www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

THE BEGINNINGS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

…   In 1849, the Municipal Corporations Act was passed under Robert Baldwin by the legislature of the United Canadas.   The geographical township of Esquesing could now become the Corporation of the Township of Esquesing and its elected representatives could govern the people of Esquesing.

An appropriate town hall would be required.   To that purpose, a general meeting of ratepayers was called for 10 March 1849.   Stewarttown was the most accessible village in the township, considering the majority of the traffic used Trafalgar Road, and was the logical choice. Georgetown did not see it that way.   The Township Hall should be located in their village!   The result was a split vote leaving Esquesing with no hall of their own.

When the first Reeve of Esquesing, John McNaughton called the Council of the Corporation of Esquesing to order on 21 January 1850, it was a McKenzie's Inn at Stewarttown.

However, some Stewarttown ratepayers were convinced that Georgetown would soon see the error of its ways.   So several entrepreneurs convinced David Cross, tanner, to erect a fine hall in 1849.   His plans were to rent it to the Corporation and anyone else, until they decided to purchase it.

The *Hamilton Spectator* first mentioned the new township hall on 2 March 1850 as a polling station for the election.   The Esquesing Agricultural Society Show was held in the hall in October 1850.   In December, the editor of the *Spectator,* Robert Reid Smiley visited the village and said, "Stewarttown contains the finest public hall which we have

TOWN HALL, STEWARTTOWN.

Esquesing Township Hall was built in 1849.   This sketch is from the 1858 Tremaine Map of Halton County, which hangs in the Georgetown Library. EHS00113

1849 poster calling a Township Meeting. EHS13602

yet seen in an inland village.   It is a large substantial brick building quite equal to the hall in Hamilton and Dundas, and we do not desire any better proof of the enterprise of the inhabitants than this building affords."

This substantial two and one-half storey brick hall had two stores and living quarters on the ground floor and a public hall upstairs.   A large veranda and outdoor staircase provided access to the second floor.   During the 1851 Fall Show, W.G. Stewart, a local school teacher, remarked that, "…It was quite exhilarating to see such an array of ladies gracing the gallery in front of the town hall…"

The hall served Stewarttown for every important event.   It was a polling station for the annual municipal elections, as well as provincial and Dominion elections. The Fall Fair used the hall, various groups had functions here, there were country-style dances and white-gloved balls.   It was truly the Town Hall of Esquesing in all but ownership.   Monthly meetings were still held up the road at McKenzie's Inn.

Georgetown never felt it was getting an honest share of the Township's attention, so they decided to apply for municipal incorporation as a village. In 1864, they received the vote of support, in spite of opposition from a group headed by Charles Williams of Glen Williams.   Acton decided to follow in 1874, and was also incorporated as a village.

Having divested itself of the larger villages, Council turned its attention to a Township office and Council Chamber.   The clerk, Richard Tracy, followed by his son John Tracy had always worked from their homes.

Finally Council decided to rent an office and chambers from John Tracy across from the Township Hall. It was a frame one and one-half storey building on the north-west

Esquesing Township Office 1879-1924   EHS10328

EHS20859

corner of Main and John Streets (now Stewarttown Road and Mill Pond Drive). Council first met there on 2 October 1879. A large sign above the door and store-front windows proclaimed it as Esquesing Council Chambers. Inside was the clerk's office and a large vault for the Township's papers. Esquesing had its first official office, rented premises though they were.

A public meeting was called in the Township Hall on 27 November 1924 to consider purchasing the brick hall, 75 years after its erection for just such a purpose. This time, the motion passed. Esquesing Township now owned the building that

many people believed they had owned from the beginning. The village store continued to operate in the north end of the hall, while Council Chambers and clerk's office was set up next door in what had been a harness shop.

About 1926, Tracy sold the former Council Chambers, which were moved to the site of McKenzie's, later Hill's Hotel, which had burned down in 1909. The Chambers now sit on the site of many early township meetings, as a residence and auto shop -28 Stewarttown Road.

