

# recollect

News from the Millbrook and Cavan Historical Society

*History*  
MILLBROOK AND CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring/Summer 2023



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On the cover: 4th Line Theatre Founder and Playwright, Robert Winslow. Photo courtesy of the 4th Line Theatre. More on page 5.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We meet on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Anishinabewaki and acknowledge with thanks their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.



# A LETTER FROM THE MCHS BOARD

*Imagine, if you will, a downtown Millbrook that is devoid of the beautiful Victorian era storefronts and buildings.*

Strolling along King Street, you can admire the work recently done to the Millbrook Dental Office, once the TD Canada Trust at the corner of Tupper. As you continue along, you see the Whale Family Chiropractic office, which still has the bank vault door intact, you can see it if you've ever wandered inside. Then onto the charming windows of the Pastry Peddler (here is a fun fact: the Historical Society used to call that storefront its own!). And then to the Joneses. Across the street, you have the beautiful, colorful storefronts that make up the small businesses of friends and neighbours.

We think back fondly of Christmas in the Village, hosted by the BIA and its volunteers. The wonderful, seasonal decorations and planters that line our quaint downtown streets. Millbrook is so idyllic, when people take photos to send to far off friends they often comment that it looks like a movie set. In fact, it has been a movie set—bringing in much needed revenue and exposure to our little neck of the woods.

Now, imagine, if you will, a downtown Millbrook that is devoid of the architecture that is so charming. Imagine that someone who owned one of these buildings could, without consultation, bulldoze these time capsules to the ground and construct a parking lot, impacting the entire atmosphere and character of the downtown area.

Or could let their building go into such a state of disrepair that it was demolition by neglect.

We've seen towns where the designation has been a successful way to preserve the cultural heritage buildings that provide residents and visitors with a glimpse into the past. Niagara-on-the-Lake has a booming tourism industry, in part because of their preservation efforts and the way the area has attracted various types of industries that encourage visitors. Queen and Picton streets are heritage conservation districts. I can't help but think of our local farm community and Rolling Grape vineyard when I draw the comparison and think of the potential of our township as a destination for a day trip or a stop on the way to Ottawa or cottage country. I consider Unionville and downtown Oakville, Byward Market in Ottawa, and Walton, John, Ontario, and Queen Streets in Port Hope to be excellent examples of well preserved heritage conservation areas that add to quality of life for residents and draw visitors from near and far.

In researching the requirements, we thought it would be helpful to hear from small business owners and residents who live and work in places that have a designated heritage district. We spoke with the owners of The Men's Room, a popular barbershop on Walton Street in downtown Port Hope. "We come into [cont'd]

## A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CONT'D...

work and some mornings just feel lucky to work in such a beautiful downtown," Katie Haalstra, co-owner of The Men's Room, shared with us. "There is just a special sense of community when there's pride shown in the upkeep of a heritage district." Katie and her sister Laura opened The Men's Room in 2019 and it has been booming ever since. "In the summer in particular, you can see so many people coming from out-of-town to spend a day in the historical downtown. By staying true to the heritage of the town, Port Hope is set apart from other towns and has become a tourist destination." We asked the sisters if they felt the heritage designations had helped their business, and Laura chimed in, "This helps bring so much business to the local shops. We have had new clients say they started off just visiting Port Hope and they fell in love with its charm and decided to make the move."

Let's work together, as a community, to protect what remains of our unique heritage downtown. Our Annual General Meeting, which will be held in May (more details to come), will include a special guest that will elaborate on this fascinating and timely topic--we hope you will join us.

## HAVE YOUR SAY...

We asked MCHS members "Why do you feel the preservation of downtown Millbrook's heritage and architecture is important?" this is what they had to say...

"It's so important to preserve what we have. We've already lost so much that was here at one time. The train station comes to mind. Having a historical village attracts visitors, and film making! And it just makes for a more lovely place to be in, and to enjoy!"

