

Golden Tales

Chronicles of our Community

Oral History Project



Clarington Library
Museums & Archives

Land Acknowledgment, Courtesy of Dave Mowat

When you hear about families who have been here since the 1820's, they've been here that long because the treaties opened the land up for settlement. The boundaries of townships and counties began.

They called our people the Mississauga, or the Misi-zaagiing, which is basically "the people who live at the mouths of many rivers." The salmon that were found in the tentacle of rivers that flowed from the Oak Ridges Moraine, produced such a vast array of abundant resources.

The fact that there were fewer Mississauga people than the wave of settlers dwarfed our history. Our people moved light on the land; they did not build towns and palisades as the Iroquoian people had. Rather they moved inland off the Big Lake (Ontario) in Fall to their winter grounds for trapping and hunting, and then towards the rivers and lake for fishing and gathering in the spring and summer.

In essence, our traditional economy moved south to north, whereby the settlement and development of the agrarian economy moved east and west. This was the intersection of the people.



"Asher & Adams' Ontario [cartographic material]", [1874], R11981-134-5-E, Library and Archives Canada.

List of Participants

Karen Cashin	4
Myno Van Dyke	5
Lois Worden	6
David Stainton	7
Enniskillen Stories	8
Margaret Zwart	10
Colin Rowe	11
Willie Woo	12
Keith Worden	14
Rae Pickell	15
Faye Langmaid	16
Marilyn Morawetz	17
Newcastle Village & District Historical Society	18
Ron Alldred	20
Elva Reid	21
Lloyd Down	22
David Down	23
Brimacombe, Rutherford	24
Nancy Knox	26
Ebenezer Church	27
Charles Taws	28
Judy Hagerman	29
Frank Stapleton	30
Betty Stapleton	31
Eileen Knox	32
Janice Kraayenhof	33
Larry Bryan	34
Charlie Trim	35
Bill Lake	36
Sher Leetooze	37
Karen Allin	38
Ken Allin	39
Jayne Salisbury	40
Lydia Carman	41
Adrian Foster	42

Golden Tales

Chronicles of our Community

Welcome!

We hope you will enjoy reading the stories that have been shared and documented through the “Golden Tales: Chronicles of our Community” project. Our interviewees opened their homes and hearts to us, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to record and save these stories for future generations.

About the Project

“Golden Tales: Chronicles of Our Community” was created as an initiative aimed at curating a treasury of narratives and portraits contributed by local seniors (aged 55+) who have either settled in or were born in the Municipality of Clarington. The project’s primary objectives were to foster inclusivity, forge social connections, and ignite inspiration through engaging interviews and events with older adults residing in Clarington.

When designing this project, Clarington Library, Museums & Archives hoped that the interviews with participants would provide them with the social setting to share their stories of how they arrived in Clarington, the families and connections they made, as well as where they worked and how they made their living. We also hoped that through the interview process, the participants would have an opportunity to be heard, and feel a deep sense of satisfaction knowing their stories are being recorded for future years.

From October 2024 to March 2025, we successfully interviewed dozens of community members and their families and made many connections along the way. We shared in birthday celebrations, took trips down memory lane, and celebrated the lives of past friends and family members. Each story was unique and important, and we are so grateful to those that took the time to share with us. Your voices and memories are important, and we will preserve and share your stories for generations to come.

The Clarington Library, Museums, and Archives gratefully recognizes the financial support of the Province of Ontario’s Seniors Community Grant Program.



Karen Cashin

Orono

*Local Stories at The
Orono Weekly Times*

My column in the Orono Times is called “The Local” because that’s what I do... I interview local people. I talk to them to get their story. There is a therapeutic element to this work, absolutely. People love to tell their stories. They think it’s important, and so do I. It’s important for them to tell their stories in their words. To hear their side of the story, their perception of the story.

People often say to me “I haven’t got much to say,” and I say “if it’s not written down, it’s gone.” We aren’t going to live forever, and our children only have one perception of us, if they are interested in the story at all. If you write it down it’s never lost.

A lot of people compare now and then. They remember when Orono used to be a village with two grocery stores, a hardware store, a blacksmith, a garage, a gas station, etc.

There’s a certain sadness when people think of the changes. So, they enjoy reminiscing about how it used to be.

Clarrington is changing. It’s growing, and the demographics are changing rapidly. So, in another year it won’t be the same. People will have different memories, different perceptions, and different opinions. And that’s what makes this all so interesting.



Myno Van Dyke

Newcastle

*Retired police detective
turned local history detective*

The first time I walked into the Newcastle Historical Society, there were two guys sitting there: Royal Lee and Ken Stephenson. I said “Hi, I’m Myno and I want to do some research on policing in Newcastle... Can I look up some information?” Ken looks at me and says “Yeah, what do you need to know?” I said “Well, are there any files I can look at?” and Ken taps his head. That was the only file. Ha ha.

Then he said, “If you want to find out more information, the first thing you do is go sign that book over there.” So I did. And I hand him \$5 and he gives me a membership card. Within a year, I was president. That’s how it started for me... I became that old guy

sitting at the table.

What I realized from my years there was that you didn’t learn from books. You didn’t learn from the files. You learned from the people that walked in the door.

There are all these stories, you absorb these things over a period of years. I made a point of being there. I sat in that room for 25 years, on Tuesdays and Saturdays because I didn’t want to miss out on anything.





Lois Worden

Enniskillen

History collector and enthusiast (née Ashton)

Growing up in Enniskillen, there were maybe ten or twelve kids that lived right in the village. We spent every day of our summers together.

Slemon's Store was at the centre of town. The Slemons lived in the house part. They had a long counter, and behind were shelves with books. I would put everything I wanted on the counter, and they would write it all down in these books. I never had to pay for it. Once a month my dad would come in and pay the bill. Along the other side were linens, towels, and you could come in here and buy your scribblers for school. Anything you wanted.

There was a post office here too. Kathy Slemon was a really good friend, so I would come here for birthday parties. She had the best parties, and her mom always used to put money in the cake.

A funny thing happened one day when a milk truck came down too quickly, and tipped over. All the milk ran down the big hill. Every cat that ever lived in Enniskillen came out that day.

We went to Bowmanville High School, but then Courtice got its own when we were halfway through. The years we were at Bowmanville, we had to be on shifts: rural kids in the morning, town kids in the afternoon. That way the farm kids could get home in time to help with chores.





