

The Grand Dispatch



A brief social history of Port Maitland Ontario, and the surrounding area
Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association (PMHA) Price \$2.00 - Free to PMHA members

The Community is asked to Donate Generously to the Commemorative Cairn at Port Maitland!



Some History about Brown's Point

After the War of 1812, the British built the *Grand River Naval Depot* at Port Maitland to provide a defense against the Americans should they decide to violate the conditions of peace. This piece of land was not yet a distinguishable landmark at the time as the Feeder Canal was not yet built; however, this land was a part of the Naval Depot. Until at least the late 1960's it was part of what was known as a Naval Reserve.

Below is the proposed wording on the four plaques which will be placed on a cairn at Brown's Point in 2015; the bicentennial of the Grand River Naval Depot.

Grand River Naval Depot

In 1815 a small detachment of the Royal Navy established the first naval base on Lake Erie at the mouth of the Grand River. It was to enforce the Treaty of Ghent (1814) to protect Upper Canada from another invasion from the United States. The wharf and four buildings were washed away in a storm in 1827. The Naval Depot was officially closed in 1834; however historical references, as late as 1850 indicates that despite decay there was further activity on the site.

purchasing granite paving stones at various donation levels with a family, business name or community service clubs engraved on the stones. Many families from the Dunnville and Port Maitland area have ancestors who lived there or actively took part in these historical events, whether it was a soldier at the Naval Depot, building of the Feeder Canal and Lock or one of the many fishermen on Lake Erie.

Interest has been shown by the community and we have received some donations toward the project, but we need the communities help, no matter how big or small the donation may be. This is an excellent opportunity for residents, businesses and cottagers to show their support by purchasing a paving stone for this memorial cairn. We hope individuals, service clubs and businesses will be willing to participate in preserving our local history. Bill Warnick and I would be pleased to give you more information.

The cost of the cairn and landscaping could cost in excess of \$40,000. I am pleased that Haldimand County is contributing \$10,395 towards the project. We will make a second attempt for a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation next month.

Port Maitland and Dunnville are small communities which have maintained a friendly small town atmosphere. We are proud of our roots. I know the interest and passion of many citizens wanting to preserve our rich history in our area. Our heritage and culture promotes tourism. Tourism helps to promote the economic base for Dunnville. We hope this project will be the first in a series of PMHA's historical preservation efforts in the community. This has been an exciting challenge for me and one that is personal since so many of my roots are in Port Maitland.

Next year is the 200th anniversary of the Grand River Naval Depot. All the monies need to be raised for this project before we can put a shovel in the ground. The projected start date will be May 2015. A list of businesses and of donors will appear in The Dispatch.

You might say Wow!

by Bill Warnick

You might say "Wow; your request prices are high!" You are correct, they are. Port Maitland, is not in a big city where lots of tourists visit, nor do we have a lot of large corporations in our midst. Fortunate as we are to

be rural, this has a number of drawbacks when it comes to funding. Government and Corporations want to know how many people visit our region annually. In most rural communities, and Port Maitland is one of those places, our honest answer comes up short. This is why if we are going to move forward with the cairn or other local historic projects we need you to give more generously than you might be asked to if you lived in a large city or wealthy community. We will be asking you for more than we would if you lived in Toronto, Hamilton or Buffalo!

Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association has worked and will continue to work hard to save our history. Better yet, we will work hard to create venues where your history can be discovered. An example of this is the Port Maitland Lock. We still wait for the Canadian Pacific Railway to hand over the lease so we can re-begin the work of making it a place to visit and learn about our early contribution to the greater St. Lawrence Seaway system.

The cairn, as we will build it this spring, is not the finished product. Even in its infancy it will create discussion among its visitors. People who know more about Port Maitland than I; or know some specific interesting piece of history will hopefully contact PMHA or me and we will learn more. In August this year we published a Grand Dispatch telling you about a one-legged lighthouse keeper at Port Maitland. That story may have helped to discover this man's prosthesis. Terry Lyons discovered it when he dismantled the former lighthouse dwelling. I find that fascinating!

Recently, I gave a walking tour to a group of students from the University of Waterloo who are studying water quality and its effects on aquatic life. We started at the Mosaic ponds, worked our way to the Port Maitland Lock, then to the fish houses and finally to Brown's Point. The tour began about 2:00 p.m. when professor Mark Servos told me to take all the time I wanted. At 4:00 p.m. we had only begun at Brown's Point when Mark looked at his watch and said we had better get going. It was not all my fault (blabbing) that we were running late. There was a real interest on the part of the students about our community and they asked lots of good questions.

PMHA has no question that the cairn and all that we are able to create here will increase interest in our little community by the Lake Erie!

Please give generously to our project!

How our funding program will work

Port Maitland, “On the Grand” Historical Association has begun the final phase in fundraising for the Port Maitland Cairn as well as funding to secure the paving stones we will be placing around the cairn. The park will be raised with the proper fill and levelled. A base of concrete will be placed around the cairn sufficient in size for all the paving stones to be secured. Landscaping will take place and protective armour stones strategically placed against the weather.

There are four levels of donors.

In an effort to give you a chance to remember your family members we are making available a variety of levels of paving stones. Families could get together to purchase a stone or stones to remember Grandma and Grandpa, or an old uncle and aunt who were pioneer farmers, fishermen, cottagers, members of the military and of course sailors, as well as the many other trades and labourers that made this area prosperous.

Some families may find themselves in a better financial position than others and wish to purchase a Corporate or Private Stone where they could include a short history of their family.

A tax receipt will be issued by PMHA for any donation of \$20 or greater.

Donations of \$125-499 from individuals or families will be recognized with a 6” x 12” engraved granite paver; 3 lines of text; 15 characters per line.

Donations of \$500-4,999 from individuals, families, businesses or corporations will be recognized with a 12” x 12” engraved granite paver; 6 lines of text; 15 characters per line or a logo and text.

Donations greater than \$5000 will be recognized with a 12” x 18” engraved granite paver; 9 lines of text; 15 characters per line or a logo and text.

(All text must be approved by Haldimand County as the cairn is on County property.)

You will find this and subsequent information on our webpage at www.port-maitland.ca Go to the link “Cairn Project”.

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The above photo is an example of what the STANDARD STONE will look like.

Please make payment to:

Port Maitland, “On the Grand” Historical Association

Link for **ORDER FORM**