*Catriona Sinclair*

"Millbrook has a historic downtown that is virtually unique in North America. That is why people visit Millbrook, it is why it is chosen for filming and it is why I shop there instead of Peterborough. It should be designated as a heritage district under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and preserved in perpetuity. Already too many buildings have been lost or altered in an incompatible way."

*Barbara Heidenreich*



**Do you have something to say? Share your thoughts on this important question by emailing us: [millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com](mailto:millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com)**





*From Dr. Beatty's party lines in Garden Hill to a still unsolved murder, Rob Winslow brought his best stories and research for the MCHS.*

## **RECAP: AN EVENING WITH ROBERT WINSLOW**

On February 23, 2023 it was cold and blustery outside, but the vibes in the Royal Canadian Legion branch 402, in historic downtown Millbrook were warm and inviting. The MCHS was thrilled to have so many attendees that we needed to find additional seating to accommodate everyone! True to form, Rob Winslow came prepared with an armload of documents, research, and notes that he has compiled in preparation for his playwriting and, we suspect, out of genuine love and curiosity for the area. Two stories in particular that stood out for this newcomer to Millbrook was the murder of Elizabeth Deyell, which is still unsolved and the story relayed by a

certain barber we will call LN about the numerous bootleggers in the area that were just hardworking folks, trying to make ends meet. (You can view a clip from that part of the evening on the MCHS YouTube channel and Facebook page). Rob's enthusiasm was contagious, members of the audience shared their own stories (my favourite, in relation to the barber, was an annual haircut where all the girls in the family received a "bowl cut" from LN because a salon was out of the question) and asked questions. Additionally, the attendees expressed gratitude for Rob's ongoing work to preserve the local memories, events, and personalities by way of the stage and page.



## RECAP: AN EVENING WITH ROBERT WINSLOW CONT'D...



"[...] We so loved our evening with Rob Winslow and his incredible storytelling [...] we truly hope there will be more of these storytelling evenings."

Lorraine Lachapelle

*Discover the MCHS YouTube Channel and find highlights from An Evening with Robert Winslow.*

 @MILLBROOKCAVANHS



*History*  
MILLBROOK AND CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# MCHS

## Curiosities Shop

Discover unique, one-of-a-kind items that let you  
bring a bit of history home and support the MCHS.  
You never know what you will find!



Join our Curiosities Shop facebook group!  
Scan the QR code above.



[/millbrookcavanhs](https://www.facebook.com/millbrookcavanhs)

[millbrookcavanhs.org](http://millbrookcavanhs.org)

# MCHS HAS A NEW COMMUNITY PARTNER

We have been invited to move in with a long-time friend and it's time!  
CM Libraries and the Historical Society are a great match.

Over the past few years, your Historical Society has worked with the Millbrook branch of Cavan Monaghan Libraries in a number of ways. The library is the location of our heritage display cabinet where Board member Peter Ramsay curates exhibits featuring both local artifacts and heritage collections, and the library offers access to Ancestry Library Edition for genealogy research. In the past we have held a number of events in the Harry Williams Room and have collaborated on a Remembrance Day Movie Night. Library staff also receive inquiries from patrons about local heritage features and programming and pass them along to us.

So, it just makes sense to deepen our relationship with such a compatible friend and ally. Although already extremely short of space, the Millbrook branch has graciously invited us to tuck our considerable archives into a designated area at the Old Millbrook School.

The move will make accessing the collection and responding to inquiries easier and more efficient. Library staff and MCHS volunteers will be able to refer to the collection catalogue and help those with questions about family histories and past local events find what they are looking for.

This match is not an uncommon one. Many local archives are partnered with municipal libraries. Regional examples include Port Hope, Cobourg, Otonabee-South Monaghan in Keene, and Clarington Public Library in Bowmanville.

MCHS is deeply indebted to Glenn Fallis, owner of Voyageur Canoe Company, for housing our archives at a minimal rent for the past 12 years. He and Jerry have been gracious and generous hosts, and we are sincerely grateful.

