



The Historical Society of St. Boniface & Maryhill Community

1338B Maryhill Rd., Maryhill ON N0B 2B0

website: maryhillroots.com

email: maryhillroots@gmail.com

Summer 2017

Editor: Susan Motz

A Summary of How Maryhill Began *Written by Tom Schell*

This is our 40th year as a Historical Society. For the newer members, I thought it would be useful to give a brief history of the area in the 1840s. This information can be found in books and letters written about our early history.

Census and assessment records show that the first Catholic settlers in the Gore District came from the German speaking areas of Alsace France and Baden Germany. Once in Upper Canada, they made their living by working for Mennonite shareholders of the German Tract Company. The Mennonites had settled in the area around 1800. Most had come from Pennsylvania.

The skills of the Catholic tradesman helped them earn enough money to purchase their own farms. However, they did not have a church to practise their religion in the first years of settlement. Missionaries travelled in the ar-

ea trying to serve the settlers' religious needs. In 1826, New Germany was part of the Kingston Diocese. In 1834, Father Mariatte S.J., celebrated mass in the home of Christian Rich. A stone marker at 1065 Forester Road marks the location of the first mass.

In 1844, land was bought from Lucas Zettel and was registered to the Diocese of Toronto. A church was built by 1848 and was dedicated to St. Boniface, the patron saint of Germany. By 1877, the church was found to be too small for the growing congregation. The church was torn down and was replaced by the present church on the same site with a commanding view of the surrounding country side.

Thanks to previous research by Joe Zinger, Paul Waechter, Diane Strickler and Shelia and Jerome Reinhart, this information and much more is available for research at the Halter House.

Found in the Historical Atlas of Waterloo County 1881:

"Bridgeport is picturesquely situated on either bank of the Grand River, where it flows through a considerable gorge, with rocky bed and walls, from the crevices of which have sprung fringes of knarled but majestic trees and shrubs. The portion of the village on the west side was founded by Jacob S. Shoemaker who came from Pennsylvania in 1820. He built a mill at that point driven by water power. That part of town was referred to as 'Shoemakers Mill'. The eastern part of the village was called Bridgeport from the start. In 1881 the population was around 250. There were a number of mills, a furniture factory and a number of stores. "



From The Past: Hitch Hiking



Remember the days when you stepped onto the side of the road and stuck your thumb out and hitched a ride? In the 1920s and 1930s, it was called 'road begging'. In the 1940s it became known as hitch hiking. It was common to see people at the side of the road, some with signs identifying their destination, with their thumbs out. Hitch hiking peaked in the 1960s when youth put out their thumbs to travel the Trans-Canada highway for the Expo 67. By the mid-'70s, hitchhiking had declined due to community pressure and media reports of sex assaults and a number of murders. Police began to enforce restrictions on highways, while cities and towns banned it on roadways. Today, hitchhiking in Ontario is illegal on all 400 series highways.

Presidents Report Summer 2017 - Tom Schell

Since the last newsletter our board has been busy planning and preparing for a new season of activities at the Maryhill Historical Society. After the wet and cool spring we hope to warm things up.

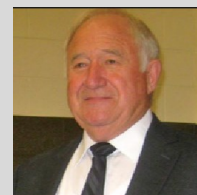
A number of volunteers have been busy since January doing an inventory of all the books, artifacts and antiques in the Halter House. We have re-arranged some rooms. For example, the Chapel now has all religious articles and items honouring native priests from the area. Upstairs the bedroom has been cleaned and quilts displayed. Another room honours local accomplishments in school, athletics etc. In the kitchen-library, all the books are being itemized and a list will be available for faster searches for those doing family or local histories.

On Tuesday May 9th we were presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Ariss-Maryhill Lions club. This was in recognition and appreciation of many years of dedicated service to the preservation of the history and historical sites of Maryhill and surrounding area. Thanks to all members and previous boards who made this award possible.

Starting on June 11th we will open the Halter House for visitors every Sunday from 1-4pm. July 1 is an important day for us as we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. See the program listed on this page. We hope you can join us!

On July 8th we have been invited to participate in the Ariss-Maryhill Lions 150th celebrations at Marden Park. On Saturday September 16th, we are part of "Doors Open" for Woolwich. Tours will be available for the Halter House, St. Boniface Church, the cemetery and a walking tour in the village. Finally we celebrate our 40th anniversary on September 24th with our Heritage Day. We invite members, non-members, friends and neighbours to come to our events or do family or local history research. Check out our new web site if you have access to the internet.

We welcome one and all.



Tom

JOIN US AT THE HALTER HOUSE

CANADA DAY

11am Raising of Flag and O'Canada
Welcome Remarks from Local Dignitaries

11:15am Honoring our Veterans

11:30am Planting of Canada 150 Maple Tree

Noon BBQ—Sponsored By Maryhill Knights Council 6024

Afternoon

Children's Crafts and Music by Melody Train

Tours

- Horse Drawn Wagon Tours of Community
- Self Guided Tours of Church & Walled Cemetery
- Tours of Halter House

Displays

Antique and Community Displays

A Member of Our Community



This summer we feature **Margaret Brohman (nee Hummel)**. Margie was the youngest of 5 children born to John Hummel and Susanna Lang. Siblings Barbara, Cecil, Doris and Irvin treated Margie as the baby of the family and she took advantage of the status. Margie started to Maryhill school at age 7. She walked to school and when tired, she would sit down in the middle of the road and let her siblings carry her. When school ended, Margie would head home and change out of her school dress into her everyday clothes and begin her chores. Her mother, Susanna, taught Margie to garden, bake, embroider, knit and crochet. In fact, neighbors would come to the Hummel home to purchase Susanna's socks; she would also sell them from the Kitchener Farmer's Market. Margie formed lasting friendships with Dolly Frank and June Haus; the three sought many adventures together. As a teenager, Margie recalls attending many dances at the Bridgeport Casino. Dressed in their poodle skirts, wide belts, blouses and scarves they would take a special bus from Maryhill to the dance hall. And while she can't believe she risked it, Margie says the girls would occasionally hitch hike to and from the dances.

