



## ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

[www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com](http://www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com)

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*September-October 2020*

### BOSTON CHURCH CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

Boston Presbyterian Church was the first Presbyterian congregation in our area. In 1819, the government began offering free land grants to settlers, many coming from the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland. This southwest part of Esquesing Township was first known as the "Scotch Settlement" and later as the "Scotch Block," as it is still known today.



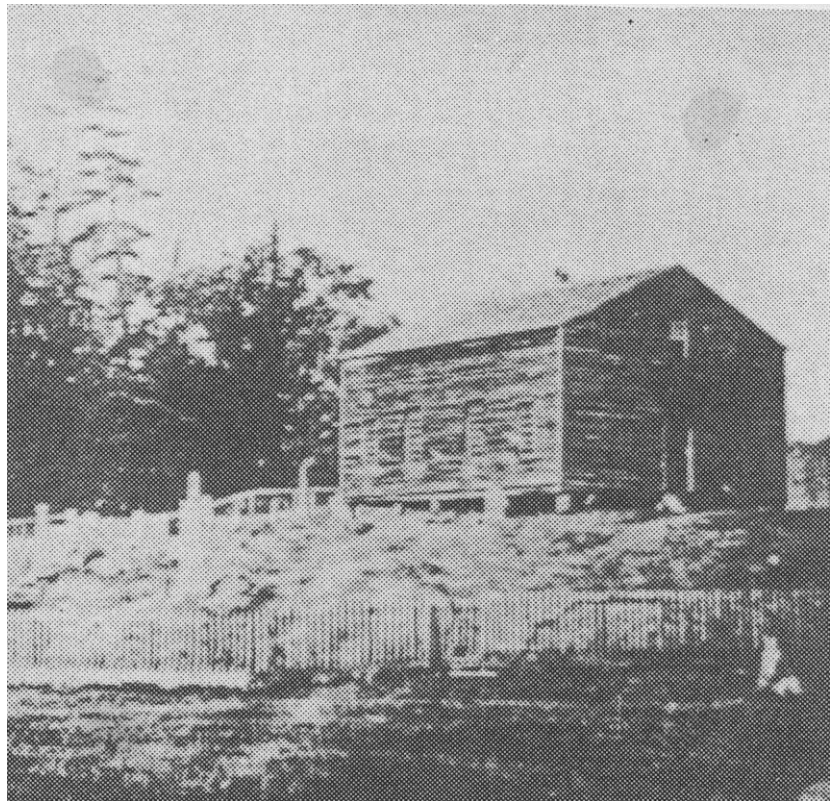
The first service in "Scotch Block," was conducted by Rev. William Jenkins in **June 1820**. He conducted the service on the farm of Andrew Laidlaw



(Lot 6, 4th Concession). A stump served as a pulpit and the people sat on logs. The sermon text was Ezekial 34.25: “And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.”

In 1824 a parcel of land was purchased from Andrew Laidlaw, sufficient in size for a burying ground and a house of worship. In 1825 work began on a meeting house, but it wasn't completely finished until 1835. The first minister Rev. Peter Ferguson was inducted April 11, 1832.

In 1844 Rev. William Rintoul was instrumental in naming the church “Boston Presbyterian” after Rev. Thomas Boston, a theologian from Ettrick, Scotland, from where many of the “Scotch Block” settlers had emigrated.



In 1868 the cornerstone was laid for the present stone church, and their first service was held in January 1879. In 1960 a basement hall was constructed under the sanctuary, and a church parlour and classrooms were added to the rear of the church.

In June 1995, our 175th Anniversary year, Boston was designated a Heritage Site by Heritage Halton Hills.

<https://bostonpresbyterianchurch.ca/about/>



Photographs: Page 1: EHS18306 -July 1986

This page: EHS12707 Original frame church built in 1820.

This photo was probably taken in 1867.

EHS20745 The current church was built in 1868. This photo dates from c. 1900.



## **ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

ALL EHS meetings for 2020 have been cancelled. We will try to re-book our speakers as soon as feasible.

### Your EHS Executive:

Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Steve McNamara	519 856-1242	Treasurer
Karen Hunter	905 877-7363	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
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Consultant

All inquiries can be sent to:

[esquesinghs@gmail.com](mailto:esquesinghs@gmail.com)

### **INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOUR TO BECOME A MEMBER!**

#### **SAUNDERS BAKERY CLOSED**

Many of our readers will have fond memories of a stop at Saunders Bakery in Rockwood. I particularly liked their jam doughnuts! Alas, after trying to find a buyer, they closed their doors for good on 21 August 2020. The bakery operated continuously in Rockwood from 1913.



