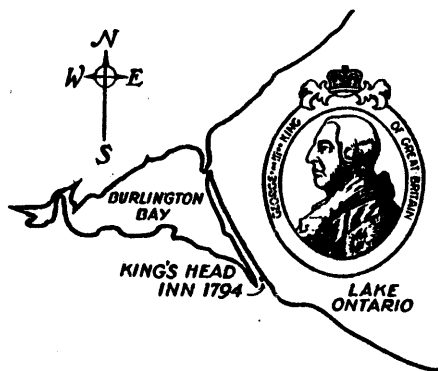


The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society

Hamilton, Ontario



EXPLORE ● PRESERVE ● RELATE

Number 18

NEWSLETTER

February, 1981

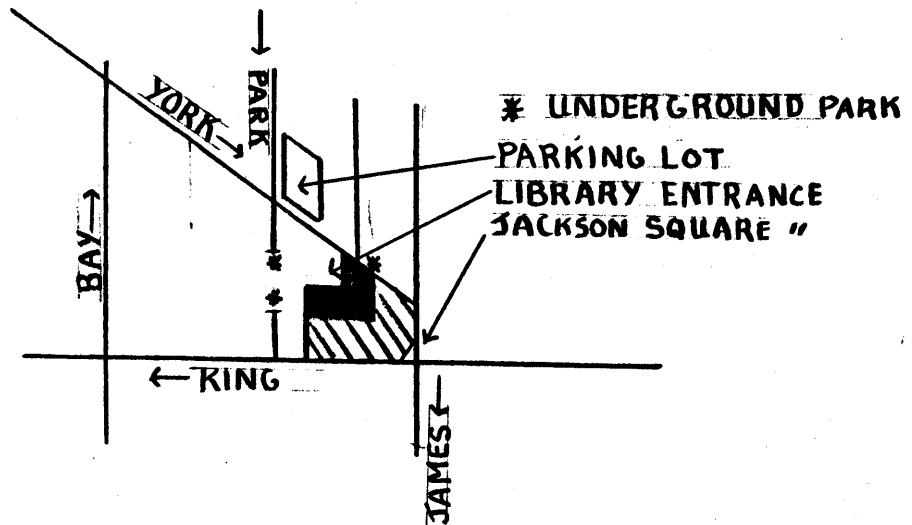
FEBRUARY MEETING

The February Meeting of the society will be held in Room 215 of the new Hamilton Public Library, 55 York Boulevard, Hamilton, on Friday, February 13, 1981, at 8 o'clock p.m. The speaker will be Mr. Stewart R. Leslie, a non-professional archaeologist who has been involved in various archaeological "digs" in this area.

Mr. Leslie's topic will be 'Aboriginal Occupations of a Farm in Binbrook Township'. The area covered in the talk is the farm of the current President of this society, Mr. Gordon Powell. During his career as a farmer, Mr. Powell amassed a large collection of aboriginal artifacts dating back several thousand years, indicating a long culture history. Mr. Leslie will interpret the evidence of the former occupations of this relatively small portion of the township, beginning with the earliest cultures of about 8,000 years ago, and working up to the European occupations of the past two hundred years. The talk will be accompanied by a slide presentation and a display of some of the most interesting artifacts.

■ Library information and directions inside.

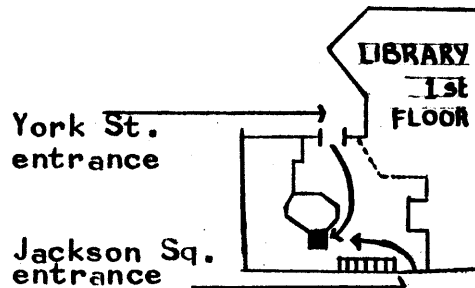
Hamilton Public Library - Directions



By Car: Approach the library from York Street. Parking is available in the lot opposite the library, and in underground parking beneath Jackson Square and above the market.

On Foot: The library may be entered from York Street or from Jackson Square. The library location is marked on the directories in the square. Bill Rosart will meet members at the King and James entrance to Jackson Square, and leave for the meeting shortly before eight o'clock.

To Meeting:
Follow arrows to elevator from either entrance. Go to the second floor - the librarian will direct you to Room 215.



THE HEAD-OF-THE-LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Please address correspondence to the society to Mrs. Stephen Baker, Corresponding Secretary, 167 Charlton Avenue West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 2C8.

