

*History*  
MILLBROOK AND CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Still at work as history unfolds

While our usual get-togethers and gatherings have had to be put on pause since March, the Historical Society is continuing to get work done.

We have been honoured to receive several donations to our collection; photographs and documents that add to the local historical record. These have been catalogued so that they can be accessed easily, and are preserved in keeping with archival standards.

We are looking forward to the installation of an information kiosk at the base of the spillway next to Needler's Mill in Millbrook. Three illustrated panels will give brief descriptions of the history of Millbrook and of mills in the area, and highlight the importance of the millpond. This initiative is a joint project between the Historical Society and Otonabee Conservation, and acknowledges funding support for the Millbrook Dam Project.

As November 11 approaches, your Historical Society is mindful of those in our community who have answered the call to defend freedom and serve the country. We remember them.



## Remembering Mary Ridge

Passionate about her community, insatiably curious and always positive, Mary Ridge was a great friend and enthusiastic supporter of the Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society. We miss her.



For Mary's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday several years ago, her sister Carol Donaldson organized a celebration at the Millbrook Branch 402 Legion Hall, where relatives and friends shared a few stories about Mary. From figuring out how to wallpaper an outhouse ceiling to fibreglassing and painting her own cars, Mary showed an enterprising spirit. Her cars were a particular fascination for her family who marveled at how she'd keep them on the road, cutting out rusted sections, fashioning patches and pop-rivetting them into place, sanding and painting them in masterful fashion. Her first car, she told the crowd, was a '29 Ford. There were seven or eight more, she said, including a two tone '60 Chev that her nephew described as definitely pink.

Mary came to Millbrook at age 4 in 1928 with her father, a Great Lakes marine engineer, mother and three brothers William, Bob and Fred, and moved into 60 King Street East. The move, according to Carol who was born some years later, was made to allow Mrs. Ridge to care for Mr. Ridge's mother who lived in the house next to Baxter Creek, just down the hill from #60. With the crash in '29 and subsequent depression, Mr. Ridge lost the house but inherited his mother's home on her death, and the family moved down the street. (cont. p.2...)

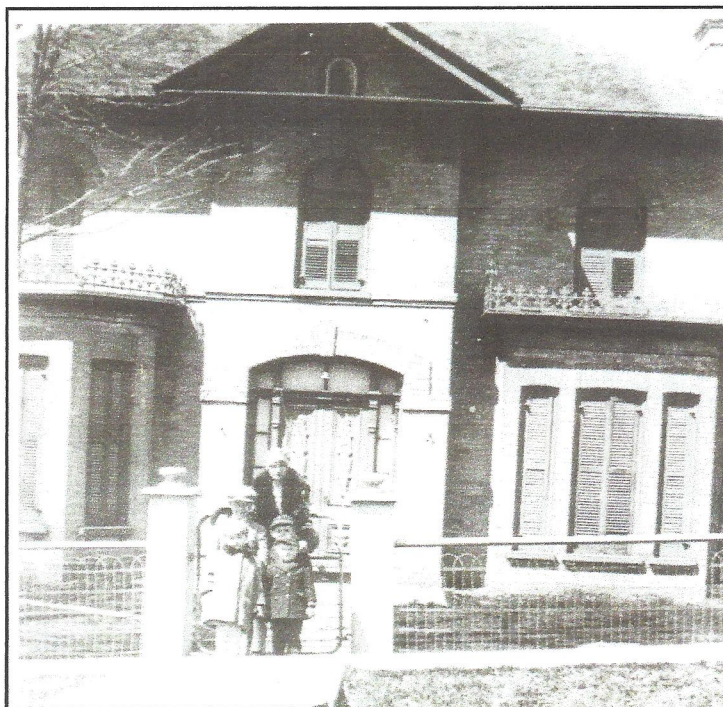


cont. from p. 1)

Craig and Mike Donaldson described their Aunt Mary as “a bit of a prankster”. She had a glint in her eye that gave away her sense of humour and appetite for adventure. Dubbing her “Aunt Mary who can fix everything”, Craig described episodes of jumping off bridges, kite-flying, go-carting and being taught how to drive: Mary, he said, was always up to a challenge. Not to be out-foxed by a pair of nephews, Mary undermined plans to have her miss parent-teacher interviews when she ‘baby-sat’ the pair in Niagara Falls, figuring out the route to and from the school by following school bus signs. More family members chimed in with tales of Mary taking them on fishing trips and to the CNE, and described her as having the patience of a saint.

