

WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP HERITAGE and HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Report of the Chair, 2019

Nancy Maitand

In February, I presented my 2018 curator's report to Wellesley Township Council. They approved the renewal of my contract as curator for 2019. They also approved our budget for 2019, funds to be taken from the Koehler Estate Fund.

Our AGM was held on February 19. The following reports were distributed - Secretary, Curator, Chair and Financial Reports. After no additional nominations from the floor, the following officers were acclaimed: Nancy Maitland – Chair; Dave Holzschuh – Vice Chair; Beth Leales – Secretary.

I attended a Council meeting in March to hear Council's to respond to questions concerning GRCA's decision not to designate the pond.

Dave Holzschuh researched other historical societies' policies on charging for research time. After some discussion we decided not to do this. Instead, we added a statement to our email signature indicating that donations could be made to us through the Township's website. In 2019 we received \$845 in donations.

In May, we obtained a key for the library and historical room for volunteers to share.

We nominated Wellesley photographer Charles F. Ottman, jr. to be inducted into the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame. Our nomination was successful and he was inducted in a ceremony on April 28. Eight Ottman family descendants attended the ceremony. On the day before the ceremony three family members came to the Historical Room to share information.

On May 30, we were featured in an article in the *Woolwich Observer* about museums and galleries in the Region. The article stated *"The exhibit is easily dwarfed in size by many of the other exhibits highlighted in this list. And yet none would offer visitors a more authentically local look at the township and its history. And that's just what lies on the surface ..."*

I completed a procedure manual for Historical Room operations.

In July, we held a training session for historical society members who wanted to learn more about what is in the collection and where to find it. These newly trained members will be a great help in assisting our researchers.

Our first Family History Workshop was held on Saturday, September 7. For this, I created a "Research Guide" to our collection which was distributed to attendees. It is also available on

our website. We spent the morning discussing the attendees' research projects and the resources in our collection. In the afternoons attendees did research using our collection.

As re result of questions at the workshop, I researched and clarified access to vital records (birth, marriage death) held in the Township Office: Births - closed after 1917; Marriages - closed after 1936; Deaths - closed after 1946.

We have four new members, bringing our total to 20.

In September, Keith Bell, a descendant of one of the early Black settlers in the "Queen's Bush Settlement" visited our Historical Room. He donated a photograph of his great-father, Daniel Brown, and three of his siblings. Keith has created a video about his visit to southern Ontario. It can be seen here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5GdcTYDrY8>.

We offered fair prizes again in 2019. As there were no submissions we have decided not to offer prizes next year.

On our last open day of the year, November 30, we hosted a free presentation sponsored by Schneider Haus National Historic Site and the Region of Waterloo Library. The presenter led a lively discussion and answered questions about the history of the Region. She demonstrated her many layers of clothing which would have been worn by women in the late 19th century.

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Report of the Curator, 2019

Nancy Maitand

Acquire

We received 22 donations in 2019 and purchased 2 items – a “trade token” from Kelterborn’s store from a local collector; and two calendars distributed by Wellesley stores, from a local resident.

I scanned the tax assessment rolls from 1854 to 1889 in the collection of the Region of Waterloo Archives. The digital files have been uploaded to our website under a new tab on the navigation bar called “Land Ownership.” This collection comprises almost 1,500 pages of previously undigitized documents.

I scanned Township Council minutes from 1866 to 1954 with the permission of Grace Kosch, Township Clerk. Earlier minutes from 1854-1865, were apparently destroyed by fire. The files will be uploaded to our website and a digital copy will be given to the township. This collection comprises about 1,600 pages of previously undigitized documents.

I used the information in the minutes to create a list of all Wellesley Township Councillors. It has been uploaded to our website under a new tab in the navigation bar called “Wellesley Township Council.” Also under this tab is a list of Wellesley Councillors who served on Waterloo County Council from 1852-1972. This information was originally published in "Waterloo County Councillors: A Collective Biography," (c) 1995 Caribou Imprints and has been reproduced with the permission of the author, Elizabeth Bloomfield.

There are two early maps of the township - one is of the original survey of the township completed in 1843 and the Tremaine map of 1861. Name indices to these maps existed, but on close examination many errors were found. I revised these lists completely (in order by name and also by lot and concession). They are available on our website under the Land Ownership tab in the navigation bar.

Preserve

After rehousing of the photo collection I reorganized the metal file cupboard to make the new boxes more accessible.

Using funds from the Koehler Estate Fund we purchased an *HP Officejet Pro 7740 Wide Format All-In-One Inkjet Printer*. It has many features which will allow us to print membership forms,

walking tours and display titles and captions which were previously printed at Staples. This printer replaces our 11-year-old monochrome laser printer

Make Available

Our historical room was open on 11 Saturdays.

I assisted with many family history research projects.

I created a display board about the mills of Wellesley Township for use at Wilmot's Heritage Day. I expanded the mill display in our historical Room to include more photos and detailed captions.

I uploaded the complete set of scanned Women's Institute minutes (1919-2008) to our website and wrote a press release about the minutes which was featured in an article in the *Woolwich Observer* on February 21.

I added a display about Charles Ottman who was inducted into the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame.

On June 13, the Region's Heritage Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) visited our Historical Room as part of the Wellesley walking tour they had downloaded from our website.

On Heritage Day, February 23, Diane and Garry Peters, Carol Gregory and Andrew Jacobson looked after our display in New Dundee. Our Historical Room was also open that day and we had 12 visitors.

On June 21 we participated in the *Township's Community Information Forum*, held at the township office grounds. Many thanks to Jean Herrgott and Diane and Garry Peters for helping out at our display.

I wrote 6 articles for "Embracing Change" a magazine for seniors in the townships.

I wrote an article about the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame for the Waterloo Historical Society Annual Volume, as well as a listing of our acquisitions.

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Report of the Secretary, 2019

Beth Lealess

Ten meetings were held in 2019 – January, February, March, April, May, June, July, September, October and November with an average of 7 members in attendance per meetings. After the minutes are approved at the next meeting, they are added to our website.

I did the minutes for 8 of the ten meetings. Andrew Jacobson filled in for me for two meetings.

There are currently 20 members, 13 of whom live locally. Seven members live outside the area and receive quarterly newsletters only.

In addition to our 10 meetings, the WTHHS participated in several other events as follows:

- February 25 – Heritage Day in Wilmot Township
- June 21 – Wellesley Township “Community Information Forum”
- September 7 – Family History Workshop
- September 28 – Apple Butter and Cheese Festival