SPEAKERS

Speakers for the year's remaining meetings are as follows:

- Friday, February 13, 1981: Mr. Stew Leslie
'Aboriginal Occupations of a Farm in Binbrook Township'
- Friday, March 13, 1981: Mr. Cook, of the Hamilton Street Railway Company
- Friday, April 10, 1981: Mr. Harvey McCulloch, Q.C.
'Interesting Law Cases in Hamilton and some older Prominent Citizens'
- Friday, May 8, 1981: Mr. Murray Aikman
'History of the West End'

February is the end of the membership year. You may use the form below to renew your membership for March, 1981, to February, 1982.

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To: Miss Florence Crabtree, Treasurer
The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society
49 East 7th Street, Hamilton, Ontario
L9A 3G7

- I wish to become a member of the society.
 I wish to renew my membership for the 1981-82 season.

Enclosed is my fee of three dollars

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Date _____

Local Events

MACNAB CIRCLE: Sir Allan MacNab's 103rd Birthday Party will be held on Thursday, February 19, at 7 o'clock p.m. The speaker will be Mr. David Faux. His topic, 'Hamilton's First Murder Mystery'. There will also be refreshments and a walk through the castle. The cost this year is \$2.50, payable at the meeting.

LINCOLN FELLOWSHIP: The fellowship will hold its 42nd Annual Meeting on the occasion of the 172nd anniversary of the birth of the Great Emancipator. Topic: 'Great (and not so great) Poems about Lincoln'. Dudnurn Castle, Thursday, February 12, 7:30 p.m.

ONTARIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY: The Hamilton Branch will meet on Sunday, February 15, 2 p.m., at The Spectator Auditorium, 44 Frid Street, Hamilton. Speaker: Mr. William Rosart, Branch librarian and editor of The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society Newsletter. Mr. Rosart will speak on the holdings of the Branch library, which comprise some five hundred books and numerous periodicals of genealogical and historical interest. Everyone welcome.

LUNCH AT WHITEHERN: During the week of February 9 to February 13, lunch will be served at Whitehern between 12 noon and 2 p.m. The menu includes a sandwich plate, home-made cookies, and coffee. The meal is served in the rec-room, and a tour of the mansion is included in the cost of \$3.00. If you wish to attend, call Whitehern (522-5664) on the afternoon before the day you plan to go, or on the morning of February 9 for a reservation.

PAULINE CAREY AS ANNA JAMESON: "Anna Jameson, wife of Canada's first Vice-Chancellor gives an insight into the political and sociological views of the woman who had a passion for justice... a woman with a spirit of adventure... a person highly cultivated yet tough enough to travel from Toronto to Lake Huron on impossible roads... to become the first white woman to venture down the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie."

The play of actress and writer Pauline Carely shows how Anna Jameson slowly came to call Lake Ontario her own and

HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN HAMILTON

by William D. King

142 - 160 JAMES STREET SOUTH

In the old cities of Britain and Europe, many of the streets are lined with residential terraces, ranging from the striking crescents of the leading centres to the humble rows of working-class houses in the industrial cities. In Canada, however, the fashion never really took hold. One reason is the fact that urban development here began only toward the end of the period during which terraced housing was popular. More fundamental is the fact that the Canadians, unlike the Europeans, were never confronted with a lack of space. Expansion was always possible and eventually the charm of a detached house with a private garden precluded the desire to imitate European cities. Nevertheless, during the 1850's it was intended that the streets of Hamilton would indeed be lined with stone terraces. By the time of Confederation the style had waned, but in the interim, several such terraces were built in the city. Of these a few still stand. Sandyford Place, the finest building of its type in Canada, is now a national historic site. Hamilton's longest terrace, less elaborate than Sandyford but still built as quality housing, is located at 142 - 160 James Street South, and comprises ten units.

This row was constructed between 1854 and 1860 as an investment by three separate individuals. Reminiscent of its counterparts in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the terrace adheres to a traditional row house format, consisting of units two storeys high and three bays wide, and all similar in design. Façades are austere and unadorned, but the work of a skilled stone-carver is evident. Each house was based on a side-hall plan, with a fine curving stair. The interior rooms were spacious, and the fireplaces, plasterwork, and moulding all indicate the quality of the buildings. The kitchens were located in the basement, and could be entered by a stairway from the front of the house. Servants could be accommodated in the small attics.

