

The Grand Dispatch



A brief social history of Port Maitland Ontario, and the surrounding area
Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association (PMHA) Price \$2.00 - Free to PMHA members

"Lower Grand River Land Trust and Ruthven's Approach to Conservation"

Ruthven Park National Historic Site

By Betsy Smith

Your first visit to Ruthven Park National Historic Site is an eye-opener. Why is there an aluminum door on the entrance to the vestibule of the 1840s east service wing, an aluminum garage door on the 1860s Carriage Way; what about the asphalt shingles on the mansion, or the turquoise wallpaper in the kitchen or the cream coloured wall to wall carpeting in the dining room and small parlour of the 1845 mansion? What gives?



The formal double drawing room at Ruthven as it was left by the Thompson family and now being cared for using preventative conservation principles. Photo by Bob Chambers, Burlington

Ruthven Park National Historic Site is a relatively new site in terms of it being open to the public. It was the family home of the Thompson family from the 1840s until 1993 when the last member of the family died. As a national historic site (1995), The Land Trust has a responsibility to present the unique resources of the property to the public, as well as protecting them for future generations. With the diversity of the 1,500 acres consisting of natural and cultural landscapes this was a huge challenge.



Photo by Wm. A. Warnick

After a great deal of consideration it was decided that the cultural landscape (buildings and associated grounds) would be presented (as much as possible) as the Thompsons had left it. With the five generations of the Thompsons, and the changes in their livelihood from politicians, to actors, to businessmen, and the use of the property from a self-sufficient farm to a summer retreat, many changes occurred over time, the last being the 1960s

What's in the Dispatch?

Ruthven Park National Historic Site	by Betsy Smith	pg -1
Brock's Speech to the Militia	by Ken Leland	pg -4
We came clean to the Coal Docks!	by Len Wheeler	pg - 8
Check our out Web-page	by Bill Warnick	pg -9
When and Why was Port Maitland Named by	Bill Warnick	pg - 9
Lake Erie takes yet another great Ship	by Bill Warnick	pg - 9
Another Journey to Port Maitland	by Sylvia Weaver	pg - 11
PMHA call to the Annual Meeting		pg - 12

– 1970s when Drew Thompson (5th generation) lived in the mansion. Today, the mansion exhibits the wear and tear of use and patina of age over time -paint is peeling and plaster is deteriorating. Why would we not consider “fixing” it up, or at least removing layers of more recent history and restore it to an earlier time period? The first consideration would be what period in time, followed by the question do we have enough information about a particular period, more importantly are funds available to do this and why would we cut off the history and stories of five generations of the Thompson family who all made an impact on the estate?



The Coach House prior to being rehabilitated/conserved.

As a result our focus is on conservation which encompasses actions of preservation, restoration or rehabilitation. All are complex processes which involve research, knowledge of standards and principles, materials, expertise from specialists and implementation by a variety of trades / technicians, documentation and monitoring. Because our property is so diverse we have incorporated all three processes of conservation in our planning whereby looking at the site holistically, using best practices

and coping mechanisms for problems that cannot be avoided. For example; a long term goal for the property to exhibit significant natural features and associated wildlife is to restore natural communities and ecological functions where possible. On the other hand, as expressed above, the Greek Revival mansion and other nineteenth century outbuildings are being preserved as the Thompson family had left them. Although in some cases, extensive repairs were required to make buildings water tight, the underlying approach has been to preserve character-defining materials, features, uses location etc. using minimal intervention. That means every effort is made to save as much of the original building materials as possible. The ultimate goal is preventive conservation in order to protect and stabilize the buildings.

The key ingredient here is routine or cyclical maintenance to ensure that the buildings are preserved. Intervention would only be implemented if deterioration is noticed. A case in point would be the condition of the plaster ceilings in the mansion. Artifacts on display within the house are catalogued and their condition monitored on a regular basis. Once again principles of preventive conservation are followed. If an artifact required conservation, treatments are always reversible so that future technical innovations can be applied.



Completed in 2006, the Coach House now can accommodate groups and rentals.

The third process of conservation is rehabilitation. This practice was used on the Coach House to convert it into a useable building in order to make it a compatible use so that it can accommodate groups and be used as a rental facility for revenue generating purposes.



