



One For The Archives

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre
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Articles in this Archives Newsletter were written and edited by Gary Gibson with contributions from Diane Cole.

SCHOOLS ABOLISHED ... WELL SOME OF THEM ANYWAY

Abolished: annihilated, demolished, destroyed, obliterated, eradicated, exterminated, gone, perished, squandered, wasted, shredded, and wrecked ... but thanks to us, NOT AT THE ARCHIVES.

When schools in the HWDSB are deemed no longer viable and are slated to be closed, the EAHC operates under a mandate from the HWDSB to identify and preserve artifacts of historical value. The Archives role is spelled out in the Board's Revitalization Policy and the process delineated in our School Closures Protocol at the EAHC.

John Aikman, our Manager, often working with one or more volunteers, will visit the school sometime before the date slated for closure. Working through the school administration, John will tour the school and identify and tag those items deemed of archival value. It is a thoughtful and important process, much dependent on the experience and expertise of Mr. Aikman. With several older Hamilton-area schools being demolished (and sometimes replaced) in these early years of the 21st century, it is critical to identify and preserve those artifacts before they are lost forever.



Especially in our oldest schools, John has been able to rescue architectural details from the exterior of the buildings themselves. The Archives and Heritage Centre in the past few years has rapidly developed an inspiring and fascinating treasury of cornerstones, friezes, carvings, and gargoyles from area schools of another era.

When a school is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the EAHC acts as a safe holding area for those valuable items that will eventually find a home in the new building. With the most recent school closings, the Archives has received several heritage items from Central Park, Dundas District,

Lawfield, and Vern Ames Schools. These items will eventually find a new home in the schools replacing those demolished. As well, significant stone carvings have been rescued from the wrecker's ball at Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria Schools. They are on display now at the Archives until the replacement schools are completed and ready to house these artifacts.



STARTLING STATISTICS STUN SUBCOMMITTEE

The Friends of Educational Archives and Heritage Centre is the organization that oversees the Archives and supervises its mandate. The Friends sets up sub-committees from time to time to provide information and advice. The Archives Futures Committee was formed two years ago to develop goals and strategies for the Archives facilities and organizational structures. One of our first tasks was to survey our volunteers and to closely examine our Macassa Avenue site to find out what we did, what resources we had, how they were organized, and where we wanted to go in future.

Here are some of those intriguing statistics from 2006:

- 7: Number of rooms occupied at Vincent Massey by the EAHC
- 9: Filing cabinet drawers used to house Curriculum Documents
- 60: Number of drawers in 15 file cabinets used to file documents from the HWDSB
- 150: Minimum number of lineal meters of shelf space required to store school registers at the Archives
- 182: Square meters of display space in our Main Display Hall at 155 Macassa Avenue.

PROFESSIONAL POWER- POINT PRESENTATION PROVES POTENT

Since the EAHC now has its own laptop computer and digital projector, we are prepared and willing to demonstrate our role to other community organizations. John Aikman and volunteer Gary Gibson have prepared a comprehensive PowerPoint (computer-based slide) presentation that describes and illustrates the various functions and roles of the Educational Archives. Through words and pictures, and John's knowledgeable narration, those who experience our PowerPoint presentation will be informed, enthusiastic, and, we hope, inspired to visit the Archives and support our valuable work.



We can also provide a brief DVD presentation with photos and music that encapsulates in a few minutes what the EAHC is all about. We even have a 7-minute photos-with-music DVD of a 1970s student visit (complete with period costumes) to the Mohawk Trail Museum School.

Of course, some of our volunteers can provide slide shows centered around visits to Europe or China, cruises in the Caribbean or week-ends at the cottage... and don't even ask about pictures of their grandchildren...

If your group or organization would like to learn more about the Archives, to schedule a visit to our Centre at 155 Macassa Avenue in Hamilton, or to arrange for one of our exciting presentations to come to you, call John Aikman at 905-318-3046, or send us an e-mail at archives@hwdsb.on.ca

INTRODUCING: A NEW CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

One of the important tasks carried out by our Futures Committee was to develop an over-all plan for the future of the Archives and to present it to the HWDSB. Our initial presentation was well-received by Executive Council in the spring of 2006.

This fall, the Futures Committee has prepared a revised Constitution for the Friends and an accompanying set of by-laws. These revisions were made to clarify the definition of the Archives as an organization, to formalize our role in preserving local educational history and to clearly delineate our political, and functional structures. The new documents were approved by the Archives Executive and were to be presented to the general membership for approval at our October Annual General Meeting.

