

Appendix E

Historic Harrington Dam and Conservation Area History and Culture Information

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Harrington Dam and Conservation Area News Articles

HARRINGTON — From the time Milton Betteridge first suggested, in 1948, that the Harrington damsite be acquired as a conservation area, until 1952, when the first piece of property was bought, lengthy negotiations were involved and several obstacles overcome.

Representatives of the Authority inspected the property and Gordon Ross reported that a large section of the 35-foot spillway had been undermined and washed away. It was estimated that to repair the dam and enlarge the pond, from four to eight acres, would cost approximately \$10,000. This was beyond the Authority's means. Furthermore the Conservation Branch of the Department of Planning and Development ruled that it would not consider a grant for this dam, or similar projects elsewhere, without complete engineering and cost estimates. Plans for the dam and spillway were prepared by R. K. Kilborn & Associates and the Conservation Branch supplied a plan for the pond.

Negotiations for property purchase were opened with Robert Duncan, who owned the dam and pond, and with adjoining property owners William Simpson, Mrs. Levi Nimock and George Robinson. In all about 12 acres were obtained. Work started in July, 1952 and the project was virtually completed by the end of the year. Service buildings were added later.



Grist Mill at Harrington

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After almost two years of negotiations the Authority came into possession of the mill at the site in 1966, when it was purchased from Mr. Duncan. It was one of the few remaining water-powered grist mills in Western Ontario. The original mill was built in 1846 by a man named Demerest and was purchased by Mr. Duncan in 1920. That mill was destroyed by fire in 1923 and replaced the same year.

HARMONY — While the restoration of the Harmony Dam was proposed by the late R. Thomas Orr in 1949, it was not until 1954 that the Authority was able to obtain the damsite and a small adjoining area from the estate of John Weldon Powell. The original dam was said to have served a saw mill, a woollen mill and a grist mill. Covering about 14 acres, the property is located in South Easthope, about four miles south of Stratford.

Immediate development was delayed in the hope of acquiring an adjoining piece of property for construction of a good-sized dam and pond. When this could not be obtained at a reasonable price the Authority, in 1966, decided to build a rubble dam, about two feet high, and a small pond for bathing. The parking lot was built by the County of Perth, in return for land and fill needed to construct a new curve at Harmony corner. An interesting story relates to the name of the small community. It seems that two early settlers, Knott and Dunsmore, both wanted it named after them but eventually agreed to give in; hence the name "Harmony".



Small But Pretty Harmony Pond

WOODHAM — The Woodham tract, on Flat Creek, originally was a 100-acre farm, bought from Crown Assets Disposal Corporation in 1955. Twenty-six acres were sold. For a time, part of the property was used for pasture demonstration and part as a demonstration woodlot, but in 1968 it remained largely undeveloped. The Federal government retained an easement over the property for a water supply that originally served the former air force camp at Centralia.

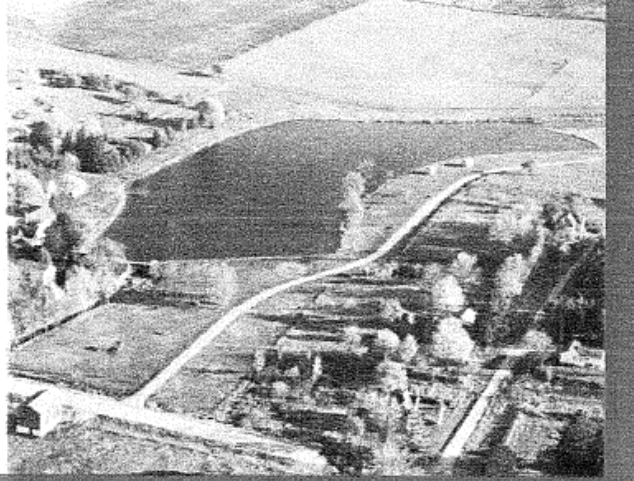
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Figure 1: Harrington history, excerpt from "25 Years of Conservation on the Upper Thames Watershed 1947 - 1973" UTRCA

CONSERVATION

The Harrington Mill Dam washed out on Easter Monday, 1949, shallow wells went dry in the Village and what had been a very scenic spot became mud flats. In 1952 the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority built a new dam on the site creating a three-acre lake on 12 acres of land. Shallow wells are now restored, the trout fishing is good and many people are enjoying picnics and swimming all summer long.