Coach House in use for open house in February 2013 Photo by
Photo by Wm. A. Warnick

To assist in our decision making we have incorporated preservation in our mission statement, we have policies, procedures and standards in place to conserve and maintain the buildings, the surrounding property and artifact collection. The easement agreement that The Land Trust holds with the Ontario Heritage Trust also provides an extra layer of protection for the site as easement officers review and approve any work that is to be undertaken. Operationally; maintenance manual, pest management program, disaster plans, housekeeping manuals and other procedures are in place and used and/or updated on a regular basis.

As you can appreciate, good stewardship and conservation practices are critical to the long term management of a national historic site. It requires expertise, resources, funding and a commitment from everyone associated with Ruthven Park. Come for a tour, we will tell you more.

Our Twentieth Anniversary

The summer of 2013 marked the 20th Anniversary of the incorporation of The Lower Grand River Land Trust based in Cayuga, Ontario at Ruthven Park National Historic Site. The LGRLT evolved from another local organization – HOPE – Haldimand/Norfolk Organization for a Pure Environment. HOPE was established in the late 1980s by local residents to protect the North Cayuga slough forests and wetlands from destruction by a large garbage incinerator planned to be built in the wetlands on Brooks Road (opposite Ruthven Park property). Several years later, members decided to form the LGRLT and commence a property owner contact program to educate the owners on the value of our local slough forests and wetlands. Numerous landowners were contacted and one of particular interest was David Thompson, the owner of Ruthven Park which included 1545 acres of slough forest and wetlands and the 1845 Greek Revival mansion, numerous outbuildings and two cemeteries.

Ruthven dates back to 1845 when David Thompson, early industrialist and Haldimand County's first member of the Legislative Assembly for Upper Canada obtained property and built the Greek Revival mansion near the early industrial village of Indiana. When David Thompson died in 1993 (the great, great grandson of David Thompson I) Marion Hartney, his aunt, became the sole owner of Ruthven Park. However the Land Trust immediately saw the need for this land to be protected for its many natural and historic values. A business plan was presented to the Estate in February 1994. By June the estate sent a Letter of Intent to the LGRLT indicating their approval to transfer Ruthven Park to the Land Trust with conditions including a comprehensive Easement Agreement between the Land Trust and the Ontario Heritage Foundation, now the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Two years of extensive negotiations took place and in June 1996 the Agreement was completed and agreed upon by all parties. The Land Trust is bound to meet all conditions. In July 1996 the Estate transferred the ownership of Ruthven Park to the

Lower Grand River Land Trust. On August 2, 1996 the official land title was transferred to the Land Trust and the OHT Easement Agreement was registered on title. In June of 1998 Parks Canada announced the National Historic Site designation for Ruthven Park.



Wetland restoration

The present Board of Directors feels very strongly that we are successfully adhering to these Statements: Our Mission is to seek to conserve, maintain and promote Ruthven's rich cultural and natural heritage through research, interpretation and education for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Our Mandate states that we will be an exemplary steward of the lands entrusted to our care while working with other stake holders and partners to effectively manage and care for these lands by creating an awareness and understanding of the past and future natural and cultural processes.

This Land Trust has realized significant accomplishments in the past 20 years; \$1,000,000 Cost Share with Parks Canada for conservation of built heritage, provide cultural, historical and environmental resources to enter into partnerships with Wilfrid Laurier University, McMaster University, University of Windsor, Niagara College,

and Mohawk College as well as Environment Canada and the Grand River Conservation Authority. In October 2013 the Board developed an exciting, comprehensive Strategic Plan. It is a consolidation of priorities and strategies for the next 5 years and is a sound basis for our positive and constructive direction. ®

Betsy Smith is President of The Lower Grand River Land Trust Inc. (LGRLT). - Check out their webpage at Ruthven Park National Historic Site (Twitter) Ruthven Park NHS (www.ruthvenpark.ca). It is a not-for-profit, non-government organization owned and operated by the Lower Grand River Land Trust Inc. Why not plan a visit to Ruthven, which is just north of Cayuga on Hwy 54. - Phone (905)772-0560 All unidentified photos are from Ruthven

Brock's Speech to the Militia at Culver's Tavern

Wednesday Evening, August 5, 1812

By Ken Leland

Historians agree this event took place, but there is no record of what British General Isaac Brock said that night. However, from subsequent events, it is clear his speech was remarkably effective. Brock changed the minds of Upper Canada farmers and shopkeepers who had, only days before, steadfastly refused an order to muster for duty. Somehow Brock transformed reluctant civilians into companies of men willing to fight an invading American army.



Gen Isaac Brock
By George Theodore Berthon's c. 1883

Perhaps your interest is peaked. What *did* Brock say and how did he say it?