Mrs. Sykes, holding a tray of cookies, was happy to allow Georgetown Girl Guide Linda Howat to sell her cookies in Sykes Bakery. Sykes Bakery was on Guelph Street. This photo, taken by Peter Jones, appeared in the 9 May 1963 issue of *The Georgetown Herald*.



## **Society Notes**

### **INTERNET CONNECTIONS**

<http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com/> Note the new website address. Send your e-mail to [esquesinghs@gmail.com](mailto:esquesinghs@gmail.com)

### **EHS NEWSLETTER**

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter. 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 currently have 51 members for 2020. Our membership year runs from February. It is time to renew your membership for 2020. The individual membership rate is \$20. The family or institution rate is \$25. The EHS is still very happy to accept personal cheques from our members. Please note that all cheques must be made payable to "Esquesing Historical Society", fully spelled out. Membership fees can be mailed to our post box or payable by cash or cheque to our membership secretary, David Borrett at a public meeting.

### **CANADIANA ON-LINE**

<http://online.canadiana.ca/search>

### **ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO**

[www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

### **EHS ARCHIVES**

The Archives have been under lockdown. However, activity continues on-line. We had a student who needed a work placement that was Covid-safe. Mary Baxter is adding photographs to the Halton Images website from our collection. All of this work can be done on-line. She is adding pictures related to Crewson's Corners, Churchill, Speyside, Mansewood, Scotch Block, Milton Heights, Ashgrove and Acton. Have a browse and see what we have in our Archives. The link is: <http://images.halinet.on.ca/search>

We had a wonderful donation in July from Joan Banks of Ottawa. Her brother Keith Strike (1931-1997) created 12 sketches of barns in Halton Hills and area in 1992. Each

barn includes photographs, a history and sometimes an interview with the farm owner. Quite a gift! See the accompanying story.

### **HERITAGE HALTON HILLS**

Every year the Heritage Foundation of Halton Hills grants Heritage Halton Hills money to support a matching grant for renovations and repairs to designated properties. This year the principal fundraiser for the Foundation, the Mayor's Heritage Golf Tournament was cancelled and so no funding was forthcoming.

Senior Heritage Planner Laura Loney managed to find some money in the budget to allow the programme to continue. Council approved the Heritage Property Grant Program By-law at a July meeting, prompting property owners to consider an application this year. The Heritage Foundation of Halton Hills are pleased that the program can continue in some way this year.

HHH has been able to hire a student for the Autumn to work on a barn inventory of Halton Hills.

### **HALTON-PEEL OGS**

<https://haltonpeel.ogs.on.ca/>

The remaining 2020 meetings will be virtual.

### **DEVEREAUX HOUSE**

Ann Lawlor at [ann@deverauxhouse.ca](mailto:ann@deverauxhouse.ca)

### **HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM**

<http://haltonhillssportsmuseum.blogspot.ca/>  
The Museum is currently closed. The Hall of Fame Gala was cancelled.

### **L.M. MONTGOMERY MUSEUM**

The L.M. Montgomery Museum & Literary Centre, Norval, had a student this summer – Gavin Hughes – thanks to the University of Guelph and history professor Linda Mahood. Gavin started work on cataloguing the collection of the fledgling museum.

### **STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY**

The Leslie Log Cabin at 4415 Mississauga Road is closed until further notice and all meetings for 2020 have been cancelled.

### **BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY**

Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7:15. All meetings are postponed.

### **MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society meets in the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 7:30 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Sept. 17 – Leslie Anderson, *Ancestry.ca*

Oct. 15 -John Duignan, *Milton Treasures*

### **OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

<https://www.oakvillehistory.org/>

All activities are suspended.

### **BURLINGTON HIST. SOCIETY**

This website appears to be compromised.

### **NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY**

[info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com)

All meetings are postponed until further notice.

### **TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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

### **TERRA COTTA HALL**

Terra Cotta Community Hall rentals: Contact Kathy Atkinson at

[terracottaeventbooking@gmail.com](mailto:terracottaeventbooking@gmail.com)

### **DEATH OF KEN GRANT**

Kenneth Charles Grant died peacefully, on Wednesday July 1st, 2020 at the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. Ken, in his 75th year was husband of the late Jo-Anne Grant. He was a regular attendee at EHS monthly meetings and was working on a history of Stewarttown with Ron Burnett. His spot on the church pew at the back of the hall will seem empty.

### **LAND REGISTRY OFFICE UPDATE**

Many of you have heard by now that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has decided to discontinue the land registration counter services at all Land Registry Offices (LROs) effective October 9, 2020.

