



NEWSLETTER

Summer

August 28, 2024



Early fruit farming in Lincoln. Picture was a donation from Donald Perry.

Friends of Lincoln's History News

Recently the FLH was awarded a grant from the Niagara Community Foundation (Moses F. Rittenhouse Trusts Fund). We are so honoured to have been chosen.

With the money received we will have already purchased new scanning equipment to start our long trek towards digitizing our collection. We will also be purchasing new computer programs to help restore old pictures.

Thank you to all involved in granting us this amazing opportunity.

Congratulations goes out to John Allan. On May 2nd he received the Paul Harris award from the Grimsby Rotary Club for his continued interest in local history and long-time community service.

UPCOMING EVENTS

We will be holding another speaker meeting sometime in late September or October. An email will be sent out at a later date with the particulars when they become available. Stay tuned!!

On December 3, 2024 we will be having our AGM Meeting followed by a speaker event featuring Adam Shoalts and his talk, A 3,400 KM ODYSSEY FROM MY DOORSTEP TO THE ARCTIC, AND OTHER ADVENTURES.

It will be held at the Rittenhouse Hall 2 @ 7pm. Further notification will come out closer to the event date.

Don't forget to visit our booth again this year at the Harvest Pioneer Day Sept. 21, 2024 at the Lincoln Museum & Cultural Centre in Jordan. A copy of the museum's ad is on the last page of this newsletter.

Leslie McCurdy will be presenting *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman* on Oct. 25, 2024 at the West Niagara High School. It is sponsored by the West Niagara High School, Jordan Station United Church and the Meridian Credit Union. Please see the last page of this newsletter for details.

Exciting News – Deeds

The Town of Lincoln has transferred storage of the 1855-1955 Land Registry Documents from the Rittenhouse Library to the Archives. Once we finish accessioning the documents, they be available for public research at the Archives.

Beamsville Women's Institute

The Beamsville Women's Institute has chosen the Archives to house their 14 Tweedsmuir community history scrapbooks and 27-Minute books for safe storage. While the Women's Institute still owns all documents, the Archives will be the custodians. We are happy to add them to our collection.

Members are encouraged to send in family stories, histories, pictures. Email us at lincolnarchives@gmail.com. Please think about making a donation to the archives. We are collecting for future generations to enjoy and learn. Please visit our website where you can now view all our newsletters.

Website: www.lincolnarchives.ca * Friends of Lincoln's History is also on Facebook * Email: lincolnarchives@gmail.com

This newsletter is produced by Karen Hughes, a volunteer at the Archives. Send questions to tokharchives@cogeco.ca



The pictures below are from our Rockway Cemetery Tour, which was held on Saturday, June 1st, 2024. It was an amazing success and we would like to thank all who participated in the event as well as all the people who came out and supported us. What a fun day we had. So many interesting residents that now call this cemetery home.



Mary Lou Garr conducting the first half of the cemetery tour



Ruth Smith conducting second half the cemetery tour



Sharon Adams making Apple Fritters at the Brown Homestead stop on the tour. Sandra Easton and Lynn Timmers are trying out some samples.



A well-deserved glass of wine after the tour at the Henry of Pelham Winery, which was also part of the tour. L to R - Hilda Wiley, Ruth Smith, Gary Dandridge, Mary Lour Garr, Joan Romagnoli, Pat Zacher, Sandy Paterson, George Wiley.

Early Road Construction

It has been a busy road construction year here in Lincoln. We thought you might like to see some road construction methods used in Lincoln's past.



Row 1 left – Beamsville RPD on Spring Creek Road. Cable Trench with 4-wheel road scraper 1923

Row 1 right – Laying Hydro lines near Beamsville 1917

Row 2 left – Beamsville RPD laying cable with motor drawn reel north towards Campden 1923