At this point, historians typically pass to other matters, explaining, "It's only speculation from here on." However, it is the aim of a writer of historical fiction, who has studied the times and people involved, to portray what happened. If done

skillfully, the novelist allows readers to stand in that audience to witness an event that occurred two hundred years ago.

But that's guess work! Well of course it is, to a certain extent, but the novelist's account is based on a calculation of probabilities, given facts that *are* known. What then are the probabilities? What issues might Brock have spoken to that evening?

Almost certainly, General Brock acknowledged the presence of traitors and American spies standing among the audience as he spoke, acknowledged the success those *provocateurs* had instilling fears among people who might otherwise be loyal.



Drawing of Fort Michilimackinac, Unknown artist (courtesy of D. & T. Roth: Heritage History Electronic Library).

One claim spread by American Brigadier General William Hull's agents was that the First Nations would not fight against American invaders. Indeed, it was true and widely known that the Six Nations people living on the Grand River were hesitating to join in Upper Canada's defense in response to entreaties from the Iroquois still residing in New York State. * On good authority, the Iroquois below thought they would be punished, driven from their reserves, if their Brothers in Upper Canada aided the British. A related rumour spread by those in favour of American victory was that, if Loyalist militia left their homes undefended, Indians would attack defenceless Loyalist families. Most probably, Brock countered these fears with heartening news only just arrived from Fort Mackinac. This news was of a victory by First

Nations warriors and British regulars, fighting together, to seize Mackinac on July 12, 1812.

Another rumour was that disaffection among civilians in Upper Canada was so widespread, the militia would not fight, leaving only vastly outnumbered British regulars to defend the province. Disaffection among recent immigrants to Upper Canada was real, easily recognized, and dangerous. **As Brock spoke to the people of Norwich and nearby communities, a number of whom ranked themselves among the disloyal, Brock had a perfect retort – accompanying him in his dash to defend Upper Canada's frontier were two hundred militiamen of 1st York and 5th Lincoln. It must be supposed Brock took the opportunity to introduce them to the audience as paragons of loyalty, as a man willing to defend the province's western front, already hard-pressed by Hull's invading army.

Finally, at some point, Brock presumably appealed to the compassion and patriotism of the Loyalist families who stood before him, knowing full well that the sympathies of American immigrants were beyond his reach. Perhaps in this appeal Brock said something very much like the following:


"The people of Baldoon and Sandwich and Amherstburg are hoping, praying, for our help. Their homes are being looted, their farms are burning. Their need is urgent. Before you stand men of York and Niagara. We leave at midnight to throw the invaders out. I ask you now. Will you join us?"

This is but a small part of how the novelist imagines Brock's speech that night.

Could there be errors of omission or commission, compared to what actually occurred? Again, of course there could be, but it can be argued convincingly that probabilities lie strongly in favour of Brock speaking these issues.®

*The complete version of the novelist's recreation of Brock's speech appears on pages 192-195 of 1812 The Land Between Flowing Waters. © Ken Leland * The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816, pages 294-198, published by the Champlain Society, 1970 ** Plunder, Profit, and Paroles, Chapter Two, by George Sheppard, McGill-Queens University Press, 1994.*

You can purchase Ken's book on line at www.port-maitland.ca by going to the link "Associations and Research."



Toby Barrett
MPP - Haldimand-Norfolk

39 Norfolk Street North
Simcoe, Ontario N3Y 3N6
Tel. (519) 428-0446 • (905) 765-8413
1-800-903-8629 • Fax (519) 428-0835
toby.barrett@pc.ola.org
www.TobyBarrett.com

**Beckley Beach
Cottager's Corporation
Supports the work of
Port Maitland,
"On the Grand"
Historical Association
And The Grand Dispatch**

Dunnville District Heritage Assn.