Esquesing Township Hall EHS00465

Esquesing Community Hall in 1948.   EHS00469

Community dances were the last events held on the upper floor in the 1930s. The upper floor was eventually condemned. After World War II, using donations and government grants, the upper floor was removed and the ground floor enlarged. It was reopened as Stewarttown Memorial Hall in 1948, being managed by a Board.

As the post-war boom hit Georgetown in the mid-1950s, Esquesing also reaped the benefits.   More and more suburban homes were dotting the rural landscape. Therefore Council felt it was time to build facilities to reflect the growing needs of its growing community.   In March 1962, Esquesing Council purchased five acres from Charles Greig for $7 000 on the Seventh Line, north of the Check Line (Maple Avenue).   Wilfred Bird was the

The basement of the new Township Office was being laid out in this Sept. 1962 photo. EHS07884

New Township Offices under construction, Feb. 1963. EHS06606

reeve when Esquesing decided to build a Township Hall to match its needs.   The contract to build the 58 foot, 3 inch by 39 footbuilding was awarded to J.B. Mackenzie of Georgetownfor $71,450! After 114 years of incorporation, the Township of Esquesing moved into their new offices on Trafalgar Road in August 1963.

Ironically, it was this same prosperous growth that allowed Esquesing to build its showpiece hall, that caused the death of the Corporation.   The much hailed answer to the problems of the day was regional government. Therefore on 1st January 1974 the township of Esquesing changed political masters a third time.

Esquesing had opened in 1819 under the authority of Gore District Council. In 1850 they achieved local government and finally a revised form of local government, namely the Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills….

-"Stewarttown Used to be the Centre of Things," John Mark Rowe, *Independent*, 19 April 1989.

K.C. Lindsay, Esquesing Township Clerk, moving to new township offices, in August 1963. EHS13212

The completed Esquesing Township Office, August 1963   EHS14908

Esquesing Township Council sworn in last week were (L to R) SEATED: Deputy Reeve Tom Hill, Reeve George Currie, Councillor Wilfred Leslie and Councillor Kenneth Marshall; STANDING: Deputy Clerk Delmar French, Councillor Russell Miller and Clerk K.C. Lindsay. This photo appeared in the 16 January 1969 issue of the Georgetown Herald on page 2. Tom Hill became the 1st Mayor of Halton Hills and Russ Miller became the 3rd Mayor of Halton Hills.   EHS06174

HALTON HILLS: The Sum of it's Parts will be the topic of our January 10th meeting. NOTE: Meeting will begin at the Cultural Centre at 6 p.m., followed by the talk at 7:30 in the John Elliott Theatre. Although tickets are required, there is no cost to attend. Tickets have been put aside for members of the Esquesing Historical Society.

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2023

Wed. 10 Jan.	**HALTON HILLS: THE SUM OF IT'S PARTS** Although the Town of Halton Hills was formed 50 years ago, it was a marriage of disparate communities. Historian Mark Rowe will examine the several communities throughout the new municipality and how they responded to the growth and challenges of regional government. **50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF HALTON HILLS** - The EHS meeting will be preceded by a reception and words from the Mayor from 6 to 7:15 at the Cultural Centre. All are invited to this free event, but TICKETS (free) are required for the talk. ***John Elliott Theatre*, 8 Church Street, Georgetown, ON 7:30 p.m.**
Wed. 14 Feb.	**HERITAGE HALTON HILLS** Prompted by Provincial legislation, Heritage Halton Hills has had a busy year writing reports and suggesting designations to the Halton Hills Town Council. HHH members Ray Denny and Mark Rowe will review the several new designated properties. ***Knox Presbyterian Church*, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00**
Wed. 12 March	**CONFUSING LOCAL NAMES** Have you been to Gamble's Corners, McCullough's Corner or Dublin? Local names, past and present, will be explored by the EHS. ***Knox Presbyterian Church*, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00**
Wed. 10 April	**POSTAL HISTORY OF ESQUESING** Nathan Hillier will draw on his collection and the EHS Archives to share the postal history of Esquesing township. ***Knox Presbyterian Church*, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00**
Wed. 08 May	**OUR HOUSE AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CALLED IT HOME** Pam Dickinson has compiled a detailed history of her house from the Kennedy family to the Dickinsons. She will share anecdotes from her book about the research and sleuthing involved and about the families themselves! ***Knox Presbyterian Church*, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00**

INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOUR TO BECOME A MEMBER!

