

NEWSLETTER



The Speed was used for many recreational activities including canoeing, skating and curling.

Speed River both in natural and human terms.

River in History

Guelph was chosen in January 1827 as a town site. Matthew Prior described the stream that ran through Guelph and would be called the Speed as 150 feet wide, shallow and rapid. The water was sufficient for any mechanical operation but unnavigable. The stream was free from swamp and there was an abundance of trout. The Eramosa, a branch of the Speed, was slower and therefore was not as good for mills.

River as Economic Engine

The Speed was the source of power for many early Guelph industries.

Mills: There were 17 valuable mill sites along the Speed and the river was sufficient to power all of these mills. The first mill in Guelph was the Canada Company-Allan's Mill. Other mills included: Red Mill (Waterloo Avenue), Speedvale Mill, Goldie Mill, and the Phoenix Mill (Waterloo Avenue).

Breweries: The quality of the water was also good for breweries. Fresh spring water and hops grown in the area contributed to the quality of Guelph beer. The breweries included Holliday Brewing (Essex Street) and the Silvercreek-Sleeman Brewery (Waterloo Avenue). In 1856, Holliday Brewing was known for the quality of its beer and Sleeman for its cheaper beer.

Homes along the Speed River

Many of Guelph's majestic homes are situated along the Speed River. The Priory was the

At the April meeting, Susan Ratcliffe presented an engaging and inspiring lecture and slide presentation to a packed hall at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The lecture entitled, "The Mighty Speed: The Lifeblood of Guelph" traced the history of

first house in Guelph and it was the home of John Galt. Along this section of the Speed, there is also Sunnyside, known as the first gauge of rising waters in a flood — the levels were the wall, the garden and the steps. In 1929 the water level reached



The birthplace of Laura Lemon

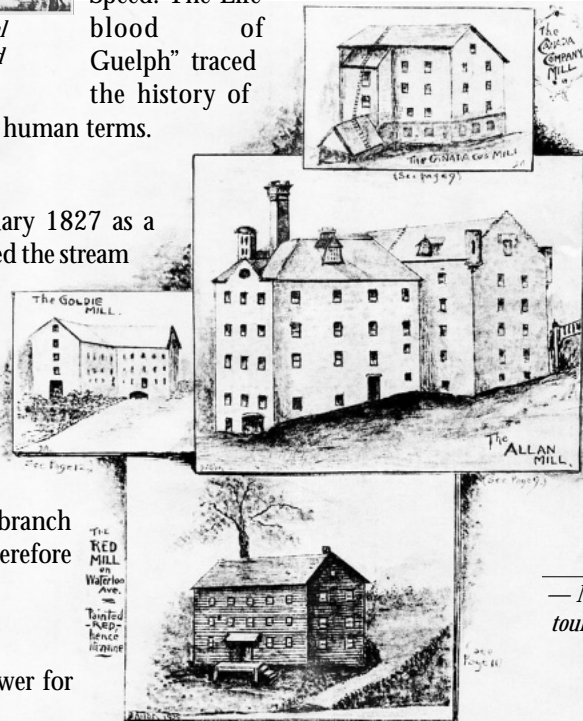
the steps of Sunnyside. Other historic homes along the river include Riverslea on the Homewood grounds and Manor Park, once the home of Arthur Wells.

Ms. Ratcliffe's lecture demonstrated the important place of the Speed in our City's history and the changes to the river over time. Today, it is hard to imagine islands in the middle of Speed, or that the Silver Creek once had sufficient volume to power the Red Mill. Ms. Ratcliffe, however, showed slides in which the river has reclaimed its natural boundaries.

Ms. Ratcliffe's lecture was an exploration of our relationship with the Speed, whether it is personal, historical, economic, or recreational, and inspired one to stop to contemplate the river anew.

— Ms. Ratcliffe is a long-time guide of the Historical Walking tours, a member of Heritage Guelph, President of the Guelph-Wellington Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, and Archivist to the Guelph Historical Society.

