



## February Activities Update

### Members Interest Meeting Saturday, February 24, 2024

There are a lot of things happening at the PHS. Around thirty members were present for the Members Interest meeting. Expectations were high and we were not disappointed. It's gratifying and encouraging to our Executive to see such a response. As an added benefit, we welcomed three new members at this meeting.

The old and empty Fonthill signpost on Canboro Road has attracted quite a following since Bill made his very humorous presentation last year. This year Bill reported that a neighbour has installed a bracket for a hanging basket and a border at the base of the post to decorated with plants.

If it can be permitted by our readers, I'll paraphrase Bill. Many seasons have past since the sign was taken away, but the post remains as a silent witness to our comings and goings.

We heard from Bill Lamb on behalf of his wife, Mary Lamb, about a collection of original cartoons by Jacqueline (Jackie) Damato (1936-2022) that have been donated to PHS. Items included representations on several issues from the 1970's including the 'Fonthill Bypass' which was never built.

Robert Young spoke about Calixa Lavallee and the diverse and somewhat controversial origins of O Canada and M. Lavallee. A surprise was Robert's piano rendition of an alternative national anthem proposed in the 1880's.

Carolyn Botari introduced the diary of Mr. John Hill. It was found in the wall of the Bissell house on Metler Road during a restoration. The document itself is in remarkable condition. It contains notes on a famine in Loyalist colonies of Niagara, contacts with the Indigenous inhabitants and the War of 1812. It is remarkable find.

Wendy Young spoke about her many family connections that arose from being parishioners at the Fonthill Church of God. Wendy's interest was aroused by a previous presentation by Graham Segger. It's amazing how life is so interconnected.

And finally, Keith McVettie told us about his great grandfather's walking stick from Ireland. Keith must have been expecting 'trouble' at the Pelham Historical Society meeting because he brought the sturdy, blackthorn shillelagh with him!

### **Other News**

Engineers found out a long time ago that it is easiest to let water and gravity do all of the work. Michelle Vosburgh announced that several significant dates related to the Welland Canal are around the corner. The museums of the four cities on the canal have combined to honour the bicentennial of the canal.

Graham Segger's book, *The Land at the Crest of the Hill*, which was sponsored by the PHS has been a great success. From the proceeds of the book's sales, two thousand dollars has been donated to preserve the Lathrop properties. The good news is the nature is our friend and if we leave our forests and wetlands alone, they can recover.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**Early 1792 Hurricane with Jessica Linzel, Saturday March 23, 2024, 2:30 at Kirk on the Hill**

**Welland Canal History with David Sherlock, Saturday April 27, 2024, 2:30 pm at Kirk on the Hill**

**Visit the Fully Restored Beaverdams Church in Thorold, Marlatt's Road, Thorold, Ontario, Saturday June 1, 2024, 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm.**

Our meetings are held at the Kirk on the Hill, 1344 Haist Street, Fonthill, Ontario. There is plenty of parking and seating. The Pelham Historical Society is pleased to tell you that the annual membership has been maintained at \$5. Memberships can be paid at the door.

Bring a friend or neighbour. It's a great opportunity to meet new people and make acquaintances. And please look at our upgraded social media.

<https://www.pelhamhistoricalsociety.ca/>

Submitted by Wayne Olson