**Historical and Genealogical Archives •
Research Assistance • Free Programs •
Publications**

**Located in the Dunnville Public Library, 317 Chestnut
Street. Open to the public Tues. & Wed., 10 a.m. -
1 p.m., Feb. - Nov. & by appointment.**

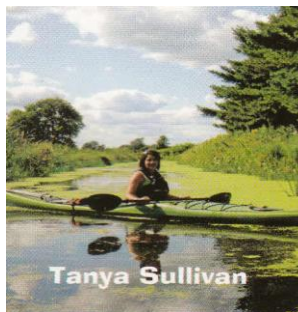
genealogydpl@yahoo.ca **905-701-8238**

FLYERS BAKERY & CAFE INC.
Monday to Saturday 8am - 3pm and Friday Dinner 5pm-8pm
Sundays 10am to 2pm

Bakery is Open Tuesday to Saturday

144 Queen Street
Dunnville, ON
N1A 1H7
905-701-8527

contact@flyersindunnville.com
www.flyersindunnville.com




**Grand River
KAYAK**

2 Port Maitland Rd
Dunnville
Ontario
N1A1Y3

1-888-KAYAK 15
www.grandriverkayak.ca

Hauser's
HOME HEALTHCARE

**Wheelchairs, Walkers,
Scooters, Bath safety
and more...**

1-855-440-8500
www.HausersPharmacy.com



Matt Storm
Plant Manager



Innophos

Innophos Canada, Inc.
109 Siddall Road
Port Maitland, ON, Canada, N0A 1K0
Telephone: (905) 774-7476 x225 ♦ Fax: (905) 774-6687
Matt.Storm@innophos.com

MATER Mechanical
MATER Mechanical

Dale A. Mater 251 Main St. W.
Specializing in: Dunnville, ON N1A 1W2
Plumbing, Heating Phone 905-774-9410
Electrical, Air Conditioning Fax 905-774-8325



*When it comes to fishing ...
we will always tell ya where to go*

**LIVE BAIT
TACKLE & MARINE SUPPLIES
BOAT LAUNCH • VALEE SERVICE
COTTAGE RENTALS • POST OFFICE**

Featuring Lake Erie Perch on the Patio
at **HiPPoS**

2472 North Shore Drive • Lowbanks, ON N0A 1K0
905-774-1229
www.mohawkmarina.ca
mohawkmarina@gmail.com



NM
NADRO MARINE SERVICES LIMITED
CAPTAIN BILL NADROFSKY
Director of Operations

Office: 519-583-1080
Fax: 519-583-3032
Cell: 519-427-3357
Email: bill@nadromarine.ca

57 River Drive,
Port Dover, ON
Canada N0A 1N7

Dermody's
P. X. Dermody Funeral Homes

<p>7 East Ave. South Hamilton, Ontario L8N 2T3 905-572-7900</p>	<p>1919 King Street East Hamilton, Ontario L8K 1V9 905-549-9955</p>	<p>796 Upper Gage Ave. Hamilton, Ontario L8V 4K4 905-388-4141</p>
---	---	---

www.dermodys.com

 **Peter's Engine &
RENTAL CENTRE**

851 North Shore Drive
Dunnville, Ontario N1A 2W5

SALES — RENTALS — SERVICE

Rainer Queckenstedt

(905) 774-7615
Cell (289) 925-1248
Home (905) 774-5022
peteng@execulink.com

Rasch & Hyde Ltd.
ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS



1333 Highway 3 East, Unit B
P.O. Box 6
Dunnville, ON N1A 2X1
Tel: 905-774-7188
Fax: 905-774-4000

R. Desmond Rasch, O.L.S.

74 Jarvis Street,
P.O. Box 550
Fort Erie, ON L2A 5Y1
Tel: 905-871-9757
Fax: 905-871-9748

Cell: 905-745-9915
Toll Free: 1-800-263-2135
Email: drasch@randh.ca
www.randh.ca

RIVERSIDE MARINA
of Dunnville Ltd.

101 Maple St. • Dunnville, ON. N1A 2G1
(Behind the Beer Store)

www.riversidemarina.ca

Gord Mcleod
Rob & Kathy Culp

Ph. 905-774-3199
Fax 905-774-6806

info@riversidemarina.ca

**ROBERT ROWE
MOTORS LIMITED**

If You Don't Buy From Us We Both Lose
rowemotors@hotmail.com

ROBERT R. ROWE

Bus. 905-774-7554
Res. 905-774-6576
Lake 905-774-8491
Fax 905-774-3233

122 Broad St. E.
Dunnville, Ontario
N1A 1E9

Grooming Available
Call For Appointment!


Ruffin's
PET CENTRES

Conveniently
Located Downtown!

We Have Everything For All Your Pets Needs

905-774-6373
www.ruffinppet.com
209 Queen St., Dunnville ON

**WD Moody
Concrete**

2583 NORTH SHORE DRIVE, R.R. #2
LOWBANKS, ONTARIO NOA 1K0
TEL: (905) 774-4898 FAX: (905) 774-6280
E-Mail: info@wdmoodyconcrete.com
www.wdmoodyconcrete.com


JUDY MARSALES REAL ESTATE LTD. Brokerage 

*Knowledge + Integrity
= Home Sweet Home*

©1988


www.judymarsales.com
(905) 522-3300

If you think this space
is ugly, buy an ad!