David Stainton

Enniskillen

Local errand boy, worked at Slemon's Store, now Enniskillen General Store

Not All Memories are "Golden"

There are a lot of memories from our childhoods that aren't "golden." One of them was with my sister, Doris.

Doris was born when I was 7 or 8 years old. She was born with, what we called, "water on the brain." My mom was sent from Enniskillen to Toronto for her birth. If there were any programs that would have helped Doris, they were in Toronto. We only had one car, and my mother never drove.

I used to spoon feed her and push her around in her wheelchair. She was always a happy child. But when she got too big for my mom to manage, she was sent to live at a facility in Barrie.

One day, I was in Bowmanville having physiotherapy, and saw a staff member at the clinic working with a little girl... just rolling a ball to her. The girl was giggling and laughing and reminded me of my little sister, Doris. I watched and thought "oh, how I wish that kind of program was available when Doris was a child." But, it wasn't, and that was just the life we knew then.

Doris died when she was 20 years old, and is buried with our mother and father.

When we started school, (at Enniskillen P.S.), there were three of us: Lois Ashton, Dave Ferguson and me in Grade 1. We never had kindergarten. And when we went in 1950, Grade 9 was there as well. And everybody was in one room. Our teacher was Phillis Mitchell.

When I was growing up, I was the only boy my age in Enniskillen. There were other guys a little older than me, but they all lived on farms outside of town. And they were busy. So, I got all the odd jobs in Enniskillen. I've cut at least two-thirds of the lawns in town at one time or another. 75 cents if I used their mower, and a dollar if I used my own.

I've picked beans, I've pruned Christmas trees, I've picked strawberries. They called on me. I used to go with the Werry brothers to the cattle auctions, because I was the only guy available to do that stuff.



Enniskillen Stories

*Shared by Lois Worden &
David Stainton during a
driving tour of the area*

There were two general stores, diagonal each other. One was Slemon's General Store and the other was Pethick's Store. The barn at Pethick's was used by Cliff as an auction barn.

My friend Liz Kerr lives in the house where I grew up. When she got a new outdoor light, she told me she would give me the old one because that's where Keith gave me my first kiss.

The cemetery is where I spent a lot of Halloween nights telling ghost stories with my friend Judy.



I was married in the United Church. It used to have a steeple, but it was knocked down by lightning twice. Every year, on the May 24 weekend, we would have a service and supper out of the old shed at the back to commemorate the anniversary of our church.

I nearly killed myself over there on the big hill. We used to build go-karts. It was just a slab of wood with some wheels on it. I was home alone and I decided to go down the big hill. I got going, and bang, bang, bang... I upset the cart. I slid a good ways down the road and under a wire fence. I tore up my shirt and my back. (David Stainton)

There used to be a guide board sign at the intersection. So mom and dad, living right there, would see people coming home from Caesarea on Saturday night, drunk as skunks. They would come down too fast and smash into the guide board sign. We'd hear the brakes squeal from home. Dad would get out of bed and come down and see if they needed any help. They wanted to replace the wood sign with a metal one after they had replaced it about 100 times, but my dad said "absolutely not! You'll kill someone!"



Cliff Pethick used to have a porch on the front of his store. All the men would come home from GM or Goodyear and sit on a bench that was on the front porch. They'd all have their black lunch pails and they'd always save something for the kids. We'd hang out there waiting after school, because we would get a treat leftover from their lunch.

There was an old guy named Doug Barton, he worked for my dad every now and again. He lived down here and was a bachelor. He came up to our house one day to see my dad and the television was on. Someone was kissing on the show, and Barton said "well isn't that just unsanitary."



Margaret Zwart

Bowmanville/Orono

*Former owner and manager of
The Orono Weekly Times, Councillor*

My parents were immigrants from Holland. They came over right after the war. There was a lot of that here. They came here not speaking English, and they weren't always received well by the Canadians at the time. They built their own churches and their own schools. We would walk over the trestle bridge by Elgin Street to our bus stop. All the public school kids were coming this way, and we were going the other.

We would come down to a variety store; it was Frank's Variety Store. We would come on the weekends and get a 10 cent ice cream cone. We used to walk down to the mill pond and go skating. My dad would come

down and tie our skates. I remember before we had a freezer in our home there was a store called Dykstra's, and they had lockers where you could leave your frozen food until you needed it. The milk came in a horse drawn wagon a few times a week. You had the bottles with the tokens inside that indicated what kind of milk you wanted and how much.





Colin Rowe

Bowmanville

Clarington Concert Band, no local parade would be the same without his smile

I came from Toronto as a retired civil servant, but I've never really retired. I worked in the same government ministry, the Ministry of Community Social Services, for 49 years. It's might be a record. I retired and then started the three year jazz program at Humber.

I remember my dental hygienist, who was a girl from South Africa, she lived in Bowmanville and told me that she moved out because she found the town racist and

she was afraid. And there I was thinking "geez, I'm living the dream here." Her experience before I moved here was a whole lot different than mine.

There was also a place called The Acres. In the good old days it was a dance hall, and it was always hopping on a Friday and Saturday night. A lot of the migrant workers from Barbados and Jamaica were going down there to party and the girls who knew they got paid on a Friday were down there too. Many a mother have warned their daughters about going to The Acres.

These days to see what had been apple orchards and corn fields turned into developments, that's hard. All these houses with no space between them. New subdivisions with new people trekking to Toronto for work. No time for community involvement.





Willie Woo

Newcastle

*Local legend, Councillor, Goodyear man,
The News Café (now Walsh's Snug)*

We moved to Newcastle in 1954. If you've ever gone into the Snug, that's where it all started. That was my parents' restaurant.

I would say none of us had, as they say, a "pot to pee in." All working class. My best friend was Ukrainian, our doctor was Hungarian, Polish war veterans, English war brides, lots of Dutch, we even had Indigenous people then, right? And we all got along.

My dad came to Canada in 1911. He was 22, born in China. He was caught up in the Chinese Exclusion Act. The government thought the head tax would be enough to dissuade any Chinese from coming over, but somehow there were able to pay the \$500 head tax.

My mom came over in 1952, and I am only assuming it was an arranged marriage. They never talked about it. If I did ask, you know, they didn't want to talk about it, and you didn't pry.

