

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Spring 2025

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor

Public Meeting

All are welcome. No admission charge.

Saturday, 15 March 2025

Doors open at 12:30; 1:15 presentation

Members and guests will gather in the Community Hall of St Matthews Lutheran Church, 54 Benton St, Kitchener, at the corner of Benton and Charles. The Community Hall can be entered via a beige door off the St Matthews parking lot. There will be WHS signs at the door. Parking is free in the church lot which is entered from Benton Street. There is free parking on Saturdays in the city lot behind the LRT ION station on Charles. There is also street parking.

Marsland Engineering, Exterior Pix of Plant, April 1961 Kitchener-Waterloo Record Photographic Negative Collection 1938-2001, University of Waterloo Special Collections and Archives



At the meeting, we'll discover how an iconic Twin Cities engineering firm began and flourished. Sixteen-year-old Stanley had an argument with his high school teacher in 1926. He left school and opened a small repair shop for those new-fangled wireless radios. Stanley's last name was Marsland and from that beginning came the ground-breaking and inventive high tech company, Marsland Engineering.

John Roe has written a detailed history of Marsland's and will join WHS on Saturday afternoon for a presentation. The book will be on sale and John will happily sign copies.

For more information contact rychmills@golden.net or 519 742 49 90

whs.ca

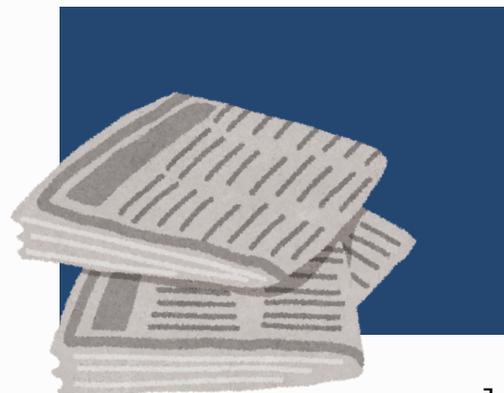
Have news to share?

Send the newsletter committee updates to

whs1912newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for Summer 2025 newsletter

Friday, May 23, 2025.



Mark your calendar

More 2025 Public Meetings

This year's public meetings will be held on two Tuesday evenings and two Saturday afternoons.

All WHS meetings are free; members and non-members are invited. The WHS Book Table will be open at all meetings. Keep an eye on www.whs.ca for further details. As well, reminder e-mails will be sent out.

Tuesday, June 24, 2025: Nancy Maitland, retired head of the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society will bring us stories and details from that northwest township. Doors open at 6:30 for a 7:15 program.

Tuesday, September 9, 2025: Attendees will gather at the Maryhill Community Centre. Elysia DeLaurentis has put together a dynamic feature called "Rough Justice in 19th Century Ontario." Members may renew their WHS annual dues with the membership committee as well. Doors open 6:30, program at 7:15.

Saturday, November 15, 2025: To wrap up the meetings for 2025, November 15 will be the WHS annual general meeting.

Full details will be sent by email to all members a few days before the meeting.

For more information on these WHS meetings, check www.whs.ca or contact rychmills@golden.net

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet are the lands traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, and Neutral peoples. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to honour all our relations.

It's that time of year again!

Renewing your membership comes with many great benefits!

- voting rights at the Annual General Meeting;
- advance notification and special invitation to all society events;
- discounted price for volume slip cases;
- 10% off used books from the book table at meetings;
- 25% off admission to Waterloo Region Museums;
- special events perks (e.g., centennial supplement, 100th anniversary postcards, prize draws); and
- access to five meetings each year featuring guest speakers. Our meetings are free to the public as well as to our members.

You will also receive:

- a copy of the society's award-winning annual volume containing articles of local historical significance and interest written by local researchers; and
- a subscription to the society newsletter which carries news items, reports of activities, upcoming events, historical notes and achievements of the society and its members. It is published four times a year and is available to members in hard or electronic copy. The newsletter is also available to the public as a downloadable pdf.

Renew your membership online [here](#). If you prefer to pay by cheque, please print this form and mail it along with your cheque to:

Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room
85 Queen St N
Kitchener, ON N2H 2H1

WATERLOO HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2025 Membership and Donation Form

October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

See whs.ca/membership for member benefits.