OPEN
GUS + son
BARBER SHOP

Gus & Son Barbershop
1530 King St. East
Hamilton, Ontario
(905) 545-1945

We came clean to the Coal Docks!

By Len Wheeler

As a youngster growing up on Hamilton's Beach Strip, there were days Lake Ontario was much like the Arctic Ocean, cold. I'd go into the water only to see my legs turn blue and retreat to the hot shore. I dreaded this cost if I got covered in sand I knew I'd have to take an icy plunge to clean-off. After doing so, I shivered in hot humid weather up to our house. This was interrupted when my mother suggested we go to the cottage at Beckley Beach. There the water was always warm and a shallow sandbar allowed us kids to play until we were exhausted.

While there on one occasion, I recall that I had this attraction to small toads that climbed up on the sand by Pete's Pond near Joe Warnick's cottage. I was about 4 years old at the time and took a pail and filled it with these tiny toads and brought them back to my parents' cottage. I thought playing with them in the living room would help me pass the time until my mother got up and caught me! Fortunately for me she wasn't squeamish and told me this was not appropriate. She helped me gather the toads and return them from whence they came before my father got up and thunder and lightning raged.

One other occasion about 6 years later we had a holiday from school. My mother loaded myself and brother into the car and ventured to the cottage to see how it survived the winter. It was a hot day and we went to the beach and found to our delight the water was suitable for swimming. After this, we met up with Greg Warnick, my brother's age. He and my brother wanted to go to the coal docks, and being the follower, I obliged.

When we got there the coal boat had discharged its load of coal into a black mountain that was worthy to climb. First we got distracted by the frogs by the Feeder Canal. We caught a few of them, walked onto the wooden bridge and put them on the railing. We then prodded them to dive into the Feeder, which they did. We then walked to the coal pile and climbed. I wore a white sweat shirt and a pair of light coloured shorts. When we reached the

summit, they were black. I recall Greg was wearing a pair of moccasins and during the climb he lost one of them. I recall his distress because his mother warned him not to go to the coal docks and the consequences of non compliance. It wasn't nice! Greg freaked because of the lost moccasin because it meant execution at sundown by his mother.



I recall walking down the road towards the cottage and mother was waiting for me and my brother with a bar of Sunlight soap and two towels. She pointed us towards the beach and said: "March". By this time Greg had walked into the valley of death at their cottage on the hill at the rear of my parents. I could hear his mother shrieking at him like a banshee. Since Greg was a very nice guy I plead with my mother to intervene somehow because she was a relation of the Warnick's and was a good friend to his father: Ambrose. Greg got a stay of execution. We proceeded down to the beach and soaped-up and swam in our dirty clothes which now resembled something a little less dark. Fortunately for us mom brought extra clothing for such emergencies. I don't know if she ever got that coal soot out of our clothes.

Also - I remember the Wilkins Brothers and so does Jack Love!

My late father told me that Rick & Ron Wilkins used to plead with him being a former pro football player for the Wildcats to play football with them. He

agreed however he would be the QB and neither boy was allowed to rush the passer. They played on the front of Ambrose Warnick's cottage vast lawn. This went on while they were young.



Wheeler cottage at Beckley Beach Photo – Len Wheeler

One summer my parents rented out the cottage to a friend of my father's: Jack Love who also was a proficient football player at Central High School. Since my father was absent Rick & Ron asked Jack to play QB for them. Jack agreed but they did not disclose the rule my father imposed about not rushing the passer. They played alright and Jack had to take another week off work from his job at Dofasco to recover from the injuries the Wilkins boys gave him. It was more likely because Jack was not in good physical condition anymore and old muscles may have memory but they never forget an injury and also don't forgive very easily. ©

Len's grandparents Hank and Vera Martin owned a cottage at Beckley Beach from circa 1925. Grace's and Reg Wheeler took over her brother Hank in the 1940s. Len is a retired Hamilton Police Officer.

Check out our Web-site

Wow! I am very pleased with our new and growing web-site. Bill Strong our webmaster tells me that a web-site is never finished; it should always be growing and changing! We will see if we can live up to his standards.

