



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1
www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

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September - October 2016

VICTORIAN MEDICINE SHOW

Medicine shows were touring acts (traveling by truck, horse, or wagon teams) which peddled "miracle cure" nostrums and other products between various entertainments.

Enjoy a fascinating display and demonstration of antique and reproduction medical equipment and treatments from the Victorian era. Historian and former nurse Nancy MacLeod's Victorian Medicine Show is engaging and interactive and shared with humour and discretion. You will come away with insights into Victorian era health and medical beliefs, treatments and quackery. Due to some mature content this presentation is recommended for adults only.

Photo from a calendar advertising "Doctor" Isaac Williams' patent medicine. Left: Peter Nelson Williams, son of Isaac and Sara (Ackert) Williams of Glen Williams. EHS08531



Victorian Medicine - From Fluke to Theory

By Bruce Robinson 2011

Medicine in 1800 was a scary combination of chance and quackery that Blackadder would have found familiar. Macbeth-like medicines were overwhelmingly botanical, with preparations of mercury, arsenic, iron and phosphorous also popular. Doctors might recommend a 'change of air' along with vomiting and laxatives and those old favourites, bleeding or leeches. The power of prayer was regularly used. All in all, not ideal. Yet a century later medicine would be available in a form easily recognisable to anybody today: hospitals, stethoscopes, white coats and x-rays. What happened?

Two things. Together, cities and science forced real progress in both prevention and cure. ... Overcrowding combined with poor sanitation and often grinding poverty to leave many vulnerable...

This growth had enormous consequences. Death rates were high, and far worse in cities than in the countryside. Smallpox, typhus and tuberculosis were endemic, and cholera alarmingly epidemic. Overcrowding combined with poor sanitation and often grinding poverty to leave many people vulnerable to the latest outbreak of anything nasty. Luckily, the Victorians loved statistics, and these validated the emotive prose of Dickens, Gaskell and Engels. In 1832 Parliament agreed to an official inquiry into the operation of the Poor Laws. Sir Edwin Chadwick was energetic in establishing the links between poverty and disease, and the enquiry resulted in new Poor Laws in 1834. Yet these did not go far enough and continued work resulted in the Public Health Act of 1848, which set up local health boards, investigated sanitary conditions nationwide, and established a General Board of Health....

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/victorian_medicine_01.shtml

The founding of medical schools in Canada was inspired by various motives, including the desire of doctors (who invariably founded the schools) to teach along lines of which they approved and to ensure a source of income for themselves. They were supported by those who felt that many Canadians who sought education in the United States were being inadequately trained and were being exposed to dangerous democratic principles. In the United States, many medical schools became commercial operations willing to lower standards to attract students, but in Canada the schools sought affiliation with universities and maintained high standards of entry, in order to discourage charlatans (or quacks) and to improve the public reputation of doctors.

By the 1850s, students in medical schools in Canada typically attended lectures on *materia medica* and therapeutics, anatomy and physiology, principles and practices and surgery, midwifery and the diseases of women and children, and medical jurisprudence. There was some dissection but little laboratory work (it was not until the mid-1870s, when William Osler took over the chair at McGill, that microscopes would be used in any extensive way). The dissecting rooms were known as "dead-houses." The one associated with the medical school established in London, Ontario, was probably typical. According to author Donald Jack, the dissecting room was located in the dining room of an old cottage and contained "two tables, a few chairs, a pile of sawdust, a shovel in the corner, old coats and aprons and hooks along the walls. A trapdoor in the floor led to the cellar, where two large vats, filled with ancient wood alcohol and other things, permeated the whole building with their odours."

New medical students were initiated into dissecting by being forced down to the cellar to retrieve the cadavers. Dr. D. C. MacCallum has left a record of the situation at McGill in the mid-19th century, where he prepared the dissections that were to be part of the anatomy professor's lectures the following day. He was compelled to pass several hours at night in the dissecting room, which was "dismal and foul-smelling." He wrote that his only company was "several partially dissected subjects and numerous rats which kept up a lively racket coursing over and below the floor and within the walls of the room."

The procuring of cadavers used for anatomical studies and medical research was often risky. The demand for bodies led to a thriving trade in body-snatching. Some students in Québec even paid their medical fees by taking bodies from the cemetery near Côte des Neiges. Such incidents led the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada to pass an Act to Regulate and Facilitate the Study of Anatomy in 1843 (amended in 1883). The Anatomy Act allowed medical

schools to legally procure unclaimed bodies from government institutions.

**"History of Medicine to 1950",
CHARLES ROLAND, 2006, *The Canadian Encyclopedia***

Samuel Webster (1842-1928) came to Toronto from Ireland, graduated in medicine in 1864 and arrived in Norval in 1865. Dr. Webster served on Esquesing Council and was Halton Reeve, while practicing medicine. He received the traditional reward of three guineas from Queen Victoria for the successful delivery of triplets. He proudly had the guineas made into a fob for his watch and chain. He became Halton Sherriff after retiring from medicine.