Growing up at the Snug, we lived at the back. If you look there is a 2 storey part, and I slept in the same room with Dad and my sister slept in the same room with Mom. We used to have a Quebec stove that we put coal into, and then dad got a little Superior propane heater. It was supposed to heat the upstairs, but I can remember wearing probably 10 layers of clothes just to keep warm. But we never knew anything different. It's just the way it was.

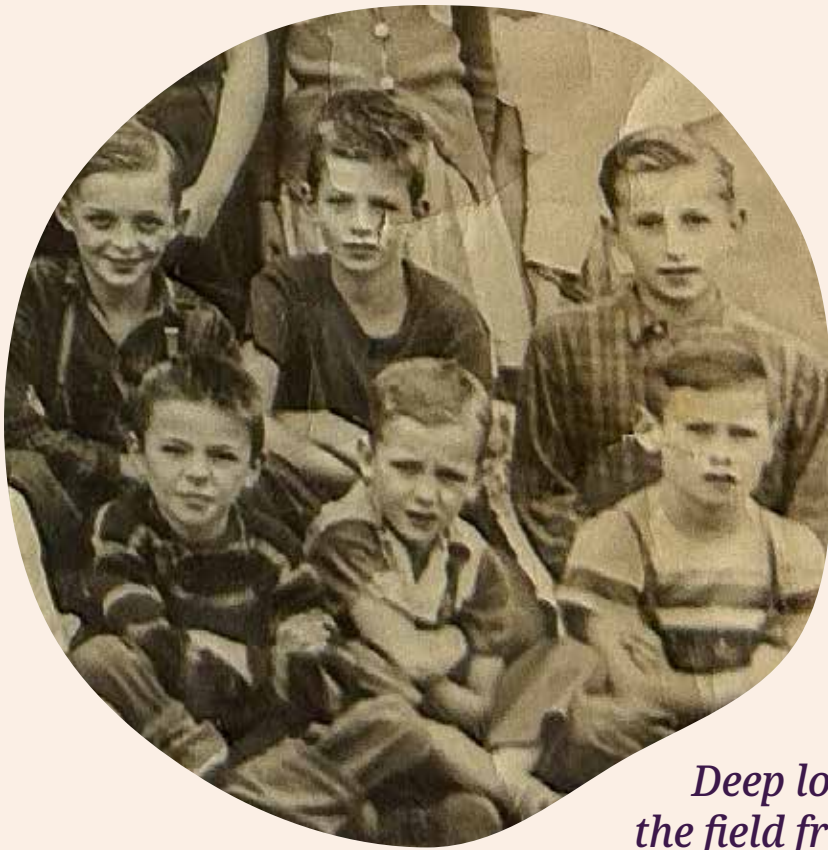
Current owner of Walsh's Snug, John Walsh, makes a point to celebrate his Dublin history alongside local history.



I think back now, if my friends came over and my parents were speaking Chinese, I'd be embarrassed. We would be serving fried rice and chicken balls up front, and we were eating authentic Chinese food at the back... you know, with chopsticks. And that was pretty novel for Newcastle. You know, I would be embarrassed. And I look back now and think "what did I have to be embarrassed about?"

It's those reflections I do now, and how proud I am of my Chinese heritage. The first time I went to China, back in 2011, I got off the plane in Hong Kong and I just had this sort of feeling that Mom and Dad were looking down on me, and how proud there were of where I am in my life. They never had that opportunity.





Keith Worden

Courtice/Ebenezer

Deep local farming roots, grew up across the field from his life-long friend, Rae Pickell

“Pick” and I grew up one concession apart from each other. We were around before the 401. We were born into an era where it was still all farming in our community. Rae and I were just coming on the ground as the starts of modernization were appearing.

A good number of the farming legends from around here had to get jobs at General Motors while they farmed just to keep their own land. I always thought I would be a farmer, but it was hard to make a living by then. I gave up on that and went into town to get a job.

When we were kids, the way the community would work together was something remarkable. Before the 401, my uncles would gather up all the grandkids, and we would shepherd these cattle up Church’s

Road, or Trulls Road and take them across Bloor Street, and up the Prestonvale Road extension to these pasture lands. You’d have to run like crazy to make sure the cattle didn’t go onto someone’s lawn. That was our job... to keep them on the road. You had to be old enough to have some legs and some speed... otherwise you weren’t much use. But trying to outrun a heifer with a full steam is a bit of a trick.

Our generation had the best of it. A true farming childhood, and yet the modernization and new tech was starting to evolve... things changed like no other time in history. From horses, to cars, to airplanes, to rockets... we’ve pretty much taken it all in.



Rae Pickell

Courtice/Ebenezer

*Deep local farming roots, family farm
stood on site of Courtice GO Station*

Keith and I went to a one room school, and we both had the same teacher for eight years. One year she had 54 kids in eight different grades. Miss Arnold was a very influential part of our growing up.

Keith's dad and my dad used to cut wood in the winter. In those days, that was with horses. They'd go out at the start of the day and come back hauling logs. Then, they'd all get together with the old buzzsaws... great big wheels with the tractors spinning them. It was the most dangerous thing you could ever imagine, and you'd never get away with that now.

And yet those were great times. Three or

four farmers would get together and they'd spend the day cutting wood. The next day, they would pack up and go cut wood at the next man's farm. Those were good times of camaraderie and the farm community doing things together.

My grandfather owned the middle stretch of what is now Darlington Provincial Park. When the 401 went through, he lost all that land to the south. That changed everything. My dad quit farming when he was 75 or 80. I think he knew by that time, that farming in that part of the world wasn't going to go on as it had.



Faye Langmaid

Solina/Bowmanville

*4H kid, town planner, preservation
of local architecture, Jury Lands*

I worked for Clarington for almost 20 years. There's been quite an evolution, especially because I remember what it was like when I grew up here versus what happened in the era I worked here. My focus is on the architecture in history. It's not just the Boys Training School that carries the history of the war era, it's the contribution that Durham Region made with the Bomber Girls and Camp X and Goodyear and GM. There's a whole history there that isn't told particularly well and doesn't really have a "home" yet.

When I grew up south of Solina, everyone went to the same church, and afterwards there would be a baseball game or a football game in someone's field. Most of us went to 4H together.

On Saturday and Wednesday nights, you were at the soccer game. The cars would drive in and park around the field, and the kids would sit on the hoods. If there was a goal, all the horns would honk. It was great fun.