Name(s):

Address:

Province/State:

E-mail address:

City:

Postal/Zip Code:

Phone:

Would you like your newsletter e-mailed (PDF)? Yes No

New Member? Yes No

Student memberships are available for full-time students. Please contact whsmemberships1912@gmail.com for information

Membership October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

\$30 Canadian addresses / \$35 US addresses

\$

Note: Your 2025 membership (Oct 1, 2024 – Sept 30, 2025) incl the 2024 Annual Volume #112 to be released in late spring 2025.

Annual Volume Patron donation

\$

(The annual volume donation does not include your membership cost)

Friend	\$100-\$199
Partner	\$200-\$499
Benefactor	\$500+

Please indicate how you would like your name(s) to appear in the annual volume and website acknowledgement.

General Donation

\$ _____

TOTAL of membership and donation(s)

\$ _____

WHS appreciates your support. **Thank you!**

Charitable tax receipts will be issued at the end of February.

Please email this form to the Treasurer at jeff420shank@gmail.com. ETransfer your payment to whs@whs.ca.

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please print this form and mail it along with your cheque to:

Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room
85 Queen St N,
Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Please contact whsmemberships1912@gmail.com with any membership questions.

The collection of personal information by the Waterloo Historical Society is necessary to administer memberships. The information will be used only by the WHS for postal and electronic mailings to members. Such mailings shall be restricted to information, events and notices of either specific WHS interest or more general historic interest. Group mailing addresses will be hidden. The WHS does not share its mailing list.

WHS Plaques Committee

celebrates 100th anniversary

Submitted by Sandra Parks

With the birth in 1912 of the Waterloo Historical Society, their first task was the collection and safe storage of documents and artifacts telling the story of Waterloo County.

In his 1922 Annual Volume President's Address, William Henry Breithaupt noted, "The marking of historic sites deserves attention from our society." Since 1919, he had worked with the Historic Sites & Monuments Board to commemorate important places in the county. Breithaupt continued his address by adding, "In our County Town [Kitchener] there are several sites that should be marked: The Mennonite Church on East King Street, the oldest church in the county." In 1925, that initial bronze plaque was installed at First Mennonite Church, 800 King St E. Two more plaques soon followed. The unveiling of a 50th anniversary WHS plaque in 1962 kicked started a new program of plaque development with 19 unveiled in the following years.

100 years later, the WHS will soon be unveiling its first full-colour illustrated storyboard or interpretive plaque recalling the history of the former Idylwild Park on Cambridge's Mill Run Trail.

1925 to 2025 – 100 years and 24 plaques!! That sounds like something to celebrate. Throughout this anniversary year, the Plaques Committee has a slate of activities planned to do just that - plaque unveilings, reinstallations and maintenance; newsletter articles and displays at WHS public meetings and other events; recruiting new members; discussing ways to counter vandalism and theft of plaques; and more.

For most of those 100 years, the Special Projects Committee was responsible for installing "Plaques or markers at historic sites in Waterloo County where the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board [Ontario Heritage Trust] will not erect such markers," [*WHS Constitution and By-laws, 1971*]. In 2011, the Plaques Committee became its own group. Today's team is comprised of chair Warren Stauch and members Debbie Kroetsch, Sandra Parks, Ray Ruddy and Harold Russell.

That first bronze plaque in 1925 simply stated:

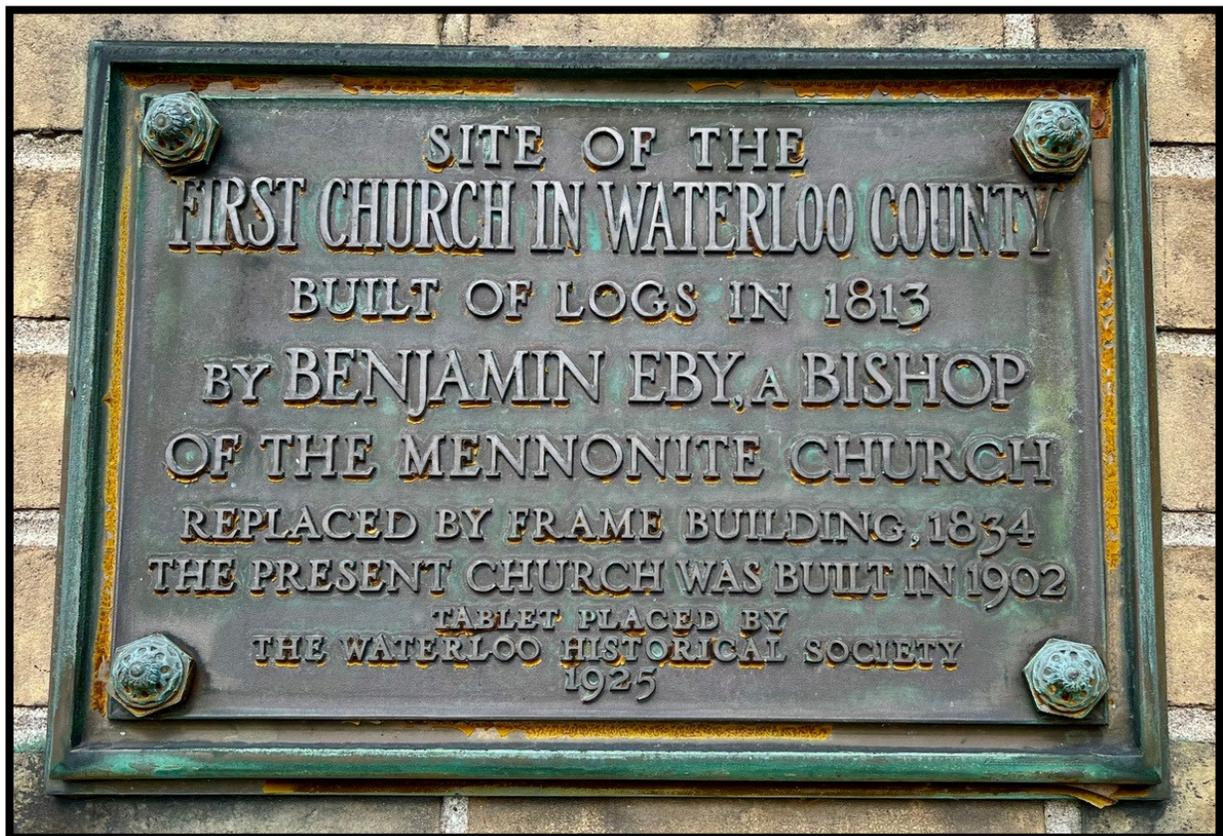


Chart of Waterloo Historical Society Plaques

Date	Name	Location
1925	Site of the First Church in Waterloo County	Kitchener
1928	Oldest Place of Continuous Business	Cambridge (Preston)
1929	Community meeting house, school and burying ground	Cambridge (Hespeler)
1962	WHS 50th anniversary	Kitchener
1963	First Mennonite Sunday School	Cambridge (Preston)
1970	Hagey Mennonite Church	Cambridge (Preston)
1972	Free Church and Cemetery	Kitchener (Bridgeport)
1974	Crosshill Township Hall	Crosshill, Wellesley Twp
1974	John Watson Manufacturing Company	Ayr, North Dumfries Twp
1978	Trinity Anglican Church - missing	Cambridge (Galt)
1979	Founding of Bridgeport	Kitchener (Bridgeport)
1982	Doon Presbyterian Church	Kitchener (Doon)
1983	St. James Anglican Church	Wilmot Township
1983	Maple Grove Public School - missing	Cambridge (Hespeler)
1989	Rev. Frederick William Bindemann	New Hamburg, Wilmot Twp
1992	Captain Thomas Smith	Conestogo, Woolwich Twp
1994	Otto Klotz & the Free School - missing	Cambridge (Preston)
1997	Kuntz/Carling/Labatt breweries	Waterloo
2000	Kitchener-Waterloo Municipal Airport	Waterloo
2005	Founding of New Dundee	New Dundee, Wilmot Twp
2006	150 Years of Railway Service	Kitchener
2012	WHS 100th anniversary	Kitchener
2018	Westmount neighbourhood	Kitchener
2025	Idylwild Park	Cambridge (Preston)

Watch the next newsletter for details of the unveiling of the Idylwild Park plaque.