We have added links for things to do and places to be. This is the only link we charge a fee to be linked to. It cost \$25.00 annually. Hopefully we will generate enough revenue from this link to pay for the web-site.

Another great link is the "Book" link. Here we feature local history books and provide a process for you to purchase them directly. We get NO revenue from the sales and have nothing to do with these sales. Please look at this link often. If you

know of anyone who has written on local history please tell them about us so they too can be added.

When and Why was Port Maitland Named?

By Bill Warnick

During the past year I have researched and written a number of articles attempting to clear up the facts of when Port Maitland was established, where it got its name and what its boundaries. Finally, I can tell the when. I have answered the whom part and my opinion of its boundaries. To recap it was named after Sir Peregrine Maitland shown here.



In this issue I will finally give you the exact date and a bit more about why the name was chosen.

On May 8, 1829, William Hamilton Merritt shown here, known as the father of the Welland Canal rewarded Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland for assisting him in obtaining land to build his ditch to Dunnville. He did so by calling the community at the mouth of the Grand River, Port Maitland. There is a sign at the four corners (Kings Row & Port Maitland Roads.) that tell us our founding date is 1819. It now looks as though we will have amend that sign and set our hoped for bicentennial calibrations off for an additional ten years. ☺



Lake Erie takes yet another great ship

By Bill Warnick

Even those of us who never seem to be without a story to tell sometimes get writers block and that was the case this issue for me. That was until I received an email from Kraig Anderson of California. I presume he found our new website and wanted to know a bit more about the light house on the west pier at Port Maitland. That led to a phone call from me to him and some interesting back and forth information gathering. We discussed a ship that sank some 400 yards east of the pier at Port Maitland on November 25, 1874.

The ship was a schooner named the *AUGUSTUS FORD* carrying wheat from Detroit to Oswego NY on Lake Ontario. Her captain, a fellow by the name of J. C. Pease himself a resident of Oswego and three crew members froze to death while the ship buffeted about lying broadside along the shore. It was one of those November storms that on Lake Superior is known for not giving up her dead. As daylight four broke, ice covered bodies, unrecognizable but for the cloth they wore were revealed.

No time was wasted to remove the bodies from the ship which lay on her side roughly in front what is today the Rielly or the Hockton cottages. Captain W. W. Williams of Oswego left immediately for Port Maitland from Oswego to recover the bodies of Captain Pease, Charles E. Hurd, the cook Lizzie Sullivan and Thomas Brown. Captain Pease was so frozen to the deck that his body needed to be chopped free before he could be removed. He, Charles Hurd and Lizzie Sullivan's bodies were returned to Oswego each going to a different home for preparation for burial. Thomas Brown was buried at Port Maitland. I do not know the location. When the three bodies reached Oswego they were still frozen. An article from the day tells of how when Captain Pease's body arrived at Oswego, it was so frozen that his arm remained bent and beside his head.

The wreck of the *AUGUSTUS FORD* occurred on the worst night it could as the storm, to that date considered one of the worst the lakes had experience had swept the planks from the pier and scattered them for miles along the shore. This made it impossible for lighthouse keeper Fergus Scholfield to get to the lighthouse and light it. Captain Pease, struggled to get his ship behind Long Point in order to ride out the storm, but when he realized he could not accomplish this he headed for the Grand River. Barely able to make out a light he mistakenly took for the Port Maitland lighthouse; he foundered east of the pier. It was believed he "saw a light in the town". I have looked at maps from that time leading me to speculate that he might have seen a light from the farmhouse of either David Deamude or James Connor (O'Connor). Today that would be the east half of MacDonald Beach at about the trailer park.

The Captain and his crew while some 600 feet from shore hollered and screamed for assistance bringing people to the shore as the ship floundered; but being without lifeboats and the severity of the storm all they could do is watch the tragedy occur in front of them. "The lighthouse keeper's house at the light was warmed and lighted, but he did not appear and fulfill his duty. The only explanation offered is that the light keeper is a one legged man and did not dare to face the storm. There is no doubt here nor anywhere, but that Captain Pease would have made Port Maitland safely had the light been burning; the false light he saw was from a window in the town. If these are the facts, a terrible responsibility rests on the keeper and the authority which has kept him there at the peril of life and property on the lakes. We understand that he is condemned in Port Maitland without qualification." These are the words of

the Oswego Daily Palladium on Friday November 27th. Fergus Scholfield was indeed a one legged man. On June 2, 1866 while serving with the *W. T. Robb* patrolling the Niagara River at Fort Erie he lost his leg during the Fenian Raids.

