

OLD NEWS

THE PELHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 903, Fonthill, Ontario L0S 1E0

September 11, 2023

The following information was written by Robert Young, President

I trust that everyone has had an enjoyable and relaxing summer thus far. As far as the Historical Society Executive Committee is concerned however, it has been anything but relaxing. The following list highlights what we have been up to.

Library Displays – A new display discreetly featuring the history of the Sun Valley Gardens nudist club was set up in our case at the Fonthill branch of the library. A display related to Fenwick history was also set up at Maple Acre. Thanks to Carolyn and to Rosemary.

D’Everado Plaque – The Town of Pelham approached the Society’s Executive Committee in June related to a complaint that they had received noting the presence of the name ‘Egerton Ryerson’ on our plaque located in front of Town Hall. The actual wording in reference to Dexter D’Everado was that “While School Superintendent for Niagara, he played a crucial role in Egerton Ryerson’s educational reforms, which established the first free schools in the province.” The controversy related to Ryerson centered on his proposal “that indigenous students continue to be educated in separate, agriculturally based boarding schools with religious and English language instruction”. (Source: Foundations in Education – Brock University) In other words, implying that Ryerson was responsible for the origin of the Indigenous Residential School system that was established later by the government of Canada.

The consensus of the Executive was that the wording on our plaque was a statement of historical fact related to the establishment of free schools. It was not intended to be a statement on the contested legacy of Ryerson. (See ‘Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga, 1826 to 1856, an Appeal for Further Study’ by Donald R. Smith – Ontario history – September 2021) That being said, we decided to agree to a proposal from the Town of Pelham that a new D’Everado plaque be created (at Town expense) replacing the words “Egerton Ryerson’s” with “Canada West’s”. The original plaque being returned to the Historical Society’s archives. This decision also reinforced our goal that Society markers should be a unifying force to broaden awareness of place and story in our community.

Pelham Historical Society Website – The Pelham Historical Society has contracted with ExNihilo Designs to create a website for our group. This site can be accessed through pelhamhistoricalsociety.ca

Publication of Graham Segger’s Book – If all goes well at the printers, Graham should have copies of his new book *The Land at the Crest of the Hill: Clues to Niagara History from Upper Fonthill* available for sale for \$25 at our September 30th meeting. A full colour ebook will also be available through the new www.pelhamhistoricalsociety.ca website on September 22 for \$20.

MEETINGS PLANNED FOR THE BALANCE OF 2023

Saturday September 30th – 2:30 pm – Kirk on the Hill

Diane Girard will be speaking on the topic “100 Years at Lookout Point Country Club”

Saturday October 28th – 2:30 pm – Kirk on the Hill

“Voices of the Fenwick Fair” Residents interviewed in the 1990’s will share their recollections on visiting the local fair.

Saturday December 2nd – 2:30 pm – Kirk on the Hill – Annual General Meeting

“Virtual Tour of the Hillside/Dawdy Cemetery” Come to learn about the cemetery’s history and hear the life stories of some of the people that helped build our community.