

October
2011

GUELPH

historical society



The Missing Link in Presbyterian Guelph



by Ann Guthrie

At the April lecture, Donna Speers presented the lecture: *"The Missing Link in Presbyterian Guelph: The United Presbyterian Church, 1846-1883"*. The 'missing link' that brought to light a piece of Guelph's history was the Minute Book of the United Presbyterian Church. After 165 years, the book was returned found to Guelph.

The story begins in 2005 when Mrs. Speers, the archivist at Knox Presbyterian Church, received a letter from Wilma Friend in Burlington who had the Minute Book of the United Presbyterian Church. In 2007, Wilma, true to her word, returned the book to Guelph. The Minute Book was purchased at a garage sale and kept in the possession of Wilma's friend Earl and Marilyn Tattie for over 20 years.

The history of the United Presbyterian Church began with a schism: church elders John Inglis, Charles Mickle and Thomas Sandilands left the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church after a disagreement about the "proper" type of people that Reverend James Smith was bringing before Session to be accepted as members of the church. Reverend Smith worked diligently to increase the size of the coregation and to ake it self-supporting. He travelled the countryside encouraging people to join the church. Reverend Smith would submit names to Session for its approval. The Session, however, would not consider anyone for membership in the congregation if he or she were known to live "in habits of immorality" or neglected the ordinances of the church. In July of 1834, Reverend Smith presented a list of 12 names to be added to the church roll. All were acceptable, except Henry Fields. He was questioned by Session, repented and promised to amend his ways and Session agreed to allow Reverend Smith to give Fields a communion token. However, Fields was the final straw for Inglis, Mickle and Sandilands, who left the church.

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HISTORY

2011-2012
Schedule



October 4, 2011

Symbolism and Design in the Cemetery -- Then and Now

Speaker: Franceska Brennan

Ceska is the Cemetery Counselor and Memorialist at Woodlawn Memorial Park. She was one of the organizers and tour guides of the popular Spirit Walks, a 10 year on-site theatre / history project held in Woodlawn, and she is the creator of the events held in the cemetery throughout the year. Ceska is a writer, artist, celebrant and officiant.

November 1, 2011: Remembrance Lecture

"My Great Uncle and the Great War"

Speaker: Ken Irvine

Ken Irvine, Education and Events Programmer at Guelph Civic Museums, has an extensive knowledge of the "Great War" (WW1) through his many years of organizing and leading activities and education programs at McCrae House. In 2007, ken accompanied a group of Guelph school-children to Vimy Ridge for the re-dedication ceremony attended by the Prime Minister and Her Majesty the Queen.

December 6, 2011:

"Towers of Time"

Speaker: Marc Boileau

Dr. Boileau's book, Towers of Time: Ontario (Looking Back Press), provides an architectural tour of clock towers across Ontario since 1857. Marc Boileau is a biologist in the Department of Molecular & Cellular Biology at the University of Guelph and an expert on the genetics of arctic invertebrate populations. He is also a software engineer, entrepreneur and history enthusiast.

February 7, 2012: University of Guelph Lecture

Speaker: Graeme Morton

Dr. Morton is the Chair of the Scottish Studies Foundation at the University of Guelph and is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He is a published author and an entertaining lecturer on all things Scottish. Dr. Morton delivered the annual GHS Kirking address in 2011.

March 6, 2012

"Kingsmill House"

Speaker: Frank Valeriote (if the House is not sitting)

Frank Valeriote, Member of Parliament for Guelph, is also an enthusiastic supporter of local architectural heritage, evidenced by his careful and passionate stewardship of his own home, "Woodycrest", the home of Admiral Sir Charles Edmund Kingsmill.

April 3, 2012

Guelph's Underground Streams

Speaker: Jeremy Shute

Hidden beneath the streets and hilly terrain of Guelph are a network of underground streams, and Jeremy Shute has mapped them all using historical and engineering sources. Shute is a community engagement specialist with AECOM, holds an M.A. (Geography) is owner of Cardinal Maps.



BELOW: The Third annual John Galt Day Kirking Ceremony was hosted at Norfolk Street United Church in August 2011.



GHS board

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Betty Lou Clark
Email: blouclark@rlproyalcity.com

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Email: libbyw@wcm.on.ca

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NEWSLETTER: Leanne Piper
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SCHOLARSHIPS: Libby Walker
Email: libbyw@wcm.on.ca

ARCHIVES: Ken Russell
Email: fadedgenes@gmail.com

PUBLICITY: Averil Jany
Email: averiljany@sympatico.ca



The Missing Link in Presbyterian Guelph continued....

The Historical Atlas of Wellington County (1906) described the church as a rough-cast building located on the corner of Dublin and Cambridge streets. A map published in 1847 shows the church on lot 582. The Minute Book describes various changes to the property: approval to erect a suitable stable (1871), proposal to acquire a lock for the gate (1876), a motion to petition the Town Council for the laying of a sidewalk from Paisley to the Church (1887). These small details in the Minute Book help to reconstruct an image of the building.

Robert Torrance was the minister of the United Presbyterian Church. He was born in Markethill, County of Armagh in Ireland. In 1839, Torrance enrolled in the Royal Academic Institution in Belfast. After graduation, he began his theological studies in the United Secession Church in Glasgow. In 1845, he expressed his interest in missionary work in Canada. He received and declined three "calls" from congregations and then accepted a "call" from a congregation in Guelph, named the First Secession Church. The name was changed to the United Presbyterian Church after the union of the Secession Church and the Relief Churches of Scotland. The Minute Book states that Torrance was placed on November 11, 1846.

The Minute Book also provides other details on the operations of the Church. It is an invaluable resource for the study of early church history in Guelph. Mrs. Speers' lecture offered great insight into a relatively unknown part of Guelph's history.



Canada Company Lot 582 was located at the corner of Dublin and Cambridge streets.

GHS publications

ANNOUNCING...

The 50th Anniversary Special Edition of *Historic Guelph* will be available for circulation to Guelph Historical Society members later this fall! This special anniversary issue will feature a retrospective of fifty years of the Guelph Historical Society.

The 50th Anniversary Special publication **ABOUT GUELPH: ITS EARLY YEARS AND LATER** (originally published by David Allan in 1936) will be ready for sale by Christmas 2011 for gift-giving. Stay tuned for ordering details!

The GHS Newsletter is available online in colour at guelphhistoricalsociety.ca.

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically, send an email to us at inquiries@guelphhistoricalsociety.ca.

GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WEBSITE: guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

EMAIL: inquiries@guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

MAILING ADDRESS:

Guelph Historical Society

100 Crimea Street, Unit A102

Guelph, Ontario

N1H 2Y6