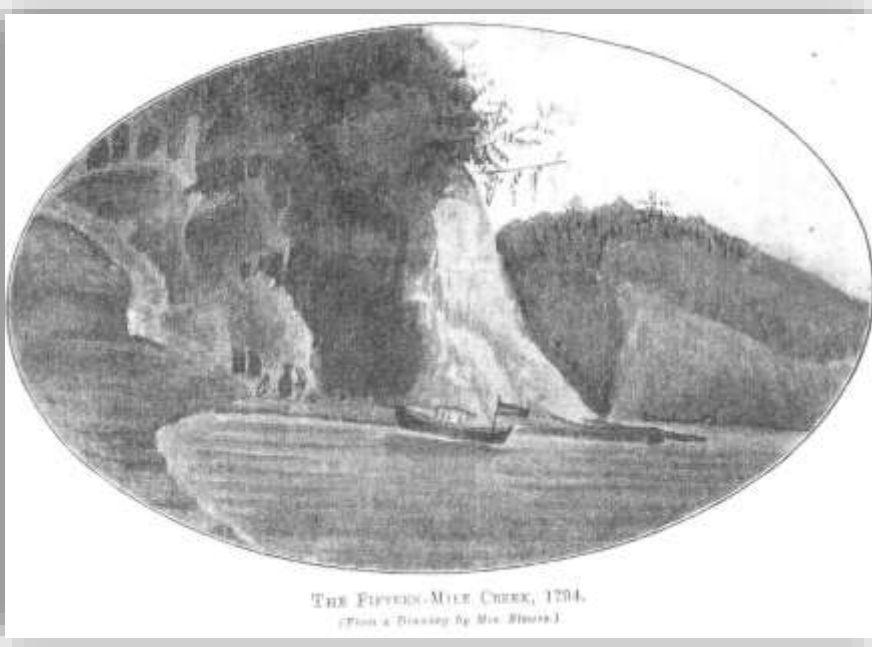
Row 2 right – Beamsville RPD on Spring Creek Road Backfilling with 4-wheel scraper 1923

Row 3 left – Road Scraping by W.B. Rittenhouse Split-Log drag brigade 1907

Row 3 right – Road work on Reg. Road 20 or 69 near Carter Beamer's house 1920s

THE FIFTEEN-MILE AND SIXTEEN-MILE BEACHES

Charles Daley Park



Picture drawn by Lady Elizabeth Simcoe in 1794 along with excerpts from her diary below.

“The weather misty, damp and disagreeable. Francis caught cold, and was so ill that we went on shore at the Eighteen-Mile Creek and stopped at Sail’s, the Indian house, half an hour”.

“We stopped at the Fifteen-Mile Creek, and took a sketch of the mouth of that river.”

“We dined on the beach at the Twenty-Mile Creek”.

One of the earliest records found of the Fifteen-mile and Sixteen-mile beach area was in the diary of Elizabeth Simcoe as shown above. Her picture shows a water fall at the mouth of the Fifteen-mile creek. If not for her sketches we would never have known how our shoreline once looked. Today the land at the mouth of the two creeks is Charles Daley Park.

On early maps of the area the land was previously known as Lots 8, 9 and 10 Broken Fronts in Louth Township. In 1798 Lot #8 was deeded by the Crown to Fredrick S. Shram. Lot #9 was deeded to Benoni Crumb in 1798, and Lot #10 was deeded to David W. Smith in 1797. These lots were sold and resold to many families over the years. Some of those old family names were Wismer, Hamilton, Smith, Miles, Gregory, Jeffery and Chas E. May (The Mayholme Foundation named after the May family).

The early settlers used the land for farming, although the land was very hilly with tall bluffs at the lakefront. In the late 1800s the land use started changing from farm use to more tourist activities. Cottages were built and tourists from Toronto, St. Catharines and Buffalo, New York came out in the summer months to get away from the heat of the cities. The beaches had two rows of cottages; one on the lake side and one the pond side. Shallow wells were sunk in sand and gravel which served several cottages. None of the cottages had running water and the water level on the beach made septic tanks impossible”. A news article from the St. Catharines Standard in 1898 shows there was once even a hotel at the Sixteen-mile beach, “Tourists wishing to spend the season at the Sixteen Beach can get accommodations at the new hotel which is now open”. Unfortunately, no names or pictures remain of this hotel.



Above – Cottages along the lakefront at the beach.