Other similar conservation areas are located at Centreville, Otterville, Norwich, Woodstock and Embro in Oxford County.



Oxford '80

1 PM Booklet

Harrington Events

- Friendly village nestled in the hills overlooking Wildwood Lake
- Community get-togethers occur throughout the year: Optimist Club sponsors turkey shoot May 24 in Conway Gravel Pit; Optimist beef barbecue July 12 in Community Centre; Slow Pitch tournament Sept. 13 in Community Centre
- The Harrington mill dam washed out on Easter Monday, 1949, shallow wells went dry in the village and what had been a very scenic spot became mud flats
- In 1952 the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority built a new dam and created a three acre lake on 12 acres of land
- The trout fishing is good and picnics and swimming can be enjoyed throughout the summer days in this tranquil part of Oxford
- Spring bazaar, tea and crafts April 23
- Strawberry Supper May 28
- Turkey supper Oct. 22

S-R

Plus March Edition

Sept. 26, 1980

Figure 2: News article about Harrington Dam washout in 1949

Harrington & Area Community Association Harrington Gem Gets Facelift

Work at the Harrington Grist Mill continues at a slow but steady pace. Thanks to many contributors and volunteers the work of restoration and repair has made progress this past year. The mill continues to be the focus of the Harrington & Area Community Association which holds many community events that serve in raising funds and in creating an awareness of this 1846 landmark. In addition, these events have served as a catalyst to become acquainted with our local community as well as bringing in many from far and wide who have an interest in the mill progress. Some who have moved from the area have kept tabs on what was happening to our mill, one of which was the late George Clark who contacted our Association some years ago to inquire about the mill's progress. George was invited to tour the building and to see for himself the progress that had been made over the years. George was born in Brooksdale, a son of Huron Clark and Margaret (Bossence) Clark. His grandparents were Jack Clark and Minnie (Whetstone) Clark who ran a general store in Harrington, and although George was raised in Ingersoll and lived in Toronto most his adult life, he had fond memories of Harrington from his childhood. As a result of that contact George acknowledged he was very pleased to see the progress and has contributed to the ongoing work.

Upon his death our Association was informed that George had not forgotten the little mill in Harrington and had left a generous endowment for which we are very grateful. This has enabled us to redo the exterior of the building with board and baton cladding, a job that was completed by a local contractor Paul Hartman and sons. This has been a huge step forward for this project of which we are very pleased. If you are in the area, have a look for yourself at this building that proudly stands on the bank of the Harrington Pond just across from the dam.

The association continues in its commitment to "Building Community" by "Rebuilding the Mill". What has been achieved to date could not have been done without the generous donations made by many businesses and individuals - some of which are shown on the "wall of donors" display in the mill. The Association also appreciates the cooperation and support of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority who work closely with us as we make repairs and restorations. The Harrington & Area Community Association is not registered as a charity, so Upper Thames has agreed to issue tax receipts of donations that are made to the mill through them. Additional signage giving a historical synopsis will soon be added for the benefit of those who visit when the building is closed. The mill is available for private group showings, school tours, or

photography sessions etc. Please call 519-475-4376 to make arrangements.

We hope one day to get the wheels turning again as they have for so many years. The preferred power source would of course be water from the adjoining pond, which is well known for its fishing and has been recreational landmark for many generations of Zorra residents.