-from *Halton Sketches Revisited*,
John McDonald, 1996

George Lee Watson, age 8, poses beside famous Norval doctor Samuel Webster, age 80 in 1922.
EHS21794





ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2016

Wed. 14th **VICTORIAN MEDICINE SHOW**
 Sept. 2016 Nancy MacLeod, a retired nurse, will bring some of her Victorian-era medical equipment to provide a frightfully fun evening. Blood-letting, amputation, and tooth extraction will be discussed. Nancy has a collection of more than 200 authentic medical items from a century and more ago.
 KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

Wed. 12th **‘The Helson Gallery and Collection’: Discover the treasures of the**
 Oct. 2016 **Helson Collection and the artists who have enriched our**
community for over 100 years
 Halton Hills Art Curator Judy Daley will explain and share images from the Helson Collection and will also touch on several artists from this area. It promises to be an enriching evening.
 KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

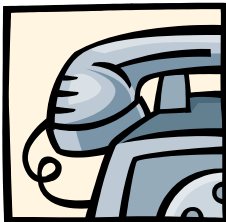
Wed. 9th
 Nov. 2016 TBA

Dec. 2016 The Society does not hold a public meeting in December.

Wed. 11th **CANADA’S CENTENNIAL YEAR**
 Jan. 2016 Travel back 50 years and enjoy pictures from the EHS collection from 1967, Canada’s centennial year. As Centennial projects, Georgetown opened Cedarvale Park and Acton opened a brand new Library.
 KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOUR TO BECOME A MEMBER!

Refreshments served from 7:00 p.m.



Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	905 877-7363	Treasurer
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Secretary
J. Mark Rowe	905 877-9510	Archivist
Jan Raymond	905 877-9172	Social
David Borrett	905 702-0737	Membership
Ray Denny	905 877-3890	Publications

Society Notes

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

<www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca>

Send your e-mail to mrowe6@sympatico.ca

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter and Dawn Livingstone. Submissions welcome. Please consider an electronic newsletter sent to your e-mail address. Not only will you save the Society postage, you get to see the colour pictures!

MEMBERSHIP

We now have 85 members for 2016. Encourage your friends and family to join the Society. The individual membership rate is \$20. The family or institution rate is \$25. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box or payable by cash or cheque to our membership secretary, David Borrett at a public meeting.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

www.archives.gov.on.ca

EHS ARCHIVES

The Society was fortunate to secure funding for a summer student and we hired Benjamin Palliser, who worked in the EHS Archives at Georgetown. In recognition of the fading use of DVDs, we opted to purchase a large back-up drive and Ben firstly transferred and updated all our TIF files from our photo collection and then converted them to JPG files for everyday use. He scanned glass negatives and sought out missing photo scans. He also transferred photos taken by *Independent* photographer Ted Brown from ZIP drives and converted them to JPGs. Since many of our large photos were scanned in two or more parts, he was also able to splice the scans back into one photo. It was a very productive summer for the EHS Archives.

CHRIST THE KING HISTORY PRIZE

A teacher from the Catholic High School provided this short biography of Jake Hirst, winner of the EHS History prize. Jake Hirst

is pursuing History at the University of Guelph in September. His passion for history earned him marks in the high 80's in all the history courses offered this year. He plays football; he is a mentor, and he volunteers at the hospital. He is visually impaired.

HALTON-PEEL OGS

Sept. 25 - Mike Quackenbush, "Rejuvenate and Stimulate: Taking a look at your current-state family history research", Oakville.

Oct. 23 -Dave Naylor, "Why Should You Test Your Autosomal DNA?"-Oakville

DEVEREAUX HOUSE

Open Thursdays 1-6 p.m. at 11494 Trafalgar Road, Georgetown.

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

Archives are open Sundays and Wednesdays from 1 to 4 p.m. at 4415 Mississauga road, Streetsville.



Leslie Clan Reunion at Leslie log cabin in Streetsville on August 12th.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7:15.

Sept. 15 *Andrew Welch*, The role of the Town Crier

Oct. 20 *Jim Leonard*, -interesting historic artifacts from Peel Museum.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sept. 15 *Scott Youngblut*, Finding the HMS Erebus: The Franklin Expedition at the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 7:30 p.m.

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

info@nasagiweyahistoricalociety.com

Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of March, April (Annual Meeting), May, June, July, August (BBQ), September, October, November (Remembrance Day), December (Christmas Potluck).

TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

All events at former Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas Street West, Oakville.

Oct. 1 Family Heritage Fair & Book Sale. 10am-4pm at the schoolhouse.