Marilyn Morawetz

Solina

*Community connector, champion
of Jury Lands (née Knox)*

I got involved with Camp 30 at first because my kids were interested in history and the war. It has grown from that into a real interest in preserving an ability for people to really connect with something real that is from the war.

One place I think of is the old bake shop. I loved walking in. For years I wanted to marry a baker because it just

seemed too good to be true. It was on Temperance street, and it was so good. Carter's.... those glass cabinets and wood floors. It just smelled of sugar and goodness.

That's a memory that comes up. And it takes you back to the way our life was when I was growing up. There was one car trip to Bowmanville on Saturday mornings. There was no running back and forth. You might go to the Olympia for hot roast beef sandwiches. Mom would get her hair done. There was a while we didn't have a washing machine at home, so we brought our laundry into town. That Saturday trip was really important.





Newcastle Village & District Historical Society

*Keeper of local treasures both
archival and human, gathering place*

Sierd De Jong

Most of the Dutch people who came here were farmers. My Dad, he was a carpenter. He worked for a big lumber mill. When the war ended, my dad said "I'm not going through another war." So, he had the choice to go to either Australia or Canada. So, he knew people who were already here, friends of his, and they said "come to Canada... that's a great place." So he did... 7 kids and 2 adults, and here we come to Grafton.



Erla Jose

We have to give credit to the early directors, starting with the Massey family. They demanded that there be women on the board here. Can you imagine in 1920 that they would ask that? I think that says something about Newcastle itself though. It always had a community feeling. Everyone was so intertwined.

Peter Martin

I've been here for close to 3 years. I have a lifelong interest in history in the broadest sense. I sought out this place almost immediately. In a sense, a place like Newcastle is a treasure trove for a historian.



Marilyn Kent

I wish I could go into my mother's grocery store one more time. It was where the Home Hardware is now. She was there from 1954 to 1963. My father had passed away, and my grandmother had inherited that whole corner. The Tom's family had started a grocery store on the end and they kept growing and expanding and buying more property from my grandmother. All that was left was this one space and she wouldn't let it go, because she always had this idea that my family would take it over. My father's health wasn't good, and he was going to have to give up the farm. We would have to move to Newcastle and they would run the grocery store. But by 1964, Thompson's had got the IGA franchise and she couldn't compete anymore. She called it Helen's Groceteria.

She was a resilient woman. I was twelve when my dad died and my brother was seven.

You know I often think right now, of my Grandmother Baskerville that owned this property, she died in 1966. I wish so much that I had more interest in history then. I think of questions today that I wish I had asked her, but I was just too busy.

(Bill Lake: "Well, when you're young you don't think about history")



Sher Leetooze on the Newcastle Community Hall

I think we should have the local kids come in and we can talk to them about the history. We can tell them there used to be hall dinners and things... different groups and organizations, and the hall was fully stocked with dishes and everything to use. But at the end of the night, if someone says "oh, I can't eat all this," well, you couldn't put it in a takeaway container, there was no such thing! So they would wrap up your plate and say "bring the plate back tomorrow will you?" And some people brought the plates back and some people didn't. So, what a fun treasure hunt! We send the kids off to grandma's or great grandma's place to look in the cupboards. "Do you see anything like that?" (Pointing to a plate from the early days of the Hall) Bring it back!"

(Erla Jose: "In all the years I've been here, I have never heard that story. Isn't that a great story?")



Ron Aldred *Bowmanville*

*Coroner, career paramedic,
passionate historian*

When I was 17, I was living in Lindsay. Bruce MacArthur, who ran a funeral business, asked me if I was willing to go out at night and pick up a body. He needed help and I said I would do it. That's how I got started. We would bring a body back to the funeral home and he would do the embalming and I would watch. When I was in grade 13, there was a funeral home in Whitby that was looking for an apprentice. I got that job. My pay was \$24 a week, and my room and board was \$16 a week. I worked 11 days on and then had three days off, and I was on-call every other night.

The business was the WC Town Funeral Chapel and Ambulance Service. All I needed was a chauffeur's license and my basic first

aid. Everything else you just learned on the job. Eventually, the funeral and ambulance businesses split, and it became the Whitby Ambulance Service, and then Durham Regional Ambulance Service in 1982. I worked for 30 years in the Whitby station, then Bowmanville for four years, and my last three years of service were out of Port Perry.

I moved to Bowmanville in 1981. I've always been a history buff. I was lucky enough to grow up with a mother who was a historian. I can remember people phoning her up to ask things about their family's history, and she'd rhyme off history for an hour with people she'd never met.



Elva Reid

Orono/Kendal

*Champion for land conservation,
supporter of local writers and artists*

I grew up north of Newtonville, between the 3rd and 4th concession, on Reid Road. My family had been in that area since the early 1800's.

My relatives were the Brimacombe family. Aunt Florence used to tell me stories. Her father used to light fires around the barn at night to keep the wolves at bay. And here, I can open the windows and hear that cacophony of sound, and it so connects me in another way to where I live. This forest behind me is the Kendal Crown Lands, and it's about 900 acres. We can thank Premier John Robarts for that. He worked to preserve green spaces in Ontario. Much of

that land came from my father's land.

If you lose your local connection to family, it all starts to fall apart. Add to that the demise of actual cemeteries and newspapers and other physical pieces of history, and you really start to lose the ability to find your own histories.

I lived a year in Europe, in 1963-64. The evidence of the war was still everywhere. And, I realized how fortunate I was, simply by right of birth. That year changed how I live my life. It made my life focus on giving back to community and country.



Lloyd Down

Courtice

*Over a century of local knowledge,
farming family, community connections*

When we were kids, we did all our work with horses. Nobody had a tractor. It wasn't thought that was a hard way to farm... that's just the way it was. There was no other way.

There was a horse man in Pickering by the name of Picov. My dad thought he'd like to buy some more horses, so they arranged between the two of them. They went out west to buy horses. They brought them home on a boxcar, from West Saskatchewan. A man came back with them from the West with a little saddle mare. He was there to look after the horses... fed them, let them off to get water and whatever they had to do.

The horses were let off in Port Hope and this man drove those horses loose. He drove them from Port Hope to my dad's farm...

four or five horses. Drove them across the lakeshore, through Newcastle and Bowmanville, all without ropes... completely loose.

And the peculiar part is that the little saddle mare never had a bridle or a bit in her mouth. He drove her with just a halter on. He had a rope from her halter in his left hand. He guided her by flipping the rope to the left if he wanted her to go left, and flipped the rope right to go right.

