

YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

VOLUME 22

SPRING 2013

Tavistock's first survey

Surveyor Shuball Park - 1819

(see page 3)

Aerial photo circa 1947

NEW WEB SITE LAUNCHED

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Tavistock & District Historical Society

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Martha Wilker saw first train come into Tavistock

from the Tavistock Gazette, December 17, 1941

To recall the day the first train stopped in Tavistock at the rough log station away back in 1857: to remember vividly the tall, soldierly man who was the founder of this village: when eggs were ten cents a dozen: when the children of the home had to be tied to a stump for fear of them getting lost in the heavy forest: when what is now No. 19 Highway was but a rough wagon trail cut through the bush: when there was but a log hotel and a few scattered shacks in the fast growing settlement then known as Inkerman, were but a few of the reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Wilker who marked her 91st birthday anniversary on Friday and who was interviewed by the The Gazette who joins in extending her hearty congratulations on the occasion.

Born In East Zorra

Mrs. Wilker is a native of East Zorra Township, and was born December 12, 1850, a daughter of William and Mary Morlock, pioneers of the Township. The family lived for a few years in East Zorra, then moved to the farm now owned by Mogk Brothers just at the western limits of the village in South Easthope Township.

Mrs. Wilker chuckled when she told of her mother tying a rope to a stump and around the waist of the older children of the family of ten for fear of them running away and becoming lost in the forest.

"There was nothing but tall trees and a few cleared patches on the farm," she recounted. The younger children were kept in the house. "No, there were no wild animals."

Planted A Tree

She told of planting a willow tree on the east side of the driveway into the farm now owned by Messrs Mogk. That tree is still standing and measures over 15 feet in circumference. The large top limbs have had to be cut off, being struck by lightning at different times and wracked considerably by lightning.

Is Charter Member

When a girl, Martha Morlock attended the Evangelical church at Balaclava, then known as the Ratz Church. "Only the older people and the small children rode in the wagons, but we had to walk. We didn't mind at all," commented Mrs. Wilker, who is the only living charter member of Zion Evangelical Church, Tavistock, founded 71 years ago this fall. "It wasn't really a road to Balaclava, just a rough wagon trail, full of bumps and hollows," added Mrs. Wilker.

Remembers Founder of Village

Asked if she remembered the founder of Tavistock Henry Eckstien, Mrs. Wilker said that she recalled very vividly the tall, soldierly gentleman. "He was a real gentleman, too" reminisced Mrs. Wilker. "Father and mother often had he and his bride for a meal. He was good to the children too". At that time Tavistock was a fast-growing village but the buildings were of log and some were only shacks at that. "There wasn't a frame dwelling in the settlement. What a difference today." Mrs. Wilker was asked if she remembered the first train that came into Tavistock. Her face brightened. "What a gala day that was. Everybody came out to see the train. It was wonderful," exclaimed Mrs. Wilker.

Martha Morlock and Leonard Wilker, also a native of the community, were married when the former was 22 years old and following their marriage moved to Crediton where they lived for a few years, then going to Michigan. On their return to Canada they lived for three years at Mount Forest, returning to Michigan where they resided for some time, coming back to Tavistock. Mr. Wilker passed away over 20 years ago and since then Mrs. Wilker has been making her home with her daughter. Mrs. William J. Zimmerman, who is the sole surviving child of a family of four, two daughters and one son passing away when quite young.

Photo below from the Lemp Studio Collection



Did you know?

In the winter of 1901 Henry Quehl and his assistants cut over 300 sleigh-loads of ice on Entricken's pond on the 15th line.

SITTING PRETTY

A history of the toilet...
an amusing illustrated talk about the history of the outhouse, chamber pot, toilet, toilet paper and public washrooms.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

presentation by
Bev Dietrich, Curator
Guelph Civic Museum

**Saturday,
March 23, 2013
at 1:30 p.m.**

Grace United Church Hall
116 Woodstock St. S.,
Tavistock, ON

Everyone
welcome!
Refreshments



Another pioneer remembered

*Old Boys Reunion program
- June 12, 1930*

Henry Rausch came to this section in 1844 at the age of 7. Coming with his parents from Germany, they landed at New York, travelled by steamboat to Albany, by canal boat to Rochester, and by steamboat to Hamilton, where they were met by Conrad Schaefer who drove them to Petersburg by team. They remained in Petersburg three weeks and then came on to Henry Wettlaufer's, south of Shakespeare, before finally locating on the west side of the 14th Line, East Zorra, at the boundary. Mr. Rausch tells us that there were no inhabitants in what is now known as Tavistock. There was nothing but bush and swampy lands here with a corduroy road running through from the north. There were no railroads in the early days and groceries had to be brought in from New Hamburg and flour had to be procured from Galt, teams being mostly used.