- All Meetings are FREE to attend -

MEETING UPDATES: Visit http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

INQUIRES: esquesinghs@gmail.com

Society Notes

EHS EXECUTIVE

Stephen Blake	President
Steve McNamara	Treasurer
Karen Hunter	Secretary
J. Mark Rowe	Archivist
David Borrett	Membership
Ray Denny	Publications
Charles Veale	

Send all inquiries to: esquesinghs@gmail.com
EHS website:
http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter. 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 79 paid 2023 members. Our membership year runs from February. The individual membership rate is $20. The family or institution rate is $25. Payment can be made via Interac transfer to
EHS.etransfer@gmail.com
The EHS will accept personal cheques from our members. Please note that all cheques must be made payable to "Esquesing Historical Society", fully spelled out. Cheques can be mailed to our post box, dropped off at the home of any executive member or at one of our meetings. Exact change can be accepted at meetings.

CANADIANA ON-LINE
http://online.canadiana.ca/search

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO
www.archives.gov.on.ca

EHS ARCHIVES

Dave and Dale Cox recently donated a number of postcards to the Archives. While half were images we already had, the reverse had been used as a postcard and contained interesting information, making them a valuable addition to the Archives.
The large format scanner in the library has proven very useful.
A detailed listing of our archives is available at
https://www.archeion.ca/esquesing-historical-society

EHS HISTORY PRIZE

The executive recently confirmed the continuation of the EHS History prize of $200 to graduating students at our three High Schools.

HERITAGE ORGANIZATION GRANT

The EHS has been awarded $739.00 this year through the Ontario Heritage Organization Grant. We apply each year, detailing what the Society has done over the previous year. A full financial report will be presented at the February AGM.

EHS ON-LINE!

Besides our long-standing website, at
http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com
managed by Ray Denny your Society is now on Facebook. Search for the Society and follow us. Our finances are also automated with money transfers now available at EHS.etransfer@gmail.com. Members can send their renewals (due in February) electronically!

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/

HERITAGE HALTON HILLS

The required notice period has passed and the following properties are now designated: 4 Stewarttown Rd., Harrison-Brown house; 533 Main St., Glen Williams, former St. Johns United Church; 514 Main St., Glen Williams, Williams-Beaumont house; 517 Main St., Glen Williams, Williams-Wheeler store; 9920 Regional Rd 25, Halton Hills, *Towercliffe*, Bate-Hampshire house and 26 Guelph St., Georgetown, H.T. Arnold Glove Factory (Carpet Barn).
Council has approved the designation of the following properties, pending the notice period: 14 Tweedle Street, Glen Williams; 12 & 16 Adamson Street South, Norval – St. Paul's Anglican Church and

Parish Hall; 129 Main Street South, Georgetown and 55 Mill Street East, Acton – *Sunderland Villa*.

HALTON HERITAGE SERVICES
To book a research time with Heritage Services at Kelso, please get in touch at
https://www.halton.ca/The-Region

HALTON-PEEL OGS
https://haltonpeel.ogs.on.ca/

LIMEHOUSE MEMORIAL HALL
Congratulations to the Hall Board elected in November: Ron Kirkwood – President; Catherine Hannah, Irene Westerveld, Homer Vandenberg, Caleb Vandenberg, Iain Houston, Jill Johnson, Leslie Hutchison and Susan Cox.

HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM
The Sports Hall of Fame are looking for nominations for the June induction ceremony. Nominate a worthy sportsman or woman with connections to Halton Hills. Forms are on the Blogspot.
http://haltonhillssportsmuseum.blogspot.ca/

L.M. MONTGOMERY MUSEUM
The L.M. Montgomery Museum website is
https://lmmontgomerynorval.com/

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY
The Leslie Log Cabin at 4415 Mississauga Road is open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY
Meetings are at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m. $5 fee for non-members.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street, Milton.