I remember those horses coming down the lane and into the barn.

I've lived here my whole life. I am sitting within three or four miles of where I was born. This is my home for more than a century.

David Down *Courtice*

*Enthusiastic keeper of Lloyd's
stories, very proud son*

When I came along we had cars and all the modern things. But my thrill growing up was watching my dad just love farming. He worked at GM of course, but his passion was farming. So, I would watch him come home, change, and then head off to Uncle Carl's to plow a field, or milk cows, or something like that.

The changes in the way my dad grew up compared to how I grew up are vast. But, the consistencies are the Down Family. There's a great honour in being a Down.

Whenever I would visit, I would go to church (at Ebenezer). Wally McKnight used to say "When are you going back home to BC?" and I would always say "I am home. This will always be home." No question about it.





Brimacombe, Rutherford

Kirby/Orono

*ski destination, local employer,
community gathering place for decades*

Shared by Mark Rutherford

I'm very much a historian. I love the history of this area, and always listened intently to my grandfather when he told his stories. The Rutherford family has been here eight generations. The land directly to the west of Brimacombe, my uncle has the Crown Deed for that. We've been here since the 1830's, and so there's not too many people I am not related to.



My grandfather bought the land from the Brimacombes. The Oshawa Ski club started up in the 1936/37 season. I was told it was a bunch of people from the Oshawa Yacht Club who were looking for something to do in the winter. They would ski on any little hill they could find, and then they started using Raglan.

During the war, Dermot Conway was stationed here. He was a ski instructor from Quebec. When he saw Raglan, he didn't think it was up to his "Quebec standards." Ive Richards had been out scouting for a bigger hill in the area. He wanted a hill that faced north, with a nice big pitch and a natural bowl. He found that here on the face of this drumlin.



Ive brought Dermot out to test the hill. Dermot took off down the hill, and when he got partway down, he stopped to look up at the top. Ten feet from the top was Ive Richards, who had quickly realized it was too big a hill for him. Derm put his thumb up and that was the moment this property started it's evolution into the ski hill it is today.

As a kid, my grandmother ran the canteen, and my sister and my cousins hung out and drank as much pop as we wanted. People still tell stories about the honey buns my grandmother made. This was my winter playground.





Nancy Knox Solina

Local farm kid, adored voice of Ebenezer Church, minister, world traveller

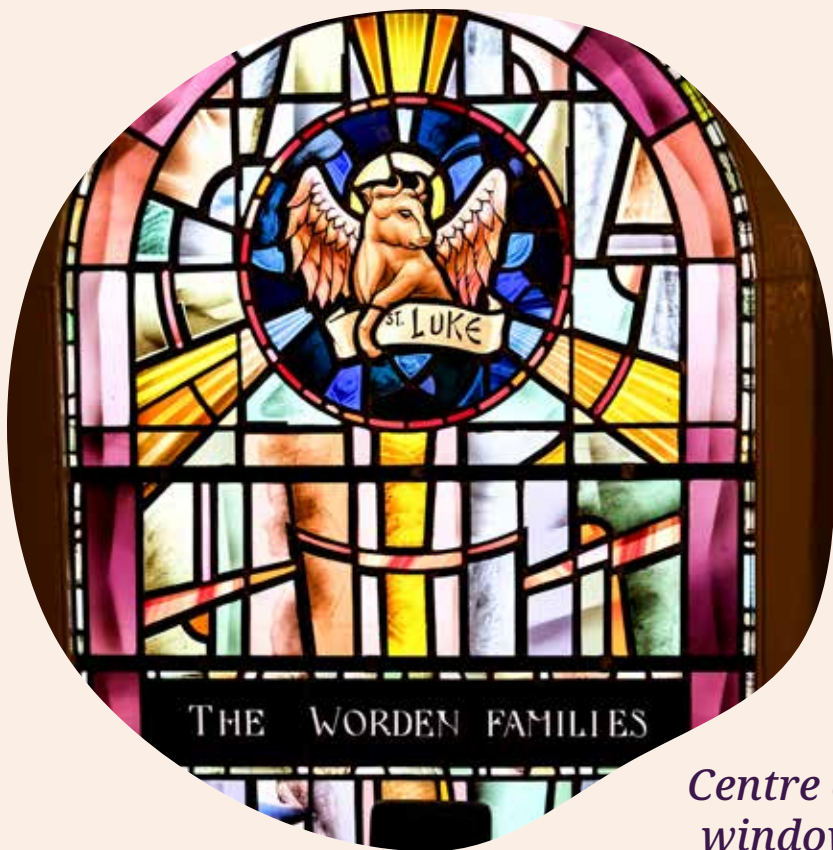
I grew up just outside Solina on my parent's farm. It's commonly known now as Knox's Pumpkin Farm today, but then it was just a small dairy farm. I went to Bradley's School, which was a one-room school. I went to Eldad United Church. A very typical rural farm kid upbringing.



The Women's Institute in Solina used to sponsor the 4H classes for girls. As girls, we would do church programs

together, like explorers and CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) and church choir. All of those community things dramatically shaped me. They gave me a really good grounding in my own value system and how I wanted to live and shape my life.

I was ordained in 1980. I decided I wanted to be a minister in high school. It was still a little unusual for women to go into ministry at time. Eventually, I went to Emmanuel College in Toronto, which was a three year program and a one year internship. The year I went, it was the first time that 50% of the class were women. It was a big transition time.



Ebenezer Church

Courtice

Centre of the community, stained glass windows commemorate local families

Rae Pickell

They used to have a couple's club there. They also used to have what they called a "farm forum," and they had a radio broadcast there. I remember taking the fields in sleighs when Courtice Road was blocked with snow, just in order to get to church.

Keith Worden

Courtice wasn't much of a town then. "Ebenezer" was where I would tell people I was from.

Lois Worden

When my children were young, we had a Sunday school program that regularly had 100 kids attend.



Lloyd Down

In my day, they used to have a shed at Ebenezer where you would leave the horses while you attended church. I can remember teams and sleighs coming in. We took it down in the 60's.

David Down

Ebenezer was our "town." All the turkey dinners, Mom and Dad going to couple's club for years and years... It was the centre of the community, without question.



Charles Taws

Bowmanville

*Museum curator, found traces of
Clarington in his new Alberta museum*

Here in Grande Prairie, I have a museum village, and incorporated in my museum village is a 1911 Presbyterian Church. It's a log building, and it's one of the first buildings from Grande Prairie. When it opened, what do you think they had inside? They had a Dominion organ from Bowmanville.