A trip back in time

Shuball Park surveyed Tavistock in 1819

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could step back in time to see what Tavistock was like before the land was settled by early pioneers?

At the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the Tavistock and District Historical Society, Dr. Paul Bartlett outlined the events in Upper Canada leading up to Tavistock's founding and its early years. He traced the duties of Lord Simcoe in his efforts to open up the territory to settlers. Under the supervision of John Galt, head of the Canada Company, the Huron Tract was surveyed and roads were built. Dr. Bartlett showed the original survey map of the 12th Line of East Zorra from Woodstock to "the rear line" which is where the road meets the county road at Hope Street just west of Tavistock.

Dr. Bartlett was also able to acquire a copy of the original notes of surveyor Shuball Park who completed his work in the area in 1819.

These field notes described every stream, pond and identifiable tree used as a landmark along the path.

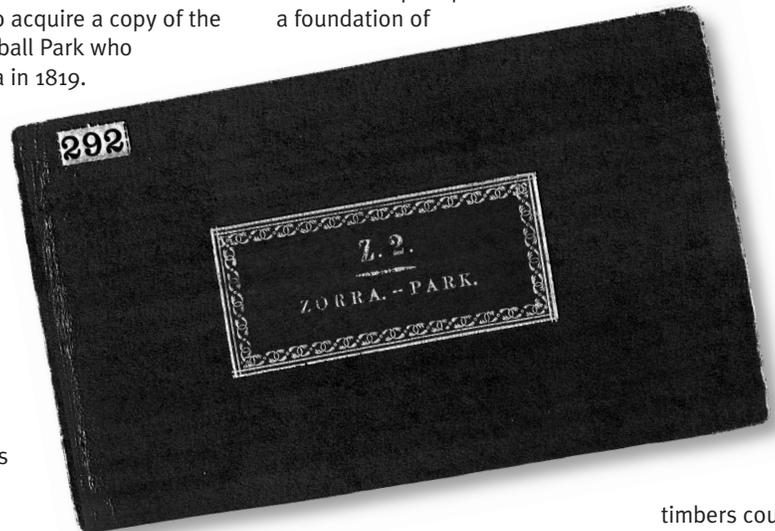
The description of the land surveyed nearly 200 years ago can bring more than a chuckle as the natural water courses described in his notes are still flowing today, despite the buildup of residences and businesses, especially when torrential rains and flooding occur.

The following is an excerpt from his notes describing what is now Hope Street, from west to east. It is interesting to note that at the intersection of the 12th Line and Hope Street was a "cedar swamp ... mostly dry, beech and maple." Moving toward the village, he described the following: "cedar swamp with some pines in it ... a spring run course S 3 links wide we have kept on the side hill all the way since we left the swamp, the land descends to the south to an open flat of about 5 acres, to a fine brook course south 10 links wide, to timbered land, of hill, land good both to N and S of the line. Timbered beech and maple, some elm, now tamarack swamp rather? close, good beech and maple land on our left, spring brook just at the edge of a cedar swamp 2 links wide course S of cedar swamp to dry land, to small spring brook course." Approaching what is now the five corner intersection of the village, his report stated, "to swale of water but did not run. Timber generally beech, maple, some elm, bass and black ash." Continuing out Hope Street East, he noted, "low ground, lasting creek due east 8 links wide, vein of black ash timber on each side of the creek, swamp brook dry in summer."

Then after crossing the 14th line, he stated, "deep creek 12 links wide course S, flats on both sides and no banks."

Even with all the new technology, underground infrastructure, drains and pipes, the water still flows where it wants.