Right – Fifteen-mile beach cottage belonging to Oliver Banks in 1926



Over the years the land has eroded away and the homes and cottages that were once on the shoreline and have long since disappeared into the depths of Lake Ontario. It seems that shore erosion was a constant problem for the cottagers. Horace Troup is quoted in saying, “erosion was caused by the removal of the gravel for building Toronto and other towns”. Three newspaper articles were found that show us some of the devastation caused by Lake Ontario over the years. In Aug.1927 the Buffalo News reported, “At Fifteen Beach the sand has seriously washed away”. On Apr. 21, 1928 Niagara Falls Review told us, “The partially marooned residents of the Fifteen and Sixteen Beaches will soon be afforded relief from the constant action of the waters. The Province and Town of Louth have made an agreement to build a road along the beach and a break wall.” The third article from the Niagara Falls Review Apr. 14, 1943 said, “Sixteen Beach in Jordan, is awash, with foundations of houses in the water alone showing where was once a popular resort.

My journey into the history of these two beaches starts here with this single picture of Gibson Hall, C.M. Gibson Grocery and the two lovely ladies at Fifteen Beach. Charles Man Gibson and his wife Elizabeth were residents of St. Catharines. The Gibsons were large land owners at the Fifteen Beach which records show they first settled in 1897, but the first land purchase wasn't until 1912. Charles operated a grocery store and rented cottages. He also ran a second grocery store at St. Paul Street & Geneva Street in St. Catharines. The Gibson Hall was quite a gathering spot where many bands and dances were held. Another one of Horace Troup's memories tells us,



“On the east side of the Fifteen, on the pond side of the beach, there was a store with a dance floor over the water, a railing around; no roof. Saturday nights when there was no wind, we could hear the music. We would walk down and enjoy the music with the moon reflecting in the water, its was wonderful. They had a piano, a trombone and two other instruments. I'll never forget the trombone playing, *Follow the Swallow Back Home*”.

News records show there were at least two fires that threatened the cottages over the years, but it seems the Gibsons always rebuilt. One such fire in March of 1915 destroyed a summer cottage and Mr. Gibson's store. The farmers in the area were said to have formed the bucket brigades which helped save further destruction. In September of 1927 there was another fire that was started in the kitchen of Roland May's home. Again, a bucket brigade was formed, but this time it was by the women cottagers who came and saved the day.

In 1939 the Provincial government expropriated land for the building of the QEW and to establish an extensive park system at the Fifteen-mile and Sixteen-mile beaches. After the construction there was a small strip of land left along the shoreline where Charles Daley Park is now located.

Jump forward to Feb. 9, 1960 and you find the Niagara Parks Commission purchasing that strip of land, formally known as the Jeffery property, 11 acres for \$50,000. The park project is located between the effluence of the 15-mile creek and of the 16-mile creek, in the Township of Louth. It included all land and beaches along the Lake Ontario shore. A 1961 NPC report shows after purchasing the property, the NPC spent additional money on buildings \$4212, Grading \$26,964 and roadway & parking lot \$23,935. The total length of the beaches 2,600 feet. During that same year, the 500-car parking area was completed. The Department of Highways constructed a service roadway commencing at Gregory Road, where there is QEW access. Part of the construction included a bridge over the Fifteen-mile Creek which led to the parking area. The steep slopes of the park were also sodded with 11,000 sq. yards of sod cut from the site where the new Lewiston-Queenston bridge was being built. Landscaping was also done at this time to prevent soil erosion. Hundreds of shrubs and 200 ornamental shade trees were planted. To prevent further shoreline erosion, they placed 50,000 tons of large stone where there was not beach, and also spent time cleaning up the beach areas of tons of debris.



Construction in 1961 shows QEW in background and bridge over the 15-mile creek.

Pictures courtesy of the Niagara Parks Commission.



September of 1961 saw the construction of buildings which consisted of a combination washroom and change room building, park's work building and entrance gate.



Left – New change room under construction.

Right – Park works building under construction.

Pictures courtesy of the Niagara Parks Commission



On July 1, 1962 the Welland Regimental Band presented a concert at the official opening of the park which was officially named the **Charles Daley Park**, after the then Chairman of the Niagara Parks Commission (1944-1967). Mr. Daley was also the St. Catharines Mayor from 1939-1943.