Ontario Ancestors met with the Ministry on July 15<sup>th</sup>. At this point in time Ontario Ancestors were told that the records currently held in these facilities will remain in the community, and that a plan is being developed in conjunction with Archives of

Ontario for the digitization and long term storage of these records.

Thanks to the work of APOLROD (Association for the Preservation of Ontario Land Registry Office Documents) the land records for Halton were transferred to the Ontario Archives twenty years ago. Halton land records are available at the Service Ontario office in Milton, on microfilm. The original township concession abstracts are also there for personal use. The earliest land records for Esquesing are available on microfilm at the Georgetown Library.

### **COVID HISTORY**

While I'm sure you're sick and tired of reading about COVID, documenting history as it happens is very important. Luckily Halton Hills Public Library took on the task and has many photos available. Search "covid" on Halton Images or Halton Hills newspapers and you'll see their collection to date.

### **TRAVEL IN THE COVID ERA**

*The Economist* magazine recently noted the availability of a package holiday deal to Dubai that includes airfare, hotel and – funeral insurance!

### **LOCAL DIGITAL RESOURCES**

Our Digital World, host of Halton Hills newspapers, Halton Images and Halton News hosts newspapers from across Ontario. You can start searching at:

<https://ourdigitalworld.net/>

### **DIGITAL DOORS OPEN**

Discover Digital Doors Open Ontario through the virtual experiences at

<https://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/en/pages/digital-doors-open>, featuring many of

Ontario's treasured places and the stories behind their doors that draw us together and inspire our strong sense of community – even while we are physically distancing. Virtual experiences for sites on this page include photo tours, virtual tours, videos, searchable collections, and online games and activities.

## BARN HISTORIES

Archivist Mark Rowe was pleased to receive an offer to donate twelve pen and ink sketches of area barns from Joan Banks of Ottawa. They were done by Montreal-born artist Keith Strike (1931-1997) after spending time in Georgetown and area. His subject was the barns that dotted our countryside. His sister Joan Banks found our historical society and offered the works of art. Ms. Banks sent the carefully packaged sketches along with a binder of photographs and interviews with property owners, all compiled in 1992.

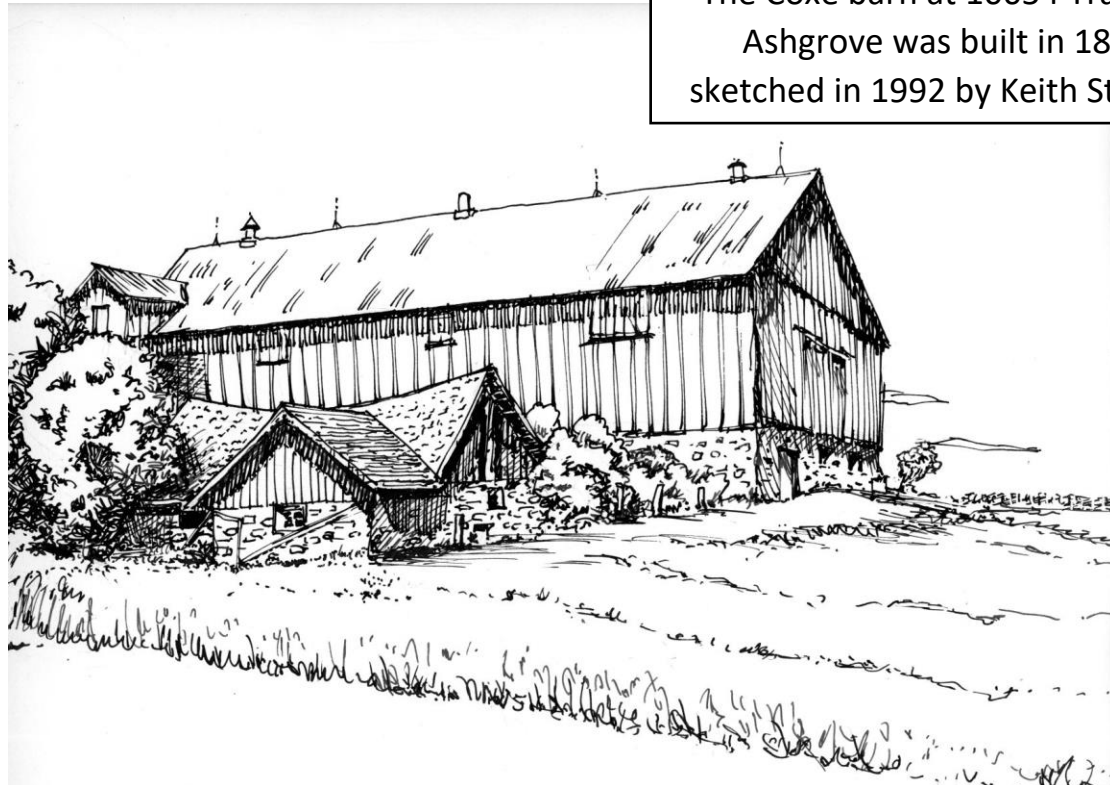
Keith Strike began his artistic career by painting backdrops for stage scenery. He worked for Bell Canada, at Eaton's as a commercial artist and as an art director with Advertising Associates. Keith joined CNR where he worked in advertising and marketing. After retirement he operated his own commercial art business for ten years. He lived in Chateaugay, Quebec giving art classes