Copies of these documents can be read online at the Archives website by visiting <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/archives/AGM2007.pdf>

Excerpts from our new Constitution:

*The Archives Organization, Facility and Collection shall be known officially as **The Educational Archives and Heritage Centre of Hamilton-Wentworth**. More informally it may be referred to as **The Archives** or the **EAHC**. The term **The Friends of the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre of Hamilton-Wentworth** shall refer to the committee of supporters and volunteers which oversees the operation of the EAHC.*

***The Vision** of The Friends of the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is to foster an appreciation of the rich educational heritage of the Hamilton-Wentworth Region among local residents and visitors to the area by preserving and promoting the history of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.*

OBJECTIVES of the Friends of the EAHC

1. To maintain the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre for the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board...
2. To oversee the operation of the historic 1882 Mohawk Trail School Museum and inventory its collection and to open the facilities to the general public...

WHAT'S ON TV: **THE RECOVERY CHANNEL**

The Archives now has its own cable television channel, although it is not available in all areas at this time. Check local listings for details. Here are some of the exciting new shows coming up on the Recovery Channel this season:

RELIC HUNTER II: Follow the exciting adventures of Johnny Aikman as he investigates decaying schools and moldy basements, searching for the elusive and mythical golden artifacts that will make him King of the Archivists at last. WEDNESDAYS AT 9:00

CANADA'S NEXT TOP REGISTER: Lyle and John, two buddies from the past, team up with Isobel as expert judges to select the top School Registers submitted by area educators. Hosted by the always witty and genial Alan (Big Al). SATURDAYS AT 7:30

THE XYZ FILES: Returning for the 23rd season, this hilarious series once again features 'Susie the Volunteer' as the girl who can't say no, and ends up filing OSOR cards for the rest of her life. Of course she constantly amuses us with the spelling and grammatical errors she finds, and visits by her various wacky friends and neighbours who drop by all too regularly. TUESDAYS AT 9:30

HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA: Sorry, that's on another channel, but nobody's watching it anyway when they can tune in to the Recovery Channel.

LAW AND ODOUR: In this latest version of the highly successful series, various Archives Volunteers team up to search the premises weekly for strange scents that appear to be emanating from the enormous stacks of artifacts, papers and old photos that mysteriously arrive on their doorstep. Connections to closing schools are suspected and investigated. THURSDAYS AT 8:00, 8:30 IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

OPRAH: Oprah makes a surprise visit to the Archives and, in an extraordinary gesture of generosity, gives everyone a new pencil, complete with eraser. Various Archives Volunteers share several of their favourite anecdotes from their many years in education and read aloud various chapters from the Minutes of the HWDSB. Surprisingly, Oprah decides against making this a regular series. NEXT MONDAY ONLY AT 3:00

THE ASHTRAY CHRONICLES: In this long-running series, various experts from the fields of education, minutiae, and bizarre pottery, debate the value and purpose of a series of strange turquoise ceramic-like artifacts found amongst HBE memorabilia from the 1960's. Ashtray or candy dish? Tune in to hear the latest views on this perpetual debate. DAILY AT 1:00



The EAHC has acquired a new television receiver from the Board's A.V. Department.



Scene from the recent hit TV series *Leave it to the Archives*. Pictured are John Aikman, Bill Lister, Ken Snell and others in an exciting episode entitled "Executive Meeting 2007"

DIANE COLE: A VOLUNTEER FOR ALL SEASONS

Diane Cole loves to garden. Even though she must find time, especially every sunny day in spring and fall for her beautiful garden at her home in Ancaster, Ms. Cole still manages to squeeze in many, many hours of valuable volunteer time at the Educational Archives. We couldn't function without her.



At the Executive table

Sometime back in the early years of this century, (Sounds like a long time ago that way doesn't it? Sort of sets the historical tone...) Diane was serving on the Central Secondary reunion committee and, because the EAHC is always

so important to reunion events, found herself working frequently at the Archives retrieving and perusing Central-related materials. She was quite impressed at the resources we were able to provide, and at how well-organized the Archives appeared to be. When Curator John Aikman told her he needed someone with her background to help organize materials for the Education Centre of the former Board of Education for the City of Hamilton, she was hooked. Diane proved to be exactly the right person for the job!