Other early descriptions of construction in the village include numerous references to quicksand or swampy land in the vicinity. When Capt. Henry Eckstein was building the first brick hotel in the village at the five-corner intersection in 1850 it was recorded in the History of Perth County that: "Where this building now stands was a great bog, and it was not till large quantities of solid material was swallowed up in quick sand that a foundation of



timbers could be laid in order to support the present fine structure."

Later residents have also mentioned that the land at the corners of Woodstock and William Streets also had quicksand-like properties. One resident recalls a backhoe having to be pulled from the foundation site when several existing buildings were built.

Although Tavistock has no major tributary except for Horner Creek south of the village and the Shakespeare drain to the east, there is no shortage of flowing underground water sources and an abundance of well water.

NOW OPEN SUNDAYS!

Did you know?

beginning Sunday, April 7, 2013
the Tavistock Museum/Archives
will be moving to Sunday afternoon
opening from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

From the Outhouse

Stories gathered by Mary Nicklas

I remember the open air outhouse during the 1930s and 1940s. Ours sat on the way to the barn in front of the fence that divided the grass around the house and the orchard. On a hot summer evening my mother decided to leave the door open while she did her thing. Lo and behold, a car comes in the driveway and turns on the grass right in front of the outhouse. I'm not sure what she did at that point. I don't think the car driver had a conversation with her there through the open door. I'm sure mom closed the door after that when she went to the outhouse.

- Anonymous

When we brought 83 Hope Street we acquired an "outdoor toilet". Later in the evening I went to use the facilities. Sitting down I thought I was on an animal. I discovered that the former owner had put a fur collar on the seat.

- Jean Houghton

In the thirties and forties we didn't have the luxury of indoor plumbing. In my home we didn't have to wade through the snow to get to the outhouse as it was attached to the washhouse. It was well ventilated. On cold stormy days we remembered to take a broom with us to clear the snow off the seat before relaxing to read the Eaton's catalogue or Family Herald.

- Anonymous

Katie? Oh, Katie, where are you?

She is probably sitting in the backhouse looking through the Eaton's catalogue.

Backhouse was the name given to the outdoor toilet on the farm. It was a windowless, four by four, two-seated structure situated out of sight behind the smokehouse on a well-worn path out of view from the farmhouse. The only adornment in the backhouse was the out-of-season Eaton's catalogue hanging precariously on a hook. The catalogue served its purpose. It took the place of modern day toilet paper. Did the Eaton Company know about this?

- Anonymous

Outhouse photo by Tim Mosher



The outdoor toilet was a necessity on the farm before we had indoor plumbing. However, when the latch was not in properly it could spell disaster. One time I closed the door when I was inside and the latch fell out! The small full-moon vent was too high and too tiny for me to get out. The alternative was not at all feasible! My calls for help were not heard. Only when it was time to get ready for church and no one could find me did they start to look for me.

- Arvilla Leis

I remember 2 men who took on the job of cleaning outhouses with a wheelbarrow and shovels. They would get little money but were paid by a meal and take-home food.

I remember that bedroom dressers had a larger section on the left side with a door to hide the chamber pot. Each morning the chamber pot would be carried to the outhouse, rinsed and the lid put on.

I know of a 25th anniversary celebrated at a country farmhouse at the end of December. Relatives came from Niagara Falls and Buffalo by train and stayed for 3 days. Other relatives came from the London area by cutter and horses and visited. There were no bathrooms. The outdoor privies were very busy.

- Anonymous

I was 20 years old before we had indoor plumbing. There was no hydro as not enough farms had signed up. In the winter we had to put on jackets and boots to go to the outhouse.

We didn't stay long. In the spring and summer and fall flies were a problem. On our farm we called it the privy. It was usually behind the house or in the orchard or near some trees. I read that in 1900 only about 10 in 100 had indoor plumbing. At Hallowe'en the outhouses were often tipped over. In the villages they were often carried to a downtown spot. The 2-seaters had 1 large seat and a smaller one for children. I remember near Maplewood an older man was found dead of a heart attack in the privy. The Eaton's catalogue pages were used for reading and for toilet paper.

- Anonymous

Dig into Tavistock's history - online!

www.tavistockhistory.ca

You can search photos in The Lemp Studio Collection; find birth, death and marriage dates of thousands of Tavistock residents; or find out more about local veterans.

Coming soon: Find out what's in the archives and museum collections, displays, and business and family histories.