Joan Banks and her brother Keith Strike.

EHS25953

The Coxe barn at 10054 Trafalgar Road, Ashgrove was built in 1875. It was sketched in 1992 by Keith Strike. EHS25955



and active in the Arts Club of Montreal. His paintings can be found in many homes and establishments.

KEN GRANT – Late EHS member Ken Grant has made the Society the beneficiary of the extensive photograph collection that he owned, which includes the collection of his mother Elizabeth Grant.

This article appeared in *The Independent Free Press* issue of 18 July 2013.

## **SPOTLIGHT... on friendship**

### **Childhood friends reunite after 54 years**

By TED BROWN

*Staff Writer*

In the 1950s, kids living in the village of Stewart-town were a close-knit group, hanging out together, fishing in the mill pond, dropping by the general store, playing together as kids did back then.

It was the summer of 1955— a new kid arrived in the village, and the locals didn't take long to adopt him into their tight-knit group. Peter Smurthwaite and his family moved in from England, and the new kid with an accent was soon spending time with his new friends Ken Grant, Phil Wilson, Bette Mae Mileham (Stokes), the Barclay sisters Linda (Gillett) and Jacqui (Cameron), Carol McLean (Copeland), as well as the Hunter kids; Mike, Barry and Rick.

“We did a lot of fishing back then,” said Grant. “Pete was quite a fisherman, and we spent a lot of time fishing in the (mill) pond.” The gang of kids forged lifelong friendships, but were to be broken up when Smurthwaite's father decided to move the family to New Zealand in 1959. Pete was 15. “We all promised like hell that we'd keep in touch, writing letters back and forth,” said Grant. “But that didn't last long. Back then, all we had were letters, there was no email or Internet.” In time, the letter writing became more sporadic, and eventually the friends lost touch with their friend in New Zealand.

“During the 1980s, Bette Mae (née Mileham) Stokes decided to track down Pete, and got in touch with an international telephone directory. She managed to get his telephone number in New Zealand. “After that, he and Bette Mae called back and forth a bit,” said Grant. “They also resumed writing letters. When the Internet and email came around, that changed everything. We suddenly were back to keeping in touch.

“In late April this year, I received a call out of the blue from Bette Mae,” said Grant. “She told me Pete was coming to visit us in Stewarttown. I nearly fell off my chair— it'd been 54 years since we had seen each other.” Smurthwaite and his wife Annette arrived May 11 and they had a reunion in Stewarttown, meeting with many of the old friends, touring the area, while reminiscing about things they'd done together, more than half a century before.

“We visited the old mill pond, which isn't there anymore,” joked Grant. “Pete looked at where his house used to be; it's gone too. The road runs right through it now.” They also

“To collect, preserve and publicize the history of Esquesing”



toured the site of the old Stewarttown School (which is also gone) as well as St. John's Anglican Church. "It was amazing," said Grant. "Things came back to us as soon as someone mentioned something. I spent a lot of time just listening to the old stories, and found it interesting how we seemed to remember the good times, but managed to forget the nasty stuff."



Pete and Ken proudly display the results of a day fishing in the mill pond. The pond was behind the Stewarttown dam (in the background) while Black Creek runs behind their house.

"One day back in 1957, Pete and I caught some fish, and my mom took a picture of us in front of the old (mill) dam, right in our back yard," said Grant. "We stood at the same place, and had another photo taken, more than 50 years later. The one tree behind us was a little tiny thing in the first photo, but is now quite a size." At a reception organized by Jacqui (Barclay) Cameron and Carol (McLean) Copeland, the group later

assembled at the St. George pub for an evening of food and good times, before the Smurthwaites resumed their tour of Canada. Grant said Smurthwaite and his wife have two daughters, two grandchildren and another one on the way. "I think they have a pretty good life," said Grant. "Pete is still working— he'll be 70 in October. I get the feeling he enjoys what he's doing." After their reunion, Grant said the connections will be that much stronger when the emails are exchanged in the future. "It was a good time, and I'm sure there aren't too many people who can reconnect with an old gang like that, especially 54 years later," said Grant. "I know I'll never forget that weekend. It was great."