Photos courtesy of the Guelph Historical Society Archives



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Verne McIlwraith Essay Contest Winners

- First Prize: Greg Oakes, *The Muckraker of Bert Burns the Black Sox*
- Second Prize: Bonnie Durntall, *Hello. This is your operator. Who do you wish to speak to?: The History of Ma Bell in Guelph 1879 to 1930.*
- Third Prize: Brian Derbyshire, *Frank Schofield in Guelph, 1922-1955*
- Honourable Mention: Naman Arora, *G.U.E.L.P.H.: As I See It*

Thank you!!

The Board of the Guelph Historical Society would like to thank Lyndon Kannenberg, Treasurer and Pat Bowley, Membership Chair for their years of service and their valuable contribution to the Society.

The Board would like to welcome John Parkyn as the new Membership Chair and Joe Jany, as Treasurer.

TICKETS ARE SELLING QUICKLY
GHS ANNUAL BUS TRIP: MAYHEM-MYSTERY-MURDER

LUCAN: HOME OF THE INFAMOUS BLACK DONNELLYS

DATE: MAY 9, 2006

**BUS LEAVES AT 8:30 A.M. FROM THE STONE RD. MALL,
ARRIVING BACK AT 4:30 P.M.**

LUNCH AT NELLIE'S BISTRO IN LUCAN

Itinerary: In the morning we will visit the Lucan Heritage Museum, which includes a tour of a replica of the log cabin homestead of the Donnelly family and a tour of the route that the Vigilance Committee took on the night of the Donnelly Massacre, February 1880. (Coffee & muffins will be served at the Lucan Museum.)

In the afternoon, we will join Rob Salt at his museum located on the original land settled by the Donnellys. This tour starts with an oral presentation by Rob Salt beginning with the 1842 arrival of the Donnellys.

Ticket price for members: \$60.00
Ticket price for non-members: \$65.00

FINAL DAY FOR RESERVATIONS: MAY 1, 2006

For more information, please contact Deb Nash-Chambers at 767-9895. Reservations and cheques can be mailed to Deb at: 290 Farley Dr., Guelph, ON N1L 1N6



GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS!

Ross Irwin, a member of the Guelph Historical Society, will be inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame in Milton. Mr. Irwin is well-known as a local historian and researcher. He has worked as an extension specialist at the School of Engineering and the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph for 36 years. Among his many achievements, Mr. Irwin wrote the 1957 *Drainage Guide for Ontario*, that has become the standard. The ceremony takes place on June 11 in the Gambrel Barn at the Hall of Fame. For more information on the induction of Mr. Irwin or the Agricultural Hall of Fame, please see the website: www.oahf.on.ca

GHS PLAQUE UNVEILING

On the morning of Saturday, May 27, 2006 the Guelph Historical Society will join with the Guelph General Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association in unveiling a plaque at the Delhi Street façade of the Guelph General Hospital. The GHS and GGH nursing alumnae have worked together on the text and design of the plaque which will feature three paragraphs of the school's history, the nurses' pin and the GHS logo. After the unveiling Elysia DeLaurentis will be speaking at the nursing alumnae association's banquet about the Guelph Historical Society, who we are, our role and history. For further details, contact Elysia: 846-8280.

MYSTERY SOLVED



In the February issue of the Newsletter, we published a photo held at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. The photograph was taken by Guelph photographer

Williard Marshall.

Two members have kindly responded to our request for help. It is agreed that the centre figure is James Webster. Mrs. Mooney wrote that James Webster came to Fergus with Adam Fergusson and he later founded Arthur. He married Margaret Wilson and they had six sons and six daughters.

Many thanks to Eileen Hammill and Shirley Mooney.

URGENT! GHS SECRETARY NEEDED...

The GHS requires a Secretary to fill this position on the Board. There are six Board meetings a year. Responsibilities include taking and electronically distributing the Minutes. The first Board meeting is in September 2006.

For more information, please contact Elysia DeLaurentis
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