Annual Volume 112

The WHS publication committee is aiming at a Tuesday, June 24 launch date. Committee members Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Marj Kohli, Susan Mavor and Jon Fear with editor rych mills have been working through the winter and spring to produce Volume 112 which will bear the date 2024. We were pleased to receive a number of exceptional articles, short, lengthy and middle-sized! Stories about floods and fires and the centenary of the Pioneer Tower are mixed with in-depth biographies and businesses and other shorter items. All members paid up for 2024-2025 will receive a free copy.

Patrons are still welcome to donate to the annual volume! For more information on donating, please reach out to rych (rychmills@golden.net) or Jeff (jeff420shank@gmail.com)

News

You know them: caring, involved seniors who go out of their way to make a difference in our community.

Maybe they're a helpful neighbour or dedicated volunteer who supports you or your organization?

Consider nominating that special person aged 65+ for a Kitchener or Waterloo Senior of the Year Award!

For details including how to nominate, visit:

[Kitchener Resident Senior of the Year](#)

[Waterloo Resident Senior of the Year](#)

Nominations for both awards close Monday March 31, 2025

We look forward to your nominations!

The Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)

Age-Friendly Waterloo Advisory Committee

Congratulations

Congratulations to Waterloo Historical Society members and King Charles III Coronation Medal recipients Warren Stauch and Jamie Martin.

Retirements

Last year, Marion Roes notified the Nominating Committee that she will not be standing for another director term or as Newsletter Editor. Marion has been a board member for 20 years, holding a number of positions including member of the Publication and Programs Committees, President and acting Membership Chair. With all this experience, we are grateful that Marion will stay connected by serving as a councillor for Woolwich Township and will continue to administer the WHS Facebook page. www.facebook.com/waterloohs/.

Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt began her journey with the WHS as a councillor representing Wellesley Township from 1986-1992. She then continued to serve on the Waterloo Historical Society board from 1992-2022, working on several projects over the years including the revision of Bylaw #1, spearheading the patron program for the volume, editing the newsletter, and working on the publications committee. Since 2022, she has transitioned from board member to a councillor position representing Wellesley once more.

Karen Ball-Pyatt has retired from her position as Librarian in the Kitchener Public Library's Grace Schmidt Room after twenty years at the KPL. Karen's legacy is one of a kind, and the Waterloo Historical Society Board congratulates her on all her hard work that has benefited not only the Society, but the Waterloo Region community.

Victoria Street North

Submitted by Jon Fear

Change is a constant in the retail world and in recent months that has been very apparent along a 500-metre stretch of busy Victoria Street North in Kitchener. In recent weeks the large Kitchener Home Hardware store has closed and a neighbouring Canadian Tire store has relocated to the Stanley Park Mall. Another large retail building nearby remains empty since Lastman's Bad Boy vacated early last year.

Together they pose a challenge that will test the memory of local history buffs. What used to be on those three store sites?

Let's start with the Home Hardware site at 1018 Victoria St. N.

From 1961 to 1994 the same building was the home of Arnold Bros. Ltd., a wholesaler of products sold at "rock bottom prices" to everyone from restaurants and grocery stores to tobacco shops and service stations.

"The site was vacant land before that," recalls John Arnold, whose father Paul had the building constructed in 1960. The previous Arnold Bros. location was on the northwest corner of King and Borden streets. John and two partners later ran the business from 1973 to 1994, when it closed. The building was then used for a time by Onward Cluthe Manufacturing Ltd. In 2004, a Home Furniture outlet opened, owned by Mark and Elizabeth Coyles. Their store was part of the St. Jacobs-based Home Hardware Stores Ltd. chain of dealer-owned outlets. A regular Home Hardware store was later added after they purchased the Wilkinson Home Hardware business at nearby Frederick Mall and moved it to their Victoria Street location. The Home Furniture section of the store ceased to operate in 2021.



The Canadian Tire building at 1080 Victoria St. N. was constructed by Ball Brothers Ltd. of Kitchener and the store, initially owned by Royden D. Whitney, opened in November of 1973. The site had been assembled with the acquisition of properties that previously held at least three businesses, including Northern Veneer and Lumber Co. Ltd., owned by L.E. “Red” Miller, and Curly’s Towing, owned by Walter “Curley” Piper. A third business was The Light-House Drive-In, owned by J. Roland St. Louis and his wife, Ida.