Oct. 21 Archives Open House. 1:30-3:30pm at the schoolhouse.

<http://www.tths.ca/events.html>

HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

OPEN: Sat. 7-9 p.m. & Sunday 1-4:30 p.m. at Mold-Masters Sportsplex.

TERRA COTTA HALL

Terra Cotta Community Hall rentals: Contact Jen Lusby at 905-702-1056.

Ron Raffan was a dedicated volunteer and supporter of Brampton heritage

Ron Raffan, a long-time Brampton resident and “tireless” volunteer who, for more than two decades, dedicated himself to preserving and promoting this city’s heritage, has died. He was 73.

Raffan’s passion for, and commitment to, heritage was recognized in 2012 with the prestigious Award of Merit from the Ontario Heritage Trust.

He was one of the founding members of the Friends of Historic Bovaird House, created in the early 1990s, and many may remember him for the tours he used to conduct of the museum at the house. He was a regular volunteer, maintained the Friends’ website, and was the treasurer.

Raffan also served as treasurer for the Brampton Historical Society. He joined the group soon after it was formed in 1998. His strong commitment to heritage preservation and promotion played an important role in the BHS establishing a respected role in the community.

He actively volunteered with many other heritage organizations, including the **Esquesing Historical Society**, the Old Ebenezer Pioneer Chapel, the Bootmakers Club of Toronto (Sherlock Holmes Society), and Applewood (the James Shaver Woodsworth House in Etobicoke). He didn’t confine his volunteer efforts to heritage, though. He was also the chair of the board of the Peel Family Education Centre, a role he had held since 2013.

He took on various volunteer roles for the past 30 years. He was a volunteer with Brampton soccer and hockey teams and, following the 2006 death of his wife of 36 years, Gail, he volunteered with Literacy North Halton. “He had always wanted to teach, and this helped him realize that goal,” his daughter Jennifer, told *The Guardian*.

Of volunteering, he once wrote: “I believe that it doesn't matter what you do to volunteer, just do it. Find something that you like, and take the first step and contact the organization, association, or group. People can make a difference. I did it and you can too.”

Jennifer Raffan described her father as a great role model who was encouraging, full of advice and full of love. “The kind of man you could always rely on, who’d help with whatever he could, and who fought vehemently for the causes he believed in,” she said.

Born in Toronto, he was the head of business systems at Prudential Life Insurance before retiring approximately 20 years ago.

Raffan died July 14. He is pre-deceased by his wife, Gail, who died in 2006, and survived by daughter Jennifer, son Geoff, and four grandchildren, Rayne, Kade, Damon and Jonathan.

A funeral service was held July 19th. Internment was at Brampton Cemetery.

-Pam Douglas, *Brampton Guardian*, 22 July 2016



EHS04590

A Grand Gallery

Independent Free Press 5 March 2013

The Helson Gallery officially opened its doors to the public this past weekend and we strongly recommend residents find the time to enjoy this collection of art. ... there is no mistaking the artwork donated by long-time resident Fred Helson is nothing short of astounding. As is the revamped Gallery.

In fact, we're hard-pressed to think of another community the size of Halton Hills (save Kleinburg) that has such an impressive (and expensive) collection of artwork that is available for the public to enjoy.

Some may argue that too often the needs of the arts community in Halton Hills are overshadowed by other groups. But the Helson Gallery is certainly a jewel in the Town's crown. ...

Helson, who also earlier donated \$1 million to the Georgetown Hospital renovation project, is to be lauded for his philanthropy and for making a significant contribution to the betterment of Halton Hills.

The Helson Gallery is an impressive facility which the Town is sure to market in an effort to attract visitors. But whether those visitors eventually come or not, local residents should savour this magnificent collection.

Fred is Georgetown's Citizen of the Year

**By Eamonn Maher
Independent, 12 March 2015**

Renaissance man, successful lawyer, volunteer and philanthropist are just some of the adjectives to describe Georgetown's Citizen of the Year for 2014. Ninety-three-year-old Fred Helson has accomplished

much in his lifetime and a large part of it has been spent in Halton Hills. He resides in the same home that he and his father built in 1959 on Trafalgar Rd. across from The Club at North Halton.

“There are so many people here who are interested in the same things I am and I’m glad I was able to join in with them,” he said. “I’m talking chiefly about the arts, whether it’s musical or physical or painting or photography.”

A self-admitted shutterbug, Helson still maintains a darkroom in his basement, although he says he’s been won over by digital photography. Attendees of local community events would often later receive photos of themselves in the mail from him. “Now he annoys everybody by stopping everyone from eating when we’re having dinner because he wants to get pictures of the whole table,” laughs his wife Rose Anna.