Although the units are all similar, the fact that they were constructed by three different individuals accounts for slight variations. The two units at the Bold Street end of the row (numbers 142 and 144) were built in 1854 by John McKenzie, a local merchant. They are the most formally decorated. Five

units in the middle of the terrace (numbers 146 to 154) were built between 1854 and 1860 by George Murison, a local builder who was also Mayor of Hamilton in 1870. Murison was also contractor for Hamilton's Customs House, which perhaps accounts for the delay in the completion of his five units. The Murison houses are distinguished by a second storey of the same height as the first. The three houses at the Duke Street end of the row (numbers 156 to 160) were erected by Alexander Gordon, a shoe manufacturer, by 1858. These are narrower than the other units, and their entrances are located in the north bay, rather than the south like the others. An early view of James Street South is interesting because it shows only some of the row standing.

The terrace has progressed through various stages over the years. Until about the turn of the century, its units were, as intended, the private homes of successful businessmen and professionals. Most residents were tenants, and some people owned more than one unit. As time moved on, more owners became occupants, although almost all of the houses continued as single family dwellings. Beginning in late Victorian times, the terrace gradually became a sort of medical centre, many units serving as the combined home and office of a doctor or dentist. By 1930, seven out of the ten houses were in use in this manner. The high concentration of the medical profession in this area influenced the location of the Medical Arts Building, which was constructed in that year.

Until 1951, when the area was designated commercial in Hamilton's first Official Plan, each house had changed hands only four to six times, indicating stability over a long term. A brief examination of the history of each unit yields some interesting details about Hamilton's earlier citizens.

The three Gordon buildings were deeded by their builder to his son-in-law, as the dowry of his daughter, and all were sold to Samuel Mills in 1861. Mills eventually became one of the richest men in the city, and was appointed to the Senate.

Number 160 passed to his son, James, a local barrister, in 1868, who let it out to various tenants. It passed to James' daughter in 1929, and remained in her hands until 1941.

Number 158 passed to Samuel Mills' daughter, Catherine, in 1866. For some time, she lived there with her husband, John B. Young, of Wylie and Young, but there were also a number of tenants. One of these, Anna Magill, was the widow of Charles Magill, who had been a member of the House of Commons, and Mayor of Hamilton on several occasions. The house was later owned by the Youngs' daughter, who held it until 1924.

Number 156 passed to another daughter of Samuel Mills,

Ann, the wife of a local hatter and furrier named Joseph Mills. They owned the house until 1885, and lived in it during this time.

Four of the five Murison houses were sold in 1892 or 1893 to Edward Ransford. The remaining one, number 152, had been sold to James Stewart, a local merchant, in 1878.

Number 154 was rented to several persons by George Murison, including Professor Henry Whish, an organist and music teacher who died in 1882. Ransford later sold the house, and then bought it back.

Number 152 has been mentioned. Number 150 was, at the turn of the century, the headquarters of the Hamilton Bicycle Club.

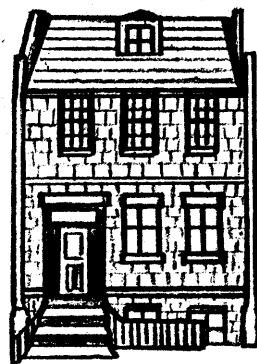
Among the tenants at number 148 was Edmund Scheuer, a Hamilton jeweler and merchant. Scheuer was a Jewish emigrant from Rhenish Prussia in 1871. He was a leader of Jewish life in Hamilton and the first President of Temple Anshe Sholom.

The final Murison house, number 146, had as one of its tenants John Calder, of McInnes, Calder, and Company.

In 1876, the two Mackenzie houses, numbers 144 and 142, were sold to John McKay, and he sold both in 1884. During the late 1800's and early 1900's, both were occupied by J. E. P. Aldous and the Hamilton Music School. Aldous, a well-known organist in the city, had come to Hamilton from France in 1877. There, he had been organist at the British Embassy. About 1908, he left his school to join the Hamilton Conservatory of Music, whose building had recently been constructed just to the north.

The building on the Bold Street corner of the row is probably the best preserved. It was purchased by Hubert and Constance Beckett in 1941, and is now operated by their son as the Beckett Gallery.

After the James South area was zoned commercial in 1951, various specialty shops and boutiques began to locate in the terrace, and at present, all of the units are occupied in this way. However, exterior changes, with the exception of one incongruent addition at number 156, have not been serious, and today, because of its uniqueness in Hamilton, 142 - 160 James Street South should rank high on a list of buildings worthy of study and preservation.



*Much of the information in this article was taken from a report prepared by Nina Chapple, researched by Katharine O'Connor, for Hamilton's LACAC.