I worked for the Bowmanville Museum for a long time, and every summer at least one German would show up. We would take them out to the school. Back then the school was a religious school, and that's who we bought the log cabin from. It was from a skills training exercise for the German soldiers to do, and we were able to buy that for \$200. We got a company to move it for free and then we restored it all. So, that was the last piece from the time of the Germans in Bowmanville.

Most of the German soldiers had very positive

things to say about their time at Camp 30. One funny story involved Bruno Petrenko. When they had the reunion in 1991, it occurred to me that everyone was talking about how well they were treated. I finally said "well, you guys were prisoners here... you must have some bad memories about this place." And Mr Petrenko thought about it and says "oh... there was one thing."

I said "aha! I knew it! What was it?" And he says "Well, you know that it used to be a boys school before it was a prison and work camp." He said "they had boys there of all ages. Well, we were stationed where the little boys were, so the toilets were only so far off the floor, and the sinks were only this high off the floor," as he gestured close to the floor. And that was the only bad thing he could think of from his time in Bowmanville as a Prisoner of War.



Judy Hagerman

Bowmanville

Passionate member of the Business and Professional Women's group (née Jeffery)

When my mother moved to Bowmanville, she sang in the choir at Trinity. In the evening there weren't a lot of people that came to the service, but she did see a young bachelor sitting in the back row. My father grew up as a minister's son, so he, of course, went to church. She took one look at him and thought "mmhmm..."

They got married at my grandfather's home by my other grandfather. They were married December 13th, and my mother was very pleased about that. She had a teaching contract in those days (1940); if you got

married as a woman, that was the end of your job. But she had a contract with the board and they had to keep her on and pay her until June.

I met my husband, Robert, in Grade 9. He already knew my mother because she had taught him. I had no chance of getting into any trouble because everyone knew who I was... My mother taught at Bowmanville High School, and my father worked at Goodyear. In those days, people kept an eye on everybody.



Frank Stapleton

Newtonville

*World Champion Auctioneer,
Stapleton Auctions, local legend*



Our families have been here since the mid-1800's. Our grandchildren, who live here, are seventh-generation in Newtonville.

Our auction hall is the old B/A station on Highway 2, and behind it is the feed mill Betty mentioned.

That feed mill building was an ammunition building in Ajax. They became defunct after the war and the government put them up for sale at ten percent of their value. My dad bought one of the old munitions buildings. It was DIL industries in Ajax, where the bomb girls worked. My mother was a bomb girl.

The building was disassembled, brought to Newtonville, and rebuilt here.

In the Stapleton's Auction lifetime, we had over 12,000 auctions in 50 years. Every one of those with one hundred to one thousand people at it. I can't imagine the number of people I've done business with over the years. We would sell for people with major collections one weekend, then the next weekend selling for someone who lost their farm. There's lots of happy stories and there's many sad stories in the auction business too.

Betty and I have been married 55 years this year. I love her more now than ever.



Betty Stapleton

Newtonville

*Champion for local history preservation,
community service and connections*

My dad (Bill Skelding) had the fuel company, serving Bowmanville through Cobourg. Frank's dad had the feed mill. So, between us, our families knew just about everyone.

Frank and I first went to school here at SS#4. In 1959, they built the new school down by the 401. The day the new school opened, all the students were told to "carry your books down to the new school." So, off we went in a long line from the old school to the new one. How I wish I had a picture of that!

Frank and I met growing up here

in town. Frank's sister was my best friend. I didn't like him, of course, because he was my best friend's brother. Years later, I got a job in Toronto, and one day, my mother asked Frank if he would give me a ride up. She knew what she was doing... she liked him. I think she still does!

We met here and we stayed here. Newtonville is home.





Eileen Knox

Starkville/Solina

*Trailblazing teacher and
community leader (née Farrow)*

I went to school in Crooked Creek, and then went to Starkville, then to Newcastle, and finally Grade 13 in Bowmanville. In that last year, I got a letter from the principal asking if I wanted to replace a male teacher, while there were away fighting in the war. So, I was hired to teach at the age of 17.

We had two or three lessons on how to mark and manage and about curriculum, but we didn't really follow it. Sometimes we only had one child per grade in the schoolhouse.

On my first day of teaching, my mother was driving me, and she put the car in the

ditch. Well, I couldn't be late, so I grabbed my books, and my lunch pail, and away I went running. It was a full concession away... about four miles. I got to the schoolyard, and the boys thought I was a student running in. Then I pulled the keys out to open the school. It was a memorable first day.

I loved teaching. I taught for 27 years. It was the best. I hope I helped the children... but they taught me as well.





Janice Kraayenhof

Orono

Library worker, teacher, deep family roots in Orono community (née Wood)

I worked at the library when it was known as the Orono Public Library. Same building. It was my after school job. My career was as a teacher, but when I retired I came back here in 2017.

My parents grew up here. My uncle Keith (Wood) used to work at Stutt's drugstore, and recently my daughter worked there.

I grew up in Orono and moved back here ten years ago. You used to know everyone in Orono, and now you don't. It's still got that small town feel, because it hasn't grown like other places. I am glad that Orono is "capped" in it's growth.

My childhood memories here include the Stedmans with the wooden floors. We had two grocery stores, we had an IGA and a Red and White. There was a barbershop, Ray's, and the other half was Middleton's and you could get your penny candy there. You used take pop bottles, and you could trade it for your candy.





Larry Bryan

Bowmanville

*Local historian and military expert,
winner of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal*

With a lot of veterans that I've known over the years, they would talk to me... you know, as an associate... the old guard they called us. And I always asked permission. "Can I share your story?" They would say "yeah." And the underlying tone was "as long as you never let the kids forget us." They were worried back then that all of this (the Wars) would have been for nothing. And look what's happening in the world right now!?

We've been in Courtice since 1993.

Some of the legions have died and closed over the years because the numbers aren't there. But we've got such a great Legion here. It represents a real connection to the

men and women that served. Because, the banners aren't just about the wartime. It's about other people too.

I believe that by looking at the history and seeing where the soldiers were back then... I mean... it's so different from now. How are you ever going to learn to be better without it? So, by looking at the history and learning from it, it shows us where we've been and where we can head to, right?