Figure 3: Article from "Zorra Now", a publication of Zorra Township, Spring 2014

■ HARRINGTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: Restoration efforts continue at historic site

Educational grist for the mill

Laura Cudworth
Staff Reporter

HARRINGTON — Walking through the door of the grist mill is like walking through a door to the past.

The mill is situated in the middle of an unpaved, residential street so quiet the water behind the building can be easily heard, and it's not hard to imagine the business up and running. Many of the beams are original and the mechanisms for operating the mill, using water, are still intact.

Legends about the place survive to this day too. As the story goes, there used to be an old bell

that was rung to warn bootleggers about a raid, said Doug Diplock, chair of the Harrington Community Association.

In more recent times, the mill has served as a stand-in for parts of rural America. The mill was used as a backdrop for a lynching scene in a movie, Diplock said, though he couldn't recall which one. Fake hangings can't be reenacted in parts of the United States.

"This fit the bill," he said.

The mill, which was built with local wood, caught fire in 1923. Though there was extensive damage, there are still beams inside

from the original 1840s structure. One of the wooden shoots has a hole in it and was repaired with a licence plate. It's still there.

The hope is to get the mill working again to give school kids a real taste of the past. It would have been used to make animal feed. Turning rough seed into birdseed would be a perfect way to spend an afternoon with school groups, Diplock suggested.

The mill operated continuously for more than 100 years, with the exception of a small period when there was trouble with the dam.

The gears, belts and other mechanisms demonstrate the

best of engineering for the time. The question is whether the mill will be able to run on water again, which is the ideal, or whether it will have to run on another power

TIMELINE

1846: Mill and Dam first built, used an overshoot water wheel
1880: Water driven turbine replaced the water wheel for power generation
1899: Chopper and Roller replaced the stone previously used for grinding the grain

1903: Dam broke and was repaired
1923: Fire caused extensive damage, Mill was rebuilt
1949: Dam/berm broke and was repaired

1966: bought out by Upper Thames Conservation Authority
Mill closed and left abandoned
1999: Harrington Community Association took over management of the Mill and Conservation Area and began to restore the Mill.

A big part of the equation is the dam. It will cost an estimated \$1.4 million to replace it. The Harrington Community

Association wants the dam already there left and repaired.

See MILL | Page A3



SCOTT WISHART/THE BEACON HERALD

Harrington's historic grist mill was in continuous operation for more than a century.

Mill is the community's heart

Continued from A1

"We are in the hands of politicians now. They want to keep the dam; however, there's insufficient funding. As it sits right now, they said the berm may or may not last, but it's been holding up for years. The dam itself seems to be fine," Diplock said.

This community, which has no official census data, has less than 200 people but all the drive and patience it will take to get the mill working again. They've been at it since the Harrington Community Association took over man-

agement from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority in 1999.

The mill really is the heart of the community. Without it, Harrington wouldn't exist, Diplock said.

"I've only lived here 10 years, but so many people who live in this area have lived here their whole lives. Their roots are here and they're very community-minded people," he said.

When they took over management of the mill, raccoons and feral cats had been living inside

for quite some time. The mill is now sealed.

About four years ago, the community association rebuilt the basement, the old concrete and stone was crumbling, with the help of a Trillium Foundation grant, local fundraising and weekends of elbow grease residents were willing to donate to the project. This past year the siding, windows and door were fixed or replaced.

"There's been well over \$100,000 invested so far," said Diplock.

There is also a plan to make a trail that loops in with other trails in the area.

The mill is becoming popular as a pristine spot for wedding pictures too.

The community association conducts tours on request. There will be a Thanksgiving tour Oct. 13. Anyone interested can call Doug at 519-475-0110 and leave a message.

laura.cudworth@sunmedia.ca

Figure 4: News article from Stratford Beacon Herald, August 19, 2014

June 23 and June 25 for Harrington Dam and Embro Dam respectively. The PIC were well attended. The second PIC describing the possible

Letter to the Editor regarding the Class Environmental Assessment on the Harrington Pond, June 28, 2015.