Let me speculate a bit here. Maybe this Yankee reporter from Oswego was just looking to settle a score with this Canadian veteran for the humiliation the Yankees took and Fort Erie. He clearly did not care to print the facts! From the webpage <http://www.fenians.org/battle-of-ridgeway.htm> there is an article about the Fenian Raids at Ridgeway and Fort Erie. One sentence written by Peter Vronsky reads; "While the Canadians were defeated on the battlefield, the raid itself was a failure. The Fenians were forced to withdraw before they might have been destroyed by numerically superior combined British and Canadian infantry reinforced by cavalry and artillery assembling nearby".

I believe Fergus Scholfield who was born on the site of what would become the Monarch Knitting company served his country admirable and was likely awarded the post as lighthouse keeper in part for his courageous service. Had this reporters "gobbly gook" been accurate, then maybe hindsight might have suggested Fergus was not the man for the job, but on that night no man no matter how many legs he had could have performed any differently. I would go one step further and suggest Fergus deserves a plaque commemorating his service to the seafarers whose lives he saved by tending his light so diligently.



Records show that many piers attempted to withstand the forces of Lake Erie storms only to suffer the same fate this pier suffered on November 25, 1874. In 1882, a storm carried away the covering of the west pier. The walk leading to the lighthouse was almost gone and large quantities of the stone work were carried out by the heavy sea. The planking and stringers were scattered along the beach over two miles. Fergus Scholfield estimated the damage to be about \$8,000. These events continued numerous times over the years leading to a cement pier being built in 1909!

After considerable work and a few disputes the *AUGUSTUS FORD* would be towed off the beach in the spring of 1875 and taken to Buffalo where it was sold in November, 1875 for \$340.00. It would be repaired and on June 29, 1876 she returned to duty under the captainship of Captain D. Nicholson taking coal from Ashtabula Ohio to Kingston Ont.

The only survivor of the *AUGUSTUS FORD*; her mate Jack Mack continued to reside in Oswego but died in August of 1881 with his wife at his side at Marine Hospital in Cleveland Ohio.

She returned his body to Oswego where he received a sailor's burial paid for by the Seaman's Union.

Another Journey to Port Maitland

By Sylvia Weaver

The memory of the 2012 archeological assessment is fading, but the suggestion by Dr. Dean Knight, the archeologist, to erect a memorial plaque at the Grand River Naval Depot is about to come true. Although we did not find the cemetery, a plaque would be a tribute to the unknown deceased who lived there almost two centuries ago. That summer was filled with meetings with Dr. Knight and the residents of Beckley Beach, researching; site visits, phone conversations and a range of emotions. Although it was disappointing that we did not confirm the location of the cemetery, one of the things that I will not forget was the interest, hospitality and cooperation from the residents of Beckley Beach and Father Cote, president of the Beckley Beach Cottagers Association, permitting this to take place.

Over this past two years several meetings followed with Katrina Schmidt, County staff member for the Haldimand County Community Projects Program. During this time she encouraged me to proceed with the cairn project, with the possibility of getting a 35 % of funding from the County.

Last week the Cairn project for the Port Maitland Park East was ratified with full support by the County and councillors. Port Maitland East Park, known as Brown's Point is owned by the County and will be the ideal location for the cairn, as it was part of the Naval Depot in 1815. Charles Brown and son Harley lived here from hence it got its name. He built a cottage and retainer wall for protection in the 1930's.

The cairn will be 8' high, pyramid shaped with various sized stones pressed into the mortar. Most of the stones will be provided by Glenmount Memorials of Port Colborne. We also hope to collect some local beach stones from Beckley Beach; it has been suggested by several of the residents that the children could help collect beach stones and carry them to the site in their small wagons. Many of us have memories imbedded in our minds of Beckley Beach, as a child, I being one of them. After another generation or so these children will be able to say "I can remember carrying stones to help build this cairn". Incorporating beach stones for the cairn from the actual site of the Naval Depot would add to its historical significance.

Other historical events that occurred at Port Maitland came to mind. Father Cote, Bill Warnick and I thought by building a memorial stone cairn with four different plaques it would capture some of the history at the east side of the mouth of the Grand River. These plaques will tell the history of the area. A plaque will depict the Naval Depot protecting Upper Canada from another invasion from the United States. One will

remember the burials at the Naval Depot for the unknown pioneers. Another plaque for the 1842 historic Feeder Canal and Lock which played an important part in developing Port Maitland and Dunnville. The last tells the importance of the commercial fishing industry from mid 1800's to our fishermen today. Port Maitland was once the largest fresh water fleets in Canada.