## MCHS REMEMBERS JUDITH HICKEY

MCHS lost a great friend and supporter in mid-January when former Cavan Monaghan resident Judith Hickey passed on as a result of pancreatic cancer.

Judith organized the Historical Society's House and Garden Tours in the 1990s and was instrumental in securing not-for-profit status for us. She also managed the Red Cross Equipment Loan program in Millbrook. She was dynamic, elegant, gracious and thoughtful. She and her husband David moved from here to Cobourg where she continued to volunteer and share her skills with the Inner Wheel organization. She will be greatly missed and remembered with gratitude.



# VALENTINE'S DISPLAY AT THE LIBRARY

Cris and Peter Ramsay delighted CM Libraries patrons and visitors with their display of vintage and unique Barbies themed for Valentine's Day. Believe it or not, Cris actually tailored some of the tiny doll outfits herself! Thank you to Cris and Peter for their tremendous work sharing this fun collection.





# ANTIQUE TOOL DISPLAY AT THE LIBRARY

The March display of antique tools has a fun surprise hidden in the case...visit the Millbrook branch of Cavan Monaghan Libraries to spot the interloper! Snap a photo and share it with us on Facebook.



*Do you have a collection you would like to display? We'd love to connect. Please email us: [millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com](mailto:millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com)*



# SEASONED AUTHOR ADDS PLAYWRITING TO EXCEPTIONAL RESUME

D'Arcy Jenish has stepped into new territory with his first play, *The Tilco Strike*, which will be premiered this July at 4 th Line Theatre.

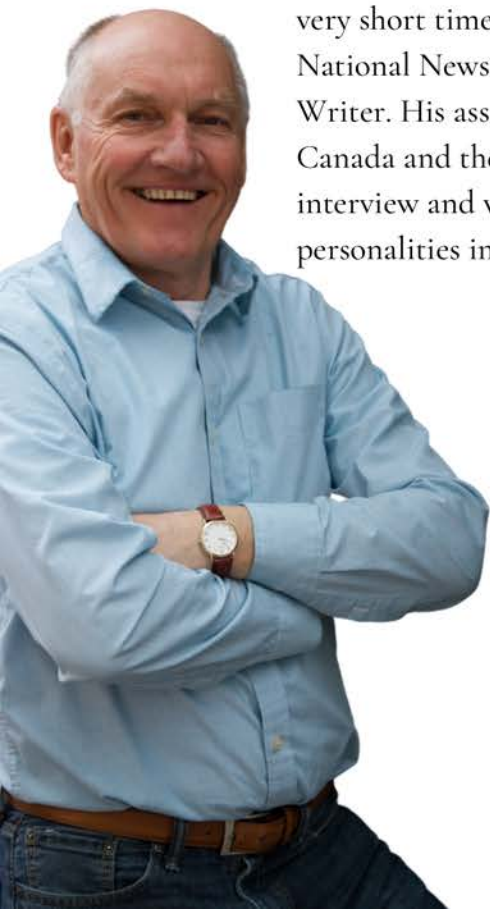
D'Arcy Jenish's career as a writer and journalist started with small-town newspapers in southwestern Ontario. Originally from Saskatchewan, he attended high school in Peterborough and graduated from the University of Western Ontario. The West called him back in 1979 for a seven year stint with *Alberta Report* in Edmonton. As Senior Editor he covered business, politics and sports at a time of political upheaval, particularly between Ottawa and the province over the National Energy Policy, and in 1985 he became *Alberta Report's* first Ottawa Bureau Chief, to cover national affairs from a regional perspective.

He caught the attention of *Maclean's* in a very short time and joined Canada's National Newsmagazine in 1986 as Senior Writer. His assignments took him across Canada and the United States to interview and write about leading personalities in the worlds of sport,

business, the arts and sciences, but while he was covering royal tours, federal elections and major trials, he was also looking out for the local or regional story that would touch readers across the country.