Diane has been an active volunteer at the EAHC for most of the past seven years and has willingly served on our Executive and our hard-working Futures Committee for the past four. As well as her "regular" volunteer duties, Diane has been instrumental in organizing and staffing our display for the annual Heritage Fair at Hamilton City Hall and in getting the Mohawk Trail Museum School into shape for Doors Open in 2006 and 2007 --- and welcoming literally thousands of visitors throughout those busy weekends.

What are those "regular" volunteer duties? Most Tuesday mornings we will find Ms. Cole busy in the "big room" at the EAHC sorting and filing documents from the various Education Centre departments. Anything basically non-curricular in nature falls under Diane's purview. For example, she has scrutinized and filed thousands of pages of documents from Research Services as well as relevant surveys and reports from outside agencies such as McMaster University. While these documents presently fill several file cabinets at our Macassa Avenue site, Diane hopes that eventually they will be catalogued on a

computer database so that cross-referencing by name, date, and topic will make retrieval so much easier. Hmm, I wonder who will be the one entering all that data...?

Diane believes in the mission of the



At the annual book sale.

EAHC for she knows this is the only way our educational history will be preserved. All the documents and all the artifacts we

collect, from textbooks to photographs to granite gargoyles, *are* the history of education in Hamilton and each comes with its own story that is worth passing on to future generations. Diane is very much a people person who enjoys the camaraderie of working with colleagues at the archives and is always pleased to meet visitors and to listen with genuine interest to their personal stories and anecdotes.



At Doors Open at Mohawk Trail

She would encourage others to join her and our volunteer staff at the Archives. The requirements are few, but Diane reminds us you do not have to have been a teacher to join our troupe. However, a keen interest and appreciation for local history is essential, as is time. Volunteering at the Archives would appeal most to retirees willing to spend a few hours a week on any one of our important tasks.

Diane spent many years working for the Hamilton Board of Education as a teacher of English in Middle School, as an English Consultant and finally as an elementary school principal. It is obvious she has not put her feet up and idled away the last few years, for besides her many hours of involvement with the Archives --- and her beloved garden --- Diane has taken a keen interest in preserving Ancaster history and as an avid reader, participating in and hosting her book club. Still, she and husband Jerry manage to find time to enjoy their cottage near Wasaga, snatching a few days of solitude and relaxation there throughout the year.

Diane loves to garden --- and has planted the "seeds" of our history here at the Archives that will blossom for generations to come.

QUERY ABOUT QUERIES?

One of the functions of the EAHC is to act as a resource for Hamilton-area citizens who wish to locate information about their families and ancestors who attended schools in this area. You, as a client, may wish to locate information regarding birthdates, school attendance, or other elements of family history. We are always glad to pursue information on behalf of clients and charge a nominal fee to cover the time required and the materials (usually photocopying) used.

Many readers may wonder how a "Query" or research request is carried out.

At the initial contact, John will work with you as our "client" to complete a Query Request which will outline exactly what you want us to find. Marie Ballantine, our "Chief Researcher", working along with John will begin to peruse school records and registers for the requested information. Sometimes it may be necessary to visit the Hamilton Public Library to examine the City Street Directories for addresses and other information. The information with names, dates, addresses and other details will be photocopied when possible and if requested. The whole process may take 2 hours or 20, but we want to be sure the information is valid and the client is satisfied. Our Query service may help you to find out more about mom, dad, grandpa or Uncle Ed. If they went to school in Hamilton, we will do our best to find their records.

To make a query of the Archives, contact John Aikman at the Archives, 905-318-3046 or drop in at the Vincent Massey location. You may submit a request via e-mail to archives@hwdsb.on.ca. Be as specific as possible in your request.

A charge plus photocopying costs will apply to each query. At present, the Archives charges \$5.00 to open up a file and provide two hours research. After that time, a charge of \$2.00 per hour of research will apply.

Our problems continue to be time and human resources. We do need more volunteers to carry out these research tasks at the Archives. If you are interested in volunteering some of your time, or you know someone who is, contact John Aikman at the Archives, 905-318-3046.



Archives Volunteer Marie Ballantine works diligently on each query request.

OPEN THE DOORS AND THEY WILL COME
DOORS OPEN May 5 and 6, 2007

It has become an annual rite of spring for the Educational Archives: Each year, *Doors Open Ontario* encourages local Doors Open events throughout the province, in which numerous historical sites are opened to the public. In the Hamilton-Wentworth area, several local facilities such as the Griffin House in Ancaster, Westfield Pioneer Village in Rockton, the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton open their doors and encourage the public to visit and experience their local heritage.