Margie finished grade 8 at St. Boniface school. Her first job was keeping house for Lorraine and Chester Weiler. She minded the children and lived at their house. After a few years of running after the Weiler kids, Margie found a job at Merchants Rubber in Kitchener. She was 16 years old and would car pool to work with Johnny Bitschy. She worked there for 35 years on the night shift, making boot straps. By age 19 Margie was married to Burt Brohman and living with his parents – Ted and Laura Brohman. They built a house on their homestead and she lived there until 2013. Margie and Burt never had children but Margie has a strong bond with her nieces Corrine and Heather, who are like daughters to her. Margie was a member of the Maryhill Quilters group for many years, and donated many handmade quilts to the local bazaar for charity. Today, you can visit Margie in Waterloo at the Cobble Creek Retirement Home.

Some residents of Maryhill met their spouses at a dance at the Bridgeport Casino. Some held their wedding receptions there.

The Bridgeport Casino

Many of our residents in Maryhill will remember the Bridgeport Casino. In 1903 the Breithaupt family opened a 50-by-80 foot pavilion (nicknamed "The Casino") with a concert hall and a long sheltered veranda overlooking the Grand River. A stairway led down to the water's edge where a cable-operated ferry took visitors across the Grand for more activities at Riverside Park, where fun could be had at a baseball diamond, boat rentals and bowling lanes. Special events at the Casino included rifle shooting competitions, midway set-ups and nightly dances and even a tight-rope-walker, Prince Stanley, crossing the river after dark on a wire strung with electric lights. The Casino continued to be a site for dances and many members of our community hitch-hiked into Bridgeport to attend dances there. Although named a Casino, the building was never formally used for gambling. In 1975, the Bridgeport Casino became Golf's Steak House & Seafood.





Fundraiser: Enclosed with this newsletter are the raffle tickets for the annual fundraiser for our Historical Society. A return addressed envelope is included for your convenience in sending your payment. If you would like additional tickets, please contact Lee Ann Wetzel at [519-648-3070](tel:519-648-3070) or maryhillroots@gmail.com or any board member. **We appreciate your support!**

The People's Railway *by Mary Ann Stroh*

I read an interesting article in The Record on March 25, 2017. Written by rych mills, it talked about the People's Railway that was to join Woodstock, Stratford, Berlin and Guelph with stops in Tavistock, New Hamburg, Ayr, Bloomingdale, New Germany(Maryhill), Elora and Arthur. In 1909 debentures were issued and a number of local people in New Germany invested in the railway. Rail embankments were built. Some still remain in the village bush south of St. Charles St. W. and on the farm once owned by George Isley at 2492 Shantz Station Rd. Bridge abutments for a bridge over Hopewell Creek were still evident in the 1980s on what was known as the Olinski farm. By the end of 1911, money problems caused the failure of the railway. People lost their investments. All thoughts of rail expansion was interrupted by WWI. After the war changing ideas about transportation ended any more thoughts of an electric railway across southern Ontario. To think that we were that close to an LRT over one hundred years ago!



Calendar of Events for 2017

Summer Sunday Open House

The Halter House Resource Centre is open from 1-4 pm in the summer on Sundays from June 11th to September 3rd. The Halter House can be open at other times for specific appointments. Please e-mail us ahead of time if you are looking for particular records and families.

Canada Day July 1st 150th Celebration: 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

A day of fun! See the program on page 2 of this newsletter.

Heritage Day Sunday September 24

Join us as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. The day will begin at 10am with a Mass of Thanksgiving. 10:45am—Tour of the wayside shrines. Lunch at noon in the Maryhill Heritage Park Community Centre with a Silent Auction and a special Anniversary Program. Tours on request: Choice of Halter House, Maryhill Village or Cemetery Tours

Annual General Meeting Sunday November 19

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Community Hall from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Business Meeting, Refreshments, Guest Speaker and Awards Ceremony. All are Welcome!

The Historical Society welcomes the opening of the Maryhill Market by owners Tara and George Kanellis. This news ties in nicely with our article in this newsletter; George is the son of the owner of Golf's Steak House in Bridgeport.



The Last Word

Eager to try a dish that our ancestors prepared? Thanks to our member Mary Bartlett for sharing this recipe with us many years ago; we came across it as we were spring cleaning the Halter House. Mary found this recipe and a few others in her paternal Grandmother's 1892 Colombia Cookbook. Watch for more recipes in future newsletters!

Broiled Squirrels

Clean and soak in cold water

Wipe dry and broil on a gridiron over a clear, hot fire, turning frequently.

When done, lay in a hot dish and dress with plenty of melted butter, pepper and salt and let them lie between two hot dishes for five minutes.