Jenish left *Maclean's* in 2001 to build a freelance writing business that has thrived. Along with newspaper and magazine features and commentaries, corporate reports and speeches, he has also written seven works of historical non-fiction, ranging in subject matter from the mapping of Canada's West by David Thompson, the fall of the Plains Cree and the Blackfoot Confederacy, the FLQ Crisis, and hockey – clearly a passion as the sport is the focus of no fewer than three of his books.

And now, D'Arcy Jenish has stepped into new territory with his first play, *The Tilco Strike*, which will be premiered this July at 4 th Line Theatre. The play tells the story of the year-long fight in 1965 by 35 poorly paid women at Tilco Plastics in Peterborough over a \$25 bonus denied them by management. The strike escalated into an epic battle between organized labour and strike-breaking employers, and changed labour relations in Ontario forever. There may be some here in our area who remember Tilco Plastics or were even employed there. Get in touch with us, please! We would love to include your memories in the evening when we welcome D'Arcy Jenish to come and talk about his breakthrough into playwriting and his research into the *Tilco Strike*.





# UPCOMING EVENTS FROM MCHS



## MCHS TRIVIA NIGHT

Trivia! Live Music! Prizes! Don't miss out on the fun. Come as a team or as an individual to the first Trivia Night hosted by the MCHS. Subjects will range from local history to pop culture.

Location: Royal Canadian Legion Branch 402 - Millbrook

Date: March 30, 2023

Time: 7 pm - 9 pm, doors at 6:45 pm

\$5/person

## AN EVENING WITH D'ARCY JENISH

D'Arcy Jenish is an accomplished journalist and writer; his play "The Tilco Strike" will premiere at the 4th Line Theatre this 2023 season. Learn more about the events that inspired his work with this interactive evening of storytelling.

Location: Lion's Community Centre

Date: April 20, 2023

Time: 7 pm - 9 pm, doors at 6:45 pm

Free for MCHS Members; Guests by Donation



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE: MAY 25, 2023

*We're back to our regularly scheduled cadence of an Annual Meeting in the Spring. Details will be forthcoming, but you can expect a full program that includes a speaker, food, and fun.*

*We can't wait to see our members, friends, and neighbours there!*



# WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

History isn't just buildings and events, it's the people in our community.

*Elaine is a newcomer to Cavan, having moved with her husband, Peter, in July 2022 from North Whitby and before that, Uxbridge. What has struck her about Cavan and the surrounding area is the rolling hills, the access to nature, and the rich history.*

Elaine has been a community builder for decades, having served as Chair of the Uxbridge BIA for many years and having been part of Committees of Council for Canada Day and other high-profile community events, including fundraising for the historic railway. Her interest in community has been a passion, from publishing a magazine that profiled local people in Uxbridge to assisting with the elections in Cavan Monaghan, she has always looked for ways to get involved and to give back.

She shared that her mother had been orphaned during WWII and had been sent to live with a family who already had five children—the family adopted her as one of their own. Elaine still keeps in touch with her British family and was fortunate enough to take her mother, now passed, on one final trip to visit the place where she had met Elaine's father.

On her 12-acre homestead, she has an old barn that she is looking to restore and a home that her husband, Peter, upon retirement, will start to bring back to its former glory. "The pace here is just so different from where we were. Millbrook is the cutest little downtown and even though you're rural, you're still close to everything you need." One of her favourite features of her new town is the stairs at the Old Millbrook School library; even though they're pitted and worn, she loves them because they speak to the many people who have been in the same spot at a different time. Elaine and her husband love history and it extends to vintage cars, historic homes and properties, and local heritage.



"This is our last house, I think." Elaine shared. She has plans to construct a swing set for her grandchildren and has brought kayaks from their cottage so they can fully enjoy the pond on their property.