Stewarttown School EHS11688





# 'It's not just about the books': Halton Hills chief librarian retires

Today's library should be "busy" not quiet, says retiring chief librarian

Jan 29, 2020 by [Bryan Myers](#) *Independent Free Press*



Geoffrey Cannon, chief librarian of the Halton Hills Public Library, will retire in June. –

Photograph by: Bryan Myers/Torstar

Geoffrey Cannon, the Halton Hills Public Library's chief librarian, will retire in June.

Having served over 30 years as a professional librarian at the library, the last three as chief librarian, Cannon's career at the HHPL started as a student page. "I was 15 and my father brought me the Herald or the Independent and said, 'they're looking for people to work at the library, you're going to work there,'" Cannon said. So he submitted his application.

"I liked working at the library, the people were great and I liked to read," he said, adding he doesn't consider himself a voracious reader. During his hiring interview, Cannon said he remembers being asked why he wanted to work at the library. His answer: "I wanted to buy a stereo."

But by the time Cannon had finished his undergrad, he enjoyed the work enough to pursue a master's degree in Library Science. "When I graduated, they were expanding here, and I got hired on as a reference librarian," he said. "I had the privilege to work under Walter Lewis, he was in charge of lots of the information technology side of things at HHPL."

Under Lewis, Cannon said he was introduced to a range of digital possibilities. "We started digitizing the local history collections and we were doing all these cool things, and then a light bulb went on," Cannon said. "The books are going to be here, but it's not just about the books."

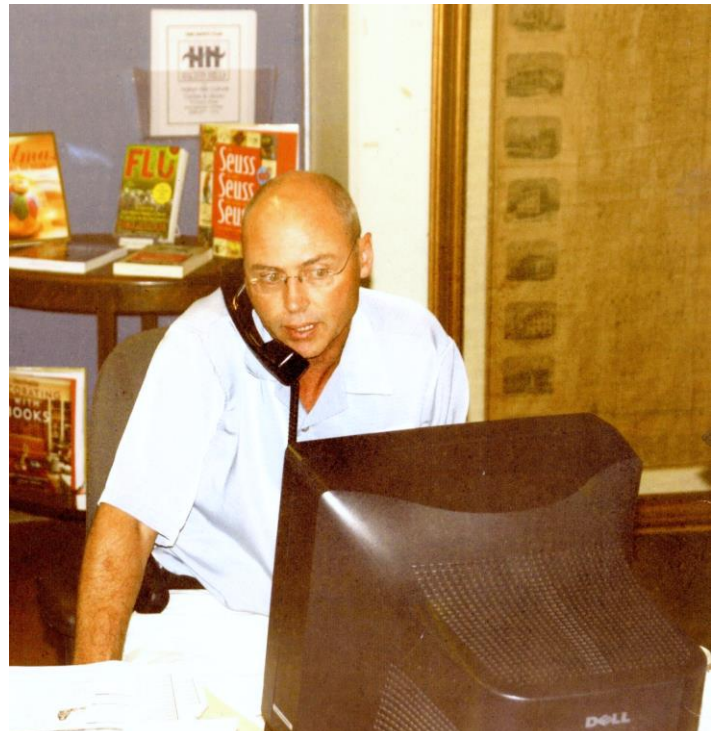
That mindset has carried the Halton Hills Public Library to where it is today. "We used to talk about how much our circulation increased," Cannon said. "Now I look more at how many people are coming in our doors."

Cannon said there are residents who don't see the value in libraries, but that the Halton Hills town council saw the importance. "I've been thinking more about the library as social infrastructure," Cannon said. "We need to continue to advocate for that. You may not use us because you can afford Netflix and Amazon but there are those, even in our community, that can't."

But the library's efforts go beyond the physical locations. "It's not just about these walls, but a lot of us are thinking about how we take this library out into the community," Cannon said. The library does a variety of outreach from virtual reality demonstrations to lending tablets and Wi-Fi hotspots. "I love breaking the stereotypes that people have of their library from when they grew up," Cannon said. "The library can be a place of reflection, but I don't want it to be a quiet place. I want it to be busy."

In retirement, Cannon said he plans to continue volunteering in the community, cooking, traveling, and relaxing with his partner Sharon and their dogs.

*The new chief librarian is Melanie Southern.*



Geoff specializing in the technology of 1985!

EHS25932