I think what the older generation taught us was that you have to be grateful for what you have. I don't know if the younger generations fully understand that.



Charlie Trim

Starkville/Wilmot Creek

All 'round athlete, local politics and history buff

Goodyear wanted somewhere to expand, so they came to Bowmanville. They had some trouble finding employees, because so many men were farming here. So, they went to Toronto to get workers, including my grandfather.

There were no accommodations for them in Bowmanville, so they built the Balmoral Hotel. The men, including my grandfather, took the train from Toronto and rented rooms for the workers. That's how the plant got going.

If you drive around the town, along somewhere like Carlisle Avenue, you will see places where the housing is all the same.

Those houses, and many like them, were built by Goodyear to house their workers. They were built a long time ago, and don't look all that bad today, still!

We used to have track and field meets out at the Boys Training School, because they had such good land. They had a lot of boys there. The boys were nice too... although they'd always want you to bring a pack of cigarettes.

As a teen, I played baseball for Newcastle and we won an All-Ontario Championship. For that, we were taken on a trip to New York City, and saw two Yankees games. I've never forgotten that time.

Photo courtesy of The Orono Weekly Times



Bill Lake

Newcastle

*Actively farming at nearly 90, owns
legendary shed filled with local treasures*

Remember Old George Butler? When we were kids we used to go down there to play hockey. There was no rink uptown here, so we'd go down there. It was about 20 below, Fahrenheit, and that ice was just like glass.

We were all up near where the boats were playing hockey, and somebody shot the puck way down to the bottom. We had a hound dog then, who used to go with us in my '53 Ford pickup. When I got down to the bottom the dog was barking and going crazy. Old George had walked across the ice and fell through.

There he was, his one arm caught in between the pylons, just his head out of the

water. He had on one of those coats you used to call a bomber jacket, big silver one. He was on his last legs.

There was an old boathouse there, and we got a bunch of kids and tore some old boards off it. We slid them over the ice and got old George out of the hole. We put him in my truck and by the time we did that he was snow-white. That's how cold he was.

I drove him straight to his brother, the doctor. He never even got a cold.

That hound should have got a citation. But it didn't even make the paper.



Sher Leetooze

Bowmanville/Newcastle

*Clarington historian, author, still
has many projects in the works*

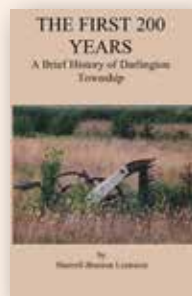
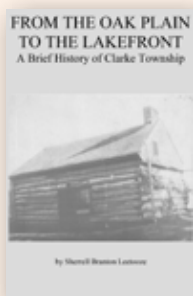
It's interesting when you start delving into things, no matter what era you're looking at. Right now, we're looking into the Victorian era, but there are really interesting stories from more modern times as well. When I finish this book, I might go on to an Edwardian one, and then a mid-century one and so on.

When you're looking at local history, the story perspective changes from that of an historian to that of a local citizen who grew up here. The stories are different, and I love that. History takes all shapes and sizes.

The face of the nation changed so much after the wars. Before that, very little had changed from the days of the first settlers. It was all agricultural and rural. If you had communities, they were small.

The face of a place is always changing, and so the stories are always changing. Even someone new to a community will have stories in a few years. Every year there's a change that warrants a story, and we may never keep up with it.

Collecting history is a never-ending story.





Karen Allin

Courtice/Tyrone

Family tree includes McKnights, Robinsons, Trulls; all essential to the area's history

Mom and Dad had to move their house, which was a Rundle house, as the 401 came through. They moved it on skids, a few feet a day. They lived in it while they moved it. Unbelievable! When they got it to where the OPG office is, they put the outside back on it.

My mom was very stylish. A city girl, with her nails painted, and high heel shoes and dressed to the nines.

After I was born, my dad fastened a box onto his tractor. That's where I would lay

as a baby. My mom would have to drive the tractor with me riding along in the box beside her. My dad was working full time at General Motors. Well, we had to get the crops planted somehow, and the only one to do it was my mom... the city girl. He would tell her he needed a field done by the time he got home, and then he would plant at night, after his shift.

Ken adds: "This is why Karen can't drive long distances in the car. She just falls asleep."



Ken Allin

Bowmanville/Tyrone

*Allin family synonymous with
farming the Clarington region*

I grew up down by the lake, near where the cement company is. Dad lived there 'til he died in 1967. The farm is gone... it's all a big hole now.

Karen and I were five miles apart growing up. Both our dad's had contracts with Stokely-Van Camps... you know sweet corn and pumpkin and all that. My dad grew for them and so did Karen's dad. That's how I met Karen when we were 21. I had a summer job with Stokely-Van Camps harvesting peas and driving a combine, and Karen's brother, Ron, had the same job. Ron

asked if I wanted to come home and have dinner at his place. So we met then and started going together.

We originally met when we were five years old at nursery school. Our teacher had a heart attack halfway through the school year and that was the end of nursery school. It was where the BOAA is now. The Lion's Centre... I remember sitting on those lions when I was younger.

After we got married at Ebenezer Church, we had our reception at the same Lion's Club.



Jayne Salisbury

Bowmanville

Whitby import dives into local agricultural history with the help of neighbours

We moved here in the 80's. It took me three days before I could sleep because those crickets were so loud. People were waving and I said to my husband "ok, I don't know what's going on here, because there's people driving down the street and waving at me, and I don't know who they are." And now I am the waver. And I love that.

I found that people in the town were very welcoming and very kind.

I did a lot of research for the 150th. I researched the creameries and dairy history. I have worked with Brenda Metcalfe and Marilyn Pearce. We want to keep working on a research project on these histories. I don't have an agricultural background. But, when I moved here I made a point of going out around the entire area to see what was what. I learned so much from my neighbours Terry and Phyllis Price.

Terry would tell me where farms had been and what families had been there. It was a great insight into how things have changed. They gave me so much information. I miss Phyllis and think of how much she would have offered to a project like this.

There's been so much change. If you don't look at something when it's originally there, this advancement wipes it right off the earth. There's nothing there that shows you what had been there. There's nothing that gives you a sense of anything other than a big push of modernization coming this way.





Lydia Carman

Orono

*Family ran the Rolph Hardware
on Orono's main street*

My family goes back to the 1700's in this area. My grandfather ran Rolph's Hardware store on the main street in Orono. My father met my mother at a dance in the area when he was surveying, and they

ended up settling here and my father took over the store from my grandfather. My grandfather also had a Christmas tree farm. We backed onto the Crown Lands.