# DEAR MCHS... CAN YOU HELP SOLVE A HISTORY MYSTERY?

Elaine and Peter Leigh are new to Cavan and have some questions about their new homestead, 120 Hwy 7A, and its past residents.



Kim, our wonderful research and genealogy volunteer, has managed to find out that the property was originally a clergy reserve, land set aside for the church when the township was initially surveyed. Typically lot 2 on every second concession was a clergy reserve. There is also a sawmill noted as being on the creek on the property. The ownership history from 1835 to 1996 was a good source of information. The lots were initially surveyed as 200 acre parcels. There was a sale to Cuthbert Richardson of the 100 acres in the south half of the lot in 1844. In 1867 you can see the parcel being split into 2 fifty acre parcels.

Kim found it interesting that the location of the sawmill was not included on the map of mills that was included in *This Green and Pleasant Land*, the book is generally well researched but it may be that there was no one left around to tell the story of that particular mill when the book was published in 1990.

If anyone has any information about the property or the previous owners, Elaine would be very happy to connect with you to learn more. You may send your information to the Historical Society and we will share with her. Email: [millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com](mailto:millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com)



# Help us bring local history to life.



## Join MCHS as a corporate member, today.

Through the ongoing, generous support of our members and business community, the Millbrook and Cavan Historical Society has been able to make great strides in the preservation of our local history. Will you be part of the effort in 2023?

We are undertaking key initiatives that we hope will bring awareness of the rich history of the local area to newcomers, long-time residents, and visitors alike.

- More in-person events!
- Continued digitization the physical assets in the MCHS archive.
- Make publications available as eBooks for broader distribution and access.
- Improve membership and volunteer experiences to ensure long-term vitality.

We hope you will support us in these endeavours by officially sponsoring the MCHS this year. Should you wish to discuss a custom sponsorship or a donation, we would love to hear from you.



# History MILLBROOK AND CAVAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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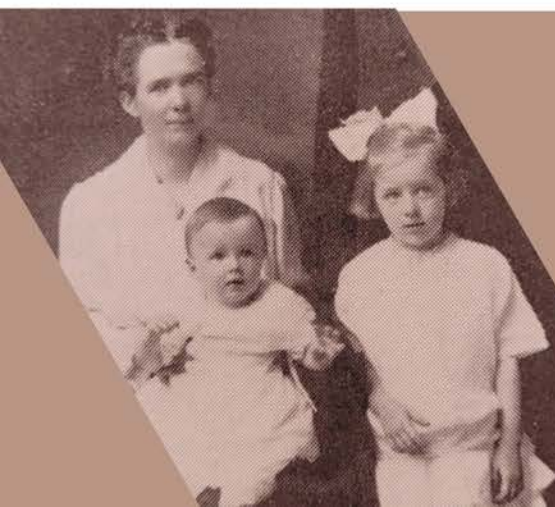
PETER RAMSAY  
DIRECTOR

## MANDATE

The purpose of the Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society is to bring together individuals interested in the diverse historical aspects of Cavan Monaghan and to research, record, retain, preserve, and present historical information pertaining to the area.

The objectives of the Society include:

- Recalling the past and preserving the present.
- Maintaining a community repository for artifacts and written records of historical interest to Cavan Monaghan.
- Encouraging the study and research of the history of Cavan Monaghan and heritage-based learning, and developing volunteer opportunities for individuals.
- Securing and preserving an accurate account of the historical, architectural and archaeological heritage of Millbrook and Cavan.
- Advancing education by improving the public's understanding and awareness of the history of Cavan Monaghan by hosting events, displays, exhibitions and performances, supporting programs offered by the society, and by producing educational material.
- Preserving objects and structures of historical significance.



Become an MCHS Member Today!  
*Support heritage conservation in your community.*

Your membership supports community programming, the ongoing digitization and preservation of our collections, heritage conservation initiatives, and more!



millbrookecavanhs@gmail.com

DONATE TODAY