "Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario"

As Jenny Foley remarked, W.I. members from far and wide may not be able to find Toronto on a map, but they can readily locate Stoney Creek.

As Stoney Creek Historical Society members we can feel proud of this world-wide organization that celebrates its 117th anniversary here this month of February.

May we always remember that "It matters little how many serve us but it matters greatly how many we serve."

TEA AT THE LEE

The Women's Institute is celebrating 117 years and you are invited to attend a Tea At The Lee Sunday February 16th at the Erland Lee Museum Home 2:00 to 4:00 ----- Donations
Come and see (feel) the alterations to the Carriage House.

STONEY CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FOR REFERENCE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES FEBRUARY 2014

Our apologies for any problems you may have experienced accessing our website or for any response you may have expected and did not receive.

The site was completely out of commission for quite some time in that we could not access any emails. All emails were lost. It is now operating and we ask that anyone who did request information, please contact us and we will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible.

Eight guests have visited in the last number of weeks. We were very pleased to help with their inquiries.

To date we have received over 1400 books for our May 2014 Book Sale. Please bring your unwanted used books to our monthly meetings. Or you can bring them directly to our Reference Library and Archive located at 605 Highway No. 8 any Tuesday or Thursday 1-4 p.m.

We have already sold more than 30 books and have found new homes for other books. Please do not bring us any encyclopedia. If you have these books, we do have a contact for you.

We have a new shadow box displaying various Stoney Creek City pins, medallions, Smith's Knoll medallion, pen, Battlefield Monument Re-opening trowel dated June 4, 1994 and a key fob. It is now proudly hanging on our wall.

Please come for a visit to see our work in progress.

Stoney Creek Historical Society Board of Directors

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Member Business Directory

Britannia Cleaners	Ed Strecker	17 King Street East	(905) 662-4971
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Please contact *Doug Green* by telephone at (905) 662-4065 or by email at newsletter@stoneycreekhistorical.ca or dgreen136@cogeco.ca If you have questions or answers regarding our newsletter content or 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

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, Karen Cerello at (905) 525-0655 receipts are issued for donations.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dan & Judy Lee