I spent my summers at the pool. I was a lifeguard and taught swimming at the Orono Park from age 15 to 19.

I remember my grandfather contributed \$1000 in around 1972 to put lights in at the baseball diamond. On a clear night you could see down to the diamond from our house.

Sharing the history fills me up because it honours my mom, who cared so much about local history.





Adrian Foster

Courtice/Bowmanville

Long-time Mayor of Clarington

One of the joys of Clarington is if you want to be in a field, or go to a farmer's market, or see some apple blossoms, it's a 10 or 15 minute trip. Can you imagine how long it would take you in downtown Toronto? The ski hill? The Provincial Park? That's in our backyard.

I had never anticipated that I was going to be a politician. I was approached by Jane Rowe who was the local councillor in Ward 1 at some point in 2003. In a weak moment I said yes that I would run. She was retiring and looking for someone to replace her. At the beginning of 2003 if you had told me that by the end of 2003 I was going to be involved with municipal politics, I would have found the whole concept hilarious.

When we first moved to Courtice there were a number of newspapers. Early on, I got the newspaper and the front page of the paper said that a billy goat had been found wandering in downtown Bowmanville on Highway 2, and "does anyone know who owns the billy goat?" Deb and I looked at each other and wondered "what have we done?" Ha ha.

Clarington has an unusually high number of good "nodes," you know. There are any number of days (on this job) that I'd just as soon forget about, but the flip side is you have all these amazing stories. You'll talk to the "old timers," these people you get to connect with in this community. By and large, it's an incredibly friendly community.

Golden Tales: Chronicles of our Community

Share Your Story

Do you have stories to share or would you like to learn how to record an oral history of a family member? Please reach out to us at hello@cplma.ca and we would be happy to help.

Reflections: Lee Higginson, Program Lead

The Golden Tales project has been a gift. Getting to know a community in a mere fifty days of work is a monumental task and I spoke with about five percent of the people I wanted to. But, the dozens of people I was able to connect with left me inspired about Clarington, and more passionate than ever about the importance of local history, and it's preservation.

The stories the seniors of Clarington hold dear are treasures, both now and for the future. I am so grateful to have heard so many of them. The participants invited me into their homes and into their lives with such generosity. These months have made me feel like family.

This project will end, but it's impact will live forever. Thank you for sharing your stories.



Thank You

Clarington Library, Museums & Archives would like to thank all the interviewees and their families for their participation in this important initiative. The stories you have shared and the time you have spent with us have been overwhelmingly meaningful to everyone who has worked on this project.

CLMA is grateful to our Project Lead, Lee Higginson, for her hard work and dedication to this project. Lee met personally with each and every participant in this booklet, and her joy of hearing their stories and memories can be seen in the successful results of this initiative.

Our sincere appreciation to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility of the Province of Ontario, for their generous support through the Seniors Community Grant program.

Through this project, we have actively connected with Clarington older adults and witnessed their joy of sharing tales of their life in Clarington. We cannot possibly thank everyone who has been involved but we wish to thank all who have contributed or assisted with this amazing project!

Publication Information

"Golden Tales: Chronicles of our Community," Clarington Library, Museums & Archives compiled by Heather Ridge and Lee Higginson, 2025

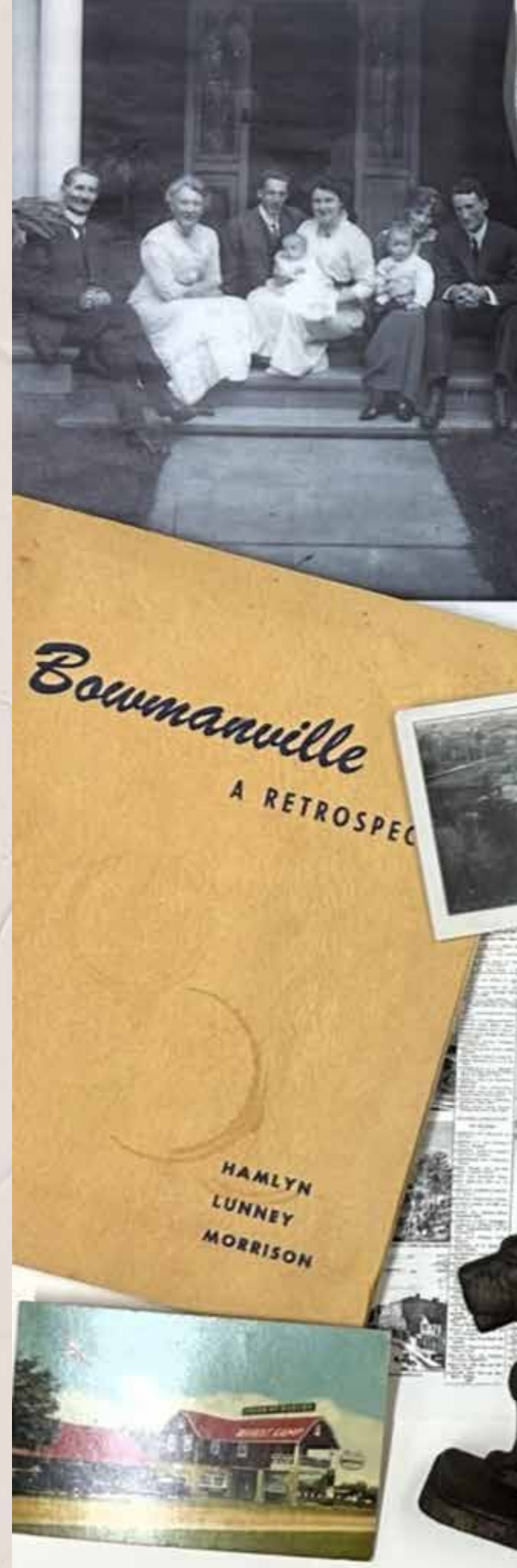
*We hope you will enjoy reading the stories that have been shared and documented through the **Golden Tales, Chronicles of our Community** project.*

Our interviewees opened their homes and hearts to us, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to record and save these stories for future generations.

Find more stories at cplma.ca/GoldenTales.



The Clarington Library, Museums, and Archives gratefully recognizes the financial support of the Province of Ontario's Seniors Community Grant Program.



Clarington Library
Museums & Archives