A native of Peterborough, Helson moved with his family as a child to Vancouver, where his father ran a tug-boat service, then back to Ontario where he completed high school before the family bought a dairy farm in Paris and supplied eggs to the Loblaws grocery chain. His tug-boat sailing skills came in handy when serving in World War II in the Royal Canadian Navy, patrolling the north Atlantic hunting enemy submarines.

A graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph with a degree in chemistry and microbiology, Helson was hired in 1946 as a chemist by Chicago-based Baxter Laboratories and worked at their operation in Acton, meeting a girl from Georgetown named Marg who would become his first wife. And although he enjoyed working for Baxter, Helson said he longed to interact with the public, so he obtained his law degree from Osgoode Hall in Toronto, beginning a long and distinguished career that affected the lives of thousands of clients. During his tenure with the law firm now known as Helson Kogon Ashbee Schaljo & Associates, five of his partners or colleagues became judges....

“I spent a lot of time in the courts and I enjoyed that interaction with the public. I was involved in local politics as the town’s lawyer very early in the game. I always liked working with the mayor and councillors. It was a good practice and lots of fun.”

He was an original board member for both the Georgetown Hospital and its fundraising foundation for more than half a century and is the lone surviving founding member out of 15 for the North Halton Golf Club.

In 2011, Helson made a \$1 million donation to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation in order to get a CAT Scanner in memory of Marg, who had to travel to Brampton or Guelph for testing during her illness.

Helson, and Marg who died in 2008, were ardent supporters of the local arts community to organizations such as the Georgetown Little Theatre, Globe Productions, Choral Society, Bach Chorale and many other groups. Helson has been recognized for his contributions with two Arts Alive awards, a key to the Town and a Queen’s Jubilee medal.



Halton Hills Cultural Centre - Here & Now Exhibit, 1985. Bruce Harding and Fred Helson. EHS16749

An avid art collector for much of his life, Helson donated 105 pieces of art to the Town in 2013 that are now on display in the fully renovated Helson Gallery at the Georgetown Library & Cultural Centre. “I just wanted the pictures to have a home because I’ve got a lot of them,” he added. “Georgetown has been so good to me and I always wanted to give something back. I go to the gallery as much as I can. It’s always evolving and we’re still buying things for it.”

On most days now, Helson goes for long drives with Rose Anna, armed with his camera. He scoffs at the suggestion of spending winters in a warmer place, like Florida, referring to his long-time passion for skiing and the outdoors. “We’re going full tilt all the time,” beamed Helson, having lost little of his quick wit. “Every day, we see one of my wife’s family (members) because I enjoy seeing the kids very much. I never had any myself and they’re just a lot of fun. Not only the grandchildren, but their mothers and fathers too.”

Two major art donations given to the Town of Halton Hills

Independent Free Press, 18 June 2014

Two major donations of art have recently been given to the Town of Halton Hills. The first comes from long-time Georgetown residents and arts supporters, John and Gisela Sommer who have donated over 100 prints, paintings and sculptures from their extensive private collection.



John Sommer and Toronto Sculptor Leonhard Oesterle at House Sol in September 1963.
EHS02448

Included are many examples of work by local artists alongside several noted Canadian and international artists. Also donated to the Town of Halton Hills is a selection of 15 works by York Wilson (1907 - 1984).

Gifted through the York Wilson Foundation for the Visual Arts, whose mandate is to encourage public awareness, interest and involvement in the artistic legacy of this renowned Canadian artist, the donation features work from representative periods of the artist's career.

"I'm delighted that the Town of Halton Hills has received these new gifts of art through the generosity of the Sommers Family and the York Wilson Foundation," said Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette. "I look forward to seeing them displayed in the beautiful setting of the Helson Gallery."

Halton Hills Art Curator Judy Daley speaks on the work of Norval-born artist John Wycliffe Lowes Forster (1850-1938) at the Helson Gallery on 14 February 2016. Photo by J.M. Rowe



Former Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller Mourned

By Eamonn Maher
Independent Free Press
1 September 2016

Russ Miller succumbed to cancer after a brief but courageous battle at the age of 84 with his family by his side.

The Limehouse native served as mayor for the municipality from 1983-94 after first being elected to public office as a school board trustee.

Miller was proud of the fact that taxes did not increase during his final three years as mayor and ... earn[ed] Georgetown's Citizen of the Year award in 1994.

Miller also helped oversee the construction and opening of the Civic Centre in 1989...

Miller is survived by his wife Gerry of 64 years, along with children Randy, Laurie, Sherry, Brad (and Trev), grandchildren Rachel (Todd), Reanne, Ryan (Jess), Chad (Amy), Corey, Zak and Abby, as well as great grandchildren Jack and River.

As per his request, there will be no funeral service and cremation has taken place. ...

The Town flew its flags at half staff Thursday in honour of Miller.