Great Aunt Mary, resident of Millbrook Manor, was a favourite person to visit, went another story. Wheelchair wars in the hall, slides down the garbage chute, fishing trips to the pond were all encouraged if not initiated by Mary.

Mary rarely missed a Historical Society meeting. Passionate about local history, she contributed extensively to two collections of photographs, history and reminiscences compiled by Marlyne Fisher-Heasman, ‘Millbrook – Voice of the People’ and ‘Millbrook Memories’. She was tireless when it came to matching names



Mary, her mother, Elizabeth, and her brothers William (Sammy), Bob and Fred, in front of the house at 60 King St.E. in 1928, which was the year the Ridge family moved to Millbrook.

to people in photographs taken long ago, and she loved to share stories.

Mary’s personal collection of Millbrook history was donated to the Historical Society, and includes photographs, clippings and many notes in Mary’s hand to help provide context and bring many local events from the past to life.

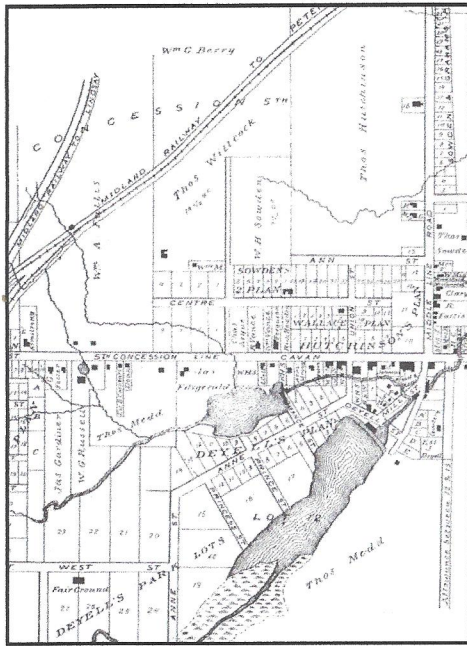
Along with local history and community, Mary was passionate about her family. She was immensely proud of her three brothers’ service as Armed Forces veterans, and loved to keep up with all her nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews, and the great-greats too.

Mary passed away on June 26, 2020. We will all miss her.

Check out our website:  
[www.millbrookcavanhs.org](http://www.millbrookcavanhs.org)

Like us on Facebook



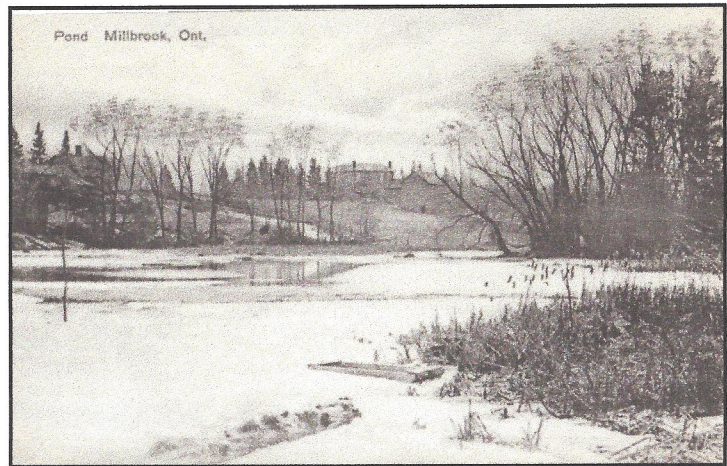


This map, from around 1878, shows the factory pond between Anne Street and the 5<sup>th</sup> Concession Line Cavan (now King St.). There was a berm built to create the pond that powered Gordon McIvor's oat mill. The berm can still be seen today.

## We want to welcome you back!

But, for now, our programming is on hold. That doesn't mean we aren't active, and we need your support.

We hope you will consider **renewing your membership** in the Historical Society for 2020-2021. A membership form is attached, and we encourage you to download it, fill it in and mail it, or leave it, with payment, at the Millbrook Branch of the library. While you're there, why not visit the Reference Section where you can find lots of local history resources?



