



## January 13 & 16, 2025 Newsletters

Dear Members of the Pelham Historical Society

**I trust that the holidays were a time for rest, for offering gratitude, and for looking ahead with hope, positivity, and intention.**

Our February 22, 2025 meeting will be the popular 'Members Interest'. On the agenda currently are Wayne Olson - Craftsman houses, Graham Segger - Pelham Pnyx, Margaret Rice – Old school bell, David Sherlock - Crossley Music archives, Robert Young - S. S. #6 Thorold Township and Carolyn Botari - 'tiny metal heart found in a wall during renovations.'

The presentations are intended to be 5 minutes long so there is space available for more members to make a presentation. I am to tell you that the Members Interest meeting will be held upstairs at the Kirk.

Our March 22, 2025 members meeting will be about the Great Fires in Welland. We will be pleased to welcome Lisa Mooney from the Welland Museum.

I have been to gym, enjoyed my coffee, and I looked out at our fresh white snow. It prompted me to think that someone might have an interest in the research I have been doing for my presentation.

### **Craftsman Houses**

Motivated by a discussion with PHS member Keith McVetty and the experience of growing up in one, I have volunteered to make a presentation on 'Catalogue Homes'.

Fortunately for me, I had a couple of models of 'Catalogue Homes' on my model railroad which I hope to show. At the same time, the Legion January/February 2025 magazine had an interesting article entitled 'Solving the WW II Housing Crisis'.

Canada was faced with an unprecedented housing shortage post-Depression and during the Second World War. The housing situation was so severe in July 1942, according to the *Globe*, that it was affecting military morale.

Prompted by the immediate need to provide 500,000 housing units the government used the War Measures Act to create the Crown agency Wartime Housing Limited (WHL) in 1941.

The government's creation of WHL was a dramatic departure from its long-standing policy that housing should be left to private industry.

Local architects and builders hired by WHL carried out projects according to pre-approved designs. The government gave WHL priority over private builders on materials that were in short supply. Once a project was completed, WHL rented the units and acted as landlord.

Working closely with municipalities, WHL, in its first year, contracted 13,000 homes in 57 communities across the country. In many cases, municipalities provided vacant lots to WHL for a nominal sum and supplied services in return for an annual payment per house. Because they were supposed to be temporary, the houses were built without basements.

In the years after the war, government efforts to build homes for veterans shifted from building public rental units to building homes for sale under the newly created Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which inherited all of WHL's assets. CMHC completed and sold any unfinished WHL projects.

The houses were priced for young families with moderate incomes and sold to veterans for between \$5,000 and \$6,000. CMHC introduced mortgage guarantees for veterans, making possible 25-year mortgages and monthly payments not much different from rent.

Each of the houses was about 700 or 800 square feet with two or three bedrooms. The wartime houses that were supposed to have been temporary, were made permanent by adding steel beams and basements.

Between 1941 and 1947, WHL successfully built and managed about 26,000 rental units for war workers, service members and returning veterans. WHL ran smoothly, efficiently, and fulfilled its program objectives, and represented a successful but temporary experiment in publicly built housing.

### **1862 Tremaine Map of Lincoln & Welland**

One of the valuable artifacts which PHS has in their archives is an original 1862 Tremaine wall map of the Counties of Lincoln and Welland. This map is quite large at 125 x 179 cm (roughly 50 x 70 inches). It shows some ill effects from 160+ years of being rolled up and down on its hangers, likely in a classroom setting, but it is in better shape than many of the other surviving copies of this map in the Region. The best publicly displayed local example of this map is hanging on the wall of the Welland Museum (West Lincoln Museum and Archives also has a restored map hanging in the Smithville Train Station lower level as does St. Catharines Museum at Lock 3 in their basement archives).

On the evening of Friday, February 21, 2025 at 7:00 pm PHS executive committee member Graham Segger will be delivering a Webinar to the Niagara Peninsula Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society on the topic of the Tremaine map making family and this 1862 Niagara map. For years Graham has used the Lincoln and Welland Counties map in his local history and genealogical research, as well as many other similar maps of various different counties throughout Ontario. He became curious about who the Tremaine family were and how they came to publish their maps of 14 different Canada West counties between 1856 and 1864. This research resulted in two articles published in the November 2024 issue of the OGS Families quarterly journal. These can be read on his website at <https://grahamsegger.com/tremaines-map-establishment/> and <https://grahamsegger.com/general-interest-articles/genealogy/county-maps-as-genealogical-evidence/>). Graham will expand upon the information in those articles using the Lincoln and Welland map as an example.

The webinar is open to the public. Register on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84428276431?pwd=ZDZsTdqBNUqL9Kkxsg>

Respectfully submitted by Wayne Olson, Newsletter Editor