1000 visitors thronged to the Mohawk Trail Museum

The Educational Archives and Heritage Centre has enthusiastically participated in this event for four years now. Last year (2006) we not only opened our Macassa Avenue site, but we also invited visitors to tour the Mohawk Trail Museum School on Mohawk Road West. Because that event was so successful, we opened the two facilities again this year and received over 1000 visitors on two beautiful days in May. Thanks to all those who offered their time to volunteer at our two sites, and to the many who attended, we had a very successful weekend!



Doors Open Ontario 2007 continues to bring together communities across Ontario. Throughout the province, there is a growing pride in our heritage. Communities boast of their commercial buildings, courthouses, places of worship, gardens, natural heritage, and other heritage sites. From April to October each year, communities open the doors to some of our most intriguing and charming heritage sites. Admission is free. And the Ontario Heritage Trust – the province’s lead heritage agency – invites you to experience these hidden heritage treasures firsthand. Bookmark this site, visit often, and make your travel plans for Doors Open Ontario events in 2007.

— from the DOORS OPEN 2007 WEBSITE at <http://www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/>

MOHAWK TRAIL: IT’S A MUSEUM, IT’S A SCHOOL

The old Mohawk Trail School on Hamilton’s west mountain is a prime example of a nineteenth century one-room Ontario schoolhouse. The school began life as S.S. # 5 Barton, built in 1882. It continued in operation serving area students in its single classroom until as recently as 1966, even as a newer school called Mohawk Trail School was built beside the one-room structure in the 1950s. That school has since been demolished and replaced by housing.

In 1967 the organization of Hamilton’s public elementary teachers, the Hamilton Teachers’ Council, undertook to renovate the old school, now also called Mohawk Trail. For many years thereafter, the restored schoolhouse, located on Mohawk Road West at West 16th Street in Hamilton, served as a location for area primary and junior students to visit and to learn about education from another era. The school, now also a museum, is today under the auspices of the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre and is maintained, in coordination with the HWDSB, by our hard-working volunteers.



Volunteers and Archives Executive members Diane Cole and June Deans, as part of their duties, have assumed primary

responsibility for the Mohawk Trail site. Because the school building is officially 125 years old this year, we wanted our Doors Open 2007 event to be an especially memorable one. Diane Cole recalls for us a few of the events at Mohawk Trail’s Doors Open event this past spring:

For the second year in a row, on May 5 and 6, 2007, Mohawk Trail Museum School was a site for the *Doors Open Hamilton* program. Visitors, some with personal connections to the school, others interested and curious, came to observe displays and artifacts set up to represent life in a one-room schoolhouse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Visitors of all ages were much in evidence, many who had attended Mohawk Trail in the mid-twentieth century, as well as their children and grandchildren.

What is the EAHC?

The Educational Archives and Heritage Centre (EAHC) is overseen by a registered charitable organization, *The Friends of the Educational Archives and Heritage Centre*. If you would like to support our organization financially, you can do so by taking out a yearly membership for only \$10, or by making a tax-deductible contribution. For more details about supporting the Friends, working as a Volunteer, or making a Query Request, visit our website at www.hwdsb.on.ca/archives, call us at 905-318-3046, or visit the Heritage Centre at 155 Macassa Avenue in Hamilton.



One family of former students who had attended Mohawk Trail School in the 1940s gathered together at the site as a surprise treat for their brother. They left with memorable photographs and copies of attendance register pages that brought back many fond memories of their days at the school.

Another visitor, who had attended the school in the 1940s, remembered there was a time of such overcrowding that some students were taken by bus from Mohawk Road to McIlwraith School on Murray Street in Hamilton’s North End! This meant a long school day indeed.

We were told of times in the one-room schoolhouse when the teacher would warm up the lunches on the potbellied stove. This often included a pot of soup provided by the teachers, one of the parents, or a kindly neighbour as a special treat. In some cases, the teacher prepared the entire lunch each day. Now that’s lunchroom supervision with a twist.



These and other revealing memories have been shared with us each year at the open house. We hope to have many more visitors – and their interesting stories -- at Doors Open 2008, scheduled for Saturday May 3 and Sunday May 4, 2008.