In about 1965 an NPC report shows they made an agreement with the Jordan Lions Club, for the operation of the refreshment stand in Charles Daley Park. The report goes on to say their permit was renewed for the 1966 season. The park was leased to the club for \$1.00 per year. They operated the refreshment stand there until the club moved up to the Jordan Park with its arena, swimming pool and baseball diamond on Fourth Avenue.

According to a report written by George Seibel, Historian for the Niagara Parks Commission, " In 1972 the NPA negotiated with the Ministry of transportation for surplus soil fill, which was available as a result of the extension of the service road westward and the construction of a new bridge over the 16 Mile Creek. The fill was used to reduce the size of the 16 Mile Creek Pond and raise the general level. The new acreage was developed into 29 additional tent and trailer sites with electrical outlets". With the original purchase of 11 acres and an additional purchase in 1974, of adjoining property, the park grew to 39 acres. This included two large ponds formed by the creeks and a total of 3070 feet of beach.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the park started having a number of issues. The park had more and more people coming and staying longer than what would be called recreational camping. At this time there were also disturbances and acts of vandalism at the park. In 1981 the NPC imposed a liquor ban at the park, which helped curtail the some of the problems.

The Town of Lincoln's recreational master plan for the 1980s suggested that the town acquire some lakefront property to build a park. Town officials looked at a few different sites but did not have sufficient funds to purchase property and then start construction on a park. In 1988/89 a letter was sent to the NPC asking if the town could lease the Charles Daley Park from the NPC. About the same time the Niagara Parks Commissioners made a recommendation to divest itself from parks outside the organization's primary focus of the Niagara River corridor. On August 17, 1990 a resolution was passed by the town, along with approval from the provincial legislature, to transfer ownership of the park to the Town of Lincoln.

The title was transferred along with associated buildings and equipment. The agreement also provided descending funding assistance for five years, effective Nov. 1, 1990, in exchange for a commitment to retain the property as a public park. Quoting Ray Konkle (Past Lincoln Mayor) – "Although the original estimated operating cost of \$63,000 would be reduced by 20% each year for 5 years. It was found on Jan. 10, 1991 that the net loss figure of \$34,979 became the base for the NPC financial assistance in the five subsequent years. The total amount given to the Town for taking over the park during those five years (1990-1994) was approximately \$117, 585".

Today this park is used for swimming, hiking, picnics, musical concerts and the town's big Canada Day extravaganza each year. This ends the story of our beautiful park on the lake. If you have any memories or pictures, we encourage you to share them with us. We have very little information or pictures from the early days of this area.

I would like to thank the following people who help to supply me with information for this story. Ruth M. Smith and Ray Konkle of the Friends of Lincoln's History, Corlene Taylor of the Mayholme Foundation and the St. Catharines Historical Society. I would like to express a special thank you to Rebecca Prose of the Niagara Parks Commission, and Gary Dandridge of the FLH for all their help.



Picture on above – Charles Daley Park overnight camping facilities. Picture courtesy of the Niagara Parks Commission

August 15, 2024 - FLH Pot Luck Supper held at Ray & Pat Konkle's



A big Thank You goes out to Pat and Ray Konkle. Good food and great company!

Picture on left – Doug Holmes, John Allan, Pat Zachar, Richard Adams, Joan Romagnoli and Elizabeth Strong.

Picture on right – George Wiley, George Mitges, Barb Mitges, Gary Dandridge, Hilda Wiley, Pat High



Picture on left – Elizabeth Strong, Barb Midge, Hilda Wiley, George Wiley, Ruth Smith and Sharon Adams. Picture taken by John Allan.

Picture on right- Gary Dandridge, Mayor Sandra Easton and Tony Easton. Picture taken by John Allan



harvest pioneer day

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Leslie McCurdy presents
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Witness how Leslie McCurdy invokes the 'spirit' of Harriet Tubman as she portrays her life in the 1850s, through her escape from captivity and mission to rescue enslaved family and friends.
 A compelling and inspiring play - something to be experienced by everyone and walk away changed forever!

TICKETS \$20

**Friday, October 25, 2024
 6:30pm**

West Niagara Secondary School
 5699 King Street | Lincoln, ON | L3J 1N5

Sponsored by:

To purchase tickets call or email:
 905-662-4454
 admin@jordanstationunitedchurch.org