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
https://www.oakvillehistory.org/speakers-nights.html
Apr. 22 -*Mark Rector*: OH CANADA! Our Home and Inventive Land! at 7:30, St. John's United Church.

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY
info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com

TRAFALGAR HIST. SOCIETY
http://tths.ca/

TOWN MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY
On January 10, 2024, at 6 p.m., the Town will host a public reception in the Cultural Centre located at 9 Church Street. The event will feature remarks from Mayor Ann Lawlor, entertainment, light refreshments, and special props for photo opportunities. Town Council members will be in attendance.

At 7:30 p.m., local historian Mark Rowe, Archivist with the Esquesing Historical Society will give a presentation in the John Elliot Theatre. Mark will share a brief history of this land and its European settlement that will culminate in an overview of the constituent parts of Halton Hills during its first 50 years. This free, ticketed presentation is part of the Halton Hills Library Lecture Series. EHS members need tickets, available through the John Elliott Theatre Box Office.

LOCAL HISTORY KITS
The Halton Hills Public Library is launching new Local History Kits. The kits provide tools and resources for historical research in Halton Hills. They are available for all ages and for all types of historical research. The kits include resource guides based on school curriculums and common areas of interest, and instructions on searching our online local history resources. They can be signed out starting in January for six-week periods.

DOROTHY DUNCAN'S PASSING
The Ontario Historical Society paid tribute to Dorothy Duncan (1927-2023) in their December *Bulletin*. She was a long-time executive director, with over 50 years association with the OHS.

WINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Wingham and Area Historical Society became affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society in November. The EHS is an affiliate of the OHS.

A BANNER YEAR FOR HERITAGE!

Prompted by Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022, Heritage Halton Hills has been working diligently to protect heritage properties that are on the Heritage Register. The Register is to be abolished, removing demolition protection for all older buildings that have not been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. A selection of properties follows.

St. John's Anglican Church, 10966 Trafalgar Road, Stewarttown.

This Parish was established in 1834, but the building dates from 1840, as a Wesleyan Methodist Church, later taken over by the Anglican parish.

EHS00474

Towercliffe, 9899 Regional Road #25, Scotch Block.

Towercliffe House with the family of builder Joseph Edwin Whiting Bate. Bate moved to the area in 1886, operated a stone quarry at Lot 11, Con. 2, and built this home for his family in 1896.
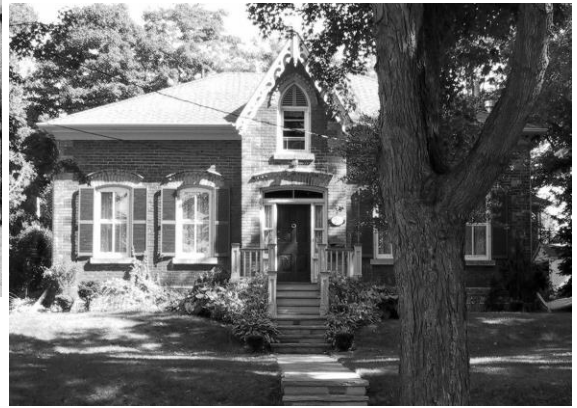
EHS 10337

Williams – Wheeler General Store
517 Main Street, Glen Williams

Glen Williams Postmaster Charles Williams built this general store and post office in 1856, four years after the post office opened. Williams always leased the store with the Wheeler family being the tenant who bought the place and operated it until 1971.

EHS00079

George C. Kennedy House, 20 Queen Street, Georgetown.   The residence was built circa 1855 by George Couse Kennedy, son of George and Harriet Kennedy.   George C. Kennedy was owner of the village foundry. EHS15031

Limehouse Presbyterian Church, 12418 Sixth Line, Limehouse.
        The church was constructed by Myles McDonald, the local tavern keeper and carpenter in the village. In October 1861, the church was completed and opened debt-free.

EHS10834