Several quotes were required from all the tradesmen and professionals needed to complete this project. Local businesses, tradesmen have been considered as much as possible, as their ancestors may have some connection to the historical events. The total cost of the cairn from excavating, building the cairn foundation, stone masons, cement, an engineer's report, county's cost to prepare the site, plaques and granite paving stones was obtained. It was a very tedious process. Our two councillors Lorne Boyko and Rob Shirton have been supportive; they both realize the importance of the cairn since next year will be the 200th anniversary of the Grand River Naval Depot.

The cost of the cairn will be approximately \$30,000.00. Through the generosity of the Jackman Foundation, Beckley Beach Cottagers Corporation, Port Maitland Historical Association and the Dunnville Historical Society, over \$6,000.00 has been raised. The Haldimand County Community Partnership Program has donated \$10,395.00. Approximately \$13,000.00 is needed to make this cairn a reality. Applications to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Legacy will be made. I hope individuals, service clubs and businesses will be willing to take part and pride in preserving our local history.

Granite paving stones can be purchased with a family, business name or community service clubs engraved on the stones. Many families of Dunnville and Port Maitland area have ancestors who lived there or actively took part in these historical events, whether it is an ancestor who was a soldier at the Naval Depot, or one of the many fishermen on Lake Erie. My g.g.g, grandfather Henry Ross was the first commercial fisherman on Lake Erie and lived at Beckley Beach.

This has been another emotional journey, full of meetings, site visits, phone calls, stacks of paper work. I have developed a lot of patience and communication skills over these past two years. I must not forget the ongoing disagreements Bill Warnick and I had regarding the historical facts. We would scrap like cats and dogs. After a short cooling down interlude, these two stubborn passionate people came together once again to achieve one common goal, preserving the history of Port Maitland.

Port Maitland and Dunnville are small communities which have maintained the small town atmosphere. We are proud of our roots. I know the interest and passion of many citizens wanting to preserve our rich history in Haldimand.



How the Cairn at Brown's Point might look!

We welcome visitors, cottagers to share our community. The Grand River Action Plan on the west side of the mouth of the Grand is a great improvement. The cairn and restoration of the Lock on the Feeder Canal are two of historical monuments that can be developed for the east side. By developing our Haldimand's history, where ever it should be, bit by bit, it will encourage tourism, which will help with our economy.

Fundraising will continue over the winter. Construction will start in the spring of 2015. A web page will be set up on the "Grand Dispatch" newsletter with more information. If you want to know more about the cairn project, donating or purchasing a granite paving stone please contact. *Still needs to be established.*

Sylvia Weaver is a well-known historian and genealogist in the Haldimand area. Sylvia has served on a number of local historical associations. Sylvia has published a number of books on church civil records. Sylvia is the project manager for PMHA regarding the proposed cairn.

Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association Annual meeting planned

For Oct. 14th at the Dunnville library (7p.m.)

One of the responsibilities of an incorporated group is that they must hold an annual meeting to bring the membership and the government up to date on what they have accomplished in the past year and what they hope to accomplish in the next year. Of course, the government needs to know how our finances are handled and who are executive officer are. We are please to say that we do indeed keep very good financial records and are pleased with our accomplishment for this year 2013 – 2014.

We are in need of a couple executive positions being filled. We need a vice-president and a recording secretary. Fortunately we do have a gentleman willing to stand for recording secretary. As for the vice-presidents position; this remains a bit of a problem. As you know, I have been president since our incorporation and soon need to leave this position to someone else. However, I personally hope whomever follows me will have both the experience and the drive I believe I have brought to this position. I believe we do have this within our executive, but the person I would support for this position is not prepared at this time to take the reins. With that in mind, we need to fill that position with someone willing to learn how we work and what we desire to take the position of vice-president. I must tell you that access to email at home is a necessary evil as we do considerable work using that method. No, you are not required by any by-law but it is just a great advantage to our group.

Our guest speaker will be **Bruce Hill** of Brantford who will tell us about the **Grand River Navigation Company** and identify for us the location of many of its former locks and wharfs.

Mailing Address

William A. Warnick
180 Rosslyn Ave. South
HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5
Phone 905 549-6086 Skype **williamawarnick**
Email wwarnick@cogeco.ca
Web-page www.port-maitland.ca