Factory Pond. This is one of a group of postcards recently donated by Jane Bateman from a collection belonging to her father.

## Connecting the dots and honouring the 'Queen Mum' of Red Hatters

Whether hard at work serving the community in the kitchen at Millbrook's St. Thomas' Anglican Church or laughing along with Cavan's Blazing Beauties as the 'Queen Mum' of the local Red Hatters, Betty Lunn was recognized for her gentleness and optimism. She also enjoyed and participated in the Historical Society's annual Tea at the Manor event. As fellow Red Hatter and Historical Society Board member Jeanette Allenbick says, Betty always took an interest in people and was fun to be with. Betty passed away on July 6, 2020, with her husband of 64 years, Joe, by her side.

Betty enjoyed delving into local history, and took pride in claiming Gordon McIvor, whose oat mill was powered by Factory Pond, as one of her grandfathers. The pond in winter drew skaters on Saturday afternoons and moonlit evenings, and the oatmeal produced by the mill was greatly appreciated by residents of the village and the surrounding area.

Gordon McIvor's oat mill is highlighted on one of the panels of the information kiosk soon to be installed next to Needler's Mill. Betty would have been pleased.



## Brush up on your local history

The Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society has several excellent publications that take a deep dive into the history of this area from 1817, and into the heritage architecture that makes Millbrook and Cavan Monaghan such an interesting place to visit.

Our local history book, **This Green & Pleasant Land – Chronicles of Cavan Township**, offers accounts of a vast variety of aspects that make up our community – a history of the railway that made Millbrook a regional hub; the importance of mills throughout the township as producers of everything from flour and feed to blankets and baskets; biographical sketches of trailblazers and tycoons. The book itself is out of print, but the contents have been downloaded to CDs/DVDs that can be read on your laptop or desktop computer screen.

**Significant Architecture of Millbrook** takes you on a tour of the many heritage properties in Millbrook, describing the history and highlighting the different styles and features that make each one worthy of designation as historically significant.

These are both available at Millbrook Mercantile, or from the Historical Society at a cost of \$20 each; you can place an order by contacting us by email [millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com](mailto:millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com), or by calling and leaving a message with Celia at 705-932-3130.



Millbrook High School Grade 10, 1950-51

School pictures with names are always a great addition to our collection. This one comes from a binder entitled *Memories and More*, donated by Vilda Nurse. The binder includes lots of school pictures and a collection of newspaper clippings that recount tales of life on the Fallis Line.

## An ideal opportunity for learning

With no chance to gather these days for our regular monthly meetings to learn about aspects of our history, this is an ideal time to take advantage of the free education kit that has been designed to help both educators and Ontario students learn about Indigenous treaties, territories and history.

This tool kit has been developed by Carolyn King, former elected chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. It has just been released in recognition of Ontario's Treaty Recognition Week that falls during the first week of November.

Part of the **Moccasin Identifier Project**, the kit outlines lesson plans for students from Grades 1 to 8, but all that it teaches and suggests as activities can be absorbed and used by "students" of any age. Here's free and fascinating content for our COVID induced spare time.

You will find it on the **Moccasin Identifier** website.

# MILLBROOK & CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Annual Membership

### 2020 – 2021

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: **August 31, 2021**

Family Membership \$25.00 ☐ Single Membership \$15.00 ☐ Student Membership \$5 ☐

Supporting Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Charitable Reg. # 89276 0802 RR0001

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

P.O Box /R.R. \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town/Village \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (please print legibly!) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I/we consent to receiving e-mail newsletters and notices of coming events from MCHS

*Please make cheques payable to: Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society*

Mail to: Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society  
Box 334  
Millbrook, ON, Canada L0A 1G0

**We invite you to let us know which of our committees or activities suit your interests.**

- ☐ Collection Committee: archiving and cataloguing records, objects and memorabilia significant to the history of Cavan Monaghan Township
- ☐ Program Committee: programming, events, guest speakers
- ☐ Oral Histories Project; recording the memories of those with stories to tell
- ☐ Needler's Mill Committee
- ☐ Communications & Publicity: newsletters, web site and Facebook updates
- ☐ Financial Development: fund-raising events and initiatives
- ☐ Membership Development
- ☐ Hospitality Committee: refreshments and welcoming at events

For office use:

Originator: \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_