It sold three kinds of burgers plus tenderloin on-a-bun and home-made pies. “Served at your car by snappy, smiling car hops,” a 1961 Kitchener-Waterloo Record advertisement promised. Suzanne St. Louis, daughter of the owners, was a car hop for eight years and sometimes wore roller skates to serve her customers. The drive-in site was later used by Lighthouse Trailer Sales and by K-N Motors, a used car lot.



The Bad Boy store at 1138 Victoria St. N. opened in 2007 on a site that previously held the southwest Ontario division of Toronto-based Teperman Demolition. From 1961 to 1983 it salvaged lumber and other items from wrecking projects and sold them on the Kitchener property. For many years a laneway on or near the Teperman site led back across the Canadian National Railway tracks to the 70-acre Kitchener Stockyards property where animal auctions and a farmers’ market regularly attracted hundreds of people. The stockyards merged with the Waterloo County Stockyards in the mid-1970s and relocated to King Street North in Waterloo, next to the St. Jacobs Farmers Market. Teperman got the job of clearing the site and had local Mennonite farmers do the work.

Who we are and how to reach us

Website www.whs.ca

Email whs@whs.ca

Mail to Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Grace Schmidt Room, 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Facebook

www.facebook.com/waterloohs

Instagram

[@waterloohistoricalociety](https://www.instagram.com/waterloohistoricalociety)

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Strickler

Archives

gsr@kpl.org for questions about the WHS archives and if you have items to donate. Please note, donations are currently paused.

Book Table

To donate or to buy books, come to our meetings and / or see www.whs.ca/booktable/

Membership

Membership take place from October 1 to September 30. See membership forms and benefits at whs.ca/membership.

Thank you for supporting WHS with your memberships, patronages and donations.

Newsletter Comments, questions and submissions may be sent to the editor, Sophia Grande-Lawlor.

Thank you for help with and distribution of this issue to Sandra Parks, Jon Fear, Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Mary Anne Banks, and rych mills.

Grace Schmidt Room celebrates 40th Anniversary

*Submitted by Sandra Parks
Photographs by Harold Russell*

On October 16 last year, the Grace Schmidt Room at Kitchener Public Library's Central Branch celebrated its 40th anniversary with old friends and new, shared memories and cake. The GSR is a treasure house of local history and genealogy resources, programs, and services.

Opened on October 14, 1984, it is named in honour of Grace Schmidt, a librarian at KPL for 35 years and a long-time member of the Waterloo Historical Society. Ms Schmidt was a well-known authority on the history of Waterloo County and was the driving force behind the development of the GSR collection.



Karen Ball-Pyatt (left) and Susan Hoffman, current and previous local history librarians in the GSR, enjoyed a visit at the 40th anniversary celebration.

The Waterloo Historical Society, of course, has had a very close relationship with the library since its inception – it was chief librarian Mabel Dunham who first identified the need for a local historical society in a 1912 report to the Berlin Library Board. The WHS archives are still stored at the GSR.

In a heartfelt presentation at the anniversary evening, WHS President John Glass highlighted that, “KPL is our longest standing and most important partner, with GSR acting as an archive for us while they facilitate public access.” John added, “I’m sure that many, if not most, of our Annual Volume article authors do at least some research in the GSR - either in person or online.”

Karen Ball-Pyatt, Local History Librarian and GSR Manager

[now retired], thanked the WHS, Ontario Genealogical

Society, and KPL “for their support and vision in helping to create the GSR, honouring Grace Schmidt, former Assistant Chief Librarian at KPL, who was a walking encyclopedia of Waterloo County history.”



Karen stated, "Susan Hoffman, as first GSR Librarian, built and developed the collection, services, and programs, that we enjoy today. I am honoured to have her as a dear friend and mentor." Karen also thanked GSR staff, present and past, heritage colleagues, and customers/researchers "who keep us striving to provide better service and research. Our goal is to continue to make accessible and share the stories of our diverse communities and people."



Here's wishing the GSR another 40 successful years!