If you use the Harrington Pond recreation area, or if you have in the past, your stories and comments are needed.

The Harrington pond: fishing hole, bird sanctuary, tranquil picnic spot. For generations the pond has been loved as a get-away, a tiny oasis providing recreational activities for visitors from near and far.

Now, the future of the Harrington Pond has a question mark hanging over it. Like many small ponds in Ontario, the Harrington Pond is a constructed-water feature created to power a saw-mill which in turn created jobs and a thriving community where none had previously existed. The concrete dam holds back the water that streams through the area from nearby springs, building pressure to channel a constant flow for the sawmill, and resulting in the pond. The dam was originally built in 1846 and re-constructed in 1952. That's a long time ago, and although the people who built the dam may not have been thinking as far ahead as today, they certainly built something sturdy.

However, structures don't last forever, and two recent studies commissioned by the UTRCA have raised concerns that the dam may be unstable. At several public meetings, the UTRCA has discussed the implications involved in rebuilding or removing the dam. Now, a Class Environmental Assessment will be undertaken to learn more about the dam, the pond, and its surrounding lands. The Assessment will look at four groups of factors that could impact a decision, economic, environmental, technical, and social, to make recommendations for the future of the dam and the pond.

This is where your help is needed. The Environmental Assessment team will take the social history of the pond into consideration when making their recommendations. To fully understand the pond and its relationship to the surrounding communities, the Environmental Assessment team is asking the public for stories and comments about the social history of the Harrington pond. These stories can include activities at the pond both in the past and present.

These researchers can't be expected to know what role the pond has played in our area without us telling them. I grew up in Harrington and to us the pond was a daily source of recreation and community activities. The pond has a history of years of bringing community members together for swimming, picnics, skating, fishing, and boating. I intend to submit my comments for this study. Will you do so save the pond? I don't know, but I feel that it is up to the members of this community and surrounding communities to do what we can, while we can, to show that the pond is used and is important to many. The history of the pond needs to be recorded and acknowledged. Stories received will be included in the final report which the study will generate.

If you have a story or comment to share, please email it to: harrington_dam@thamesrive.on.ca

You can also email this address to ask questions or to get more information about this issue.

As well, members of the public are invited to participate in an educational bus tour of local dams which will be arranged in the month of September 2015. If you are interested in the bus tour please email for details.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this project.
Jennifer Hewitt

Figure 5: Letter to the Editor of Zorra Now, Fall 2015

Resident Letters

Harrington and Area Community Association
(HACA)
c/o Doug Diplock , Chair

Harrington Pond Environmental Assessment Team

Dear Team Members,

During your enquiries and assessments you will have come to realize the many species of birds, animals, plants, insects, and amphibians that call the Pond and the area around it home. These species form an ecosystem that has developed to be dependent on the Pond for its existence.

Aside from the obvious environmental benefits of a healthy ecosystem what does the existence of The Pond, from a human perspective, mean to people who live in the area and to visitors?

The Pond in Harrington has always been a focal point of the village and people who live in various parts of Ontario have always associated Harrington with The Pond. Residents who live here often describe the location of their homes as being east of The Pond or West of The Pond, or just below The Pond or even, in deed, on The Pond. The Pond, and the Grist Mill, early on, became the reason for Harrington's existence and is one of the historical links to our cultural heritage in this small village.

The Mill was originally built in 1847 and is one of the few remaining historical structures from that era that provides a very real link to History. The Mill, and the Millpond, have existed in a symbiotic relationship for well over 150 years. The Mill, millpond, and surrounding natural ecosystem form a cultural landscape that would be threatened by the loss of an integral component of this landscape – The Pond.

The Harrington and Area Community Association (HACA) is an incorporated entity, with an elected board and membership, as the name implies, of residents who currently or in the past, have lived in the area. The Association is deeply involved in Community Issues.

In 1999 HACA entered into an agreement with UTRCA for the management and maintenance of the Harrington Conservation Area including the Grist Mill.

The volunteers in the area have worked countless hours, raised significant amounts of money, and obtained Provincial and Municipal Grants to assist in the restoration of the Mill. Part of the restoration process will see the Mill again functioning as before, with power being supplied by the water from the Pond.

HACA has worked closely with Government Agencies, Township Officials, outside Agencies and other Service Clubs to enhance enjoyment of the Conservation Area. All of these activities within the Conservation Area use the Pond as a focal point.

A fishing derby, held on the opening of trout season each spring, attracts hundreds of young children and for some, it is an introduction to fishing and outdoor activities that will continue for a lifetime.

During the spring and summer months and into the early fall the Pond is visited by hundreds of fishermen and fisherwomen on a regular basis. Some have even stated it is the only fishing hole they have found that is accessible by wheelchair-bound individuals.

Each August a BBQ is held on the banks of The Pond, attended by individuals from all across South Western Ontario. The BBQ is a major fundraising event for HACA and helps to support many local endeavours such as Concerts, Dances for all ages, Holiday Celebrations and more.

A birding/hiking trail has been established that encircles the Pond and is complete with a viewing stand at the south end of The Pond. Each year, in all Seasons, many hikers and birding enthusiasts use the trail and the opportunity to view wildlife and commune with Nature.

The Village of Harrington, as is all of Zorra, is serviced by Volunteer Firefighters. The Pond is the only source of water in the north section of Zorra that is accessible in winter months and has been vital to the Fire Department on several occasions. A loss of The Pond could be detrimental to safety and well-being of the neighbourhood inhabitants.

Cost, of course, is always an issue, and while the least expensive path would be to, in the absence of any imminent threat to life or property, just leave the Pond as it is, and as it has existed for years. The most expensive path may well be the one that threatens the existence of a small village, a cultural and historical link to our past and a fragile ecosystem.

Any decision made on the future of The Pond will have an impact on all of these issues, and indeed on the existence of the village, the lives of the people in the area and future generations.

The Harrington and Area Community Association respectfully request that all these points be considered as you determine your various recommendations.

Sincerely,

Doug Diplock
Chairperson
Harrington and Area Community Association

Email from Sam Coghlan (received after June 25, 2015 public information session)

Harrington Dam Class Environmental Assessment

Gentlemen,

As I prepare to leave for a drive out west that will take 6 weeks or more, the likelihood has been looming on my mind that I will not return home to Harrington until after your *“Presentation of Baseline Characterization and Potential Alternatives”* which is scheduled for *“September 2015 (planned)”*. Consequently, I would like to add something now to the conversation about the future of the Harrington Dam.

The cultural significance of the dam to the identity of the village of Harrington causes me to urge you to recommend the alternative of doing nothing with the dam. The dam has served admirably for the 60+ years since it was rebuilt following the 1949 flood and there is no sign of imminent collapse. Anyway, if the dam does fail, the damage to property and homes downstream would be minimal. Certainly, remedial work would need to be done in the wake of a failure, but it would be clear exactly what type of work would need to be done (as opposed to speculating that this or that might occur if work is done now). The reserve fund for the dam could be built up in the meantime to cover the costs of such an eventuality.

Since I moved to Harrington in 1988, I have been surprised many times and in many different places by the number of people who actually know where Harrington is, especially as Harrington is as small as it is. Meeting people in London and area, when I tell them I live near Harrington, I expect the common response of *“Where’s that?”*. At first I was surprised when some people would say instead, *“Oh yes, I know Harrington, my dad used to take me there to fish”*. Years ago I stopped being surprised because I heard that response so frequently. Just a few months ago, the Executive Director of the Stratford Chamber of Commerce commented exactly in that manner.

Doing some research on the history of Harrington, I have come to realize that the pond has been part of the community since before the village was given its current name. In fact, the original name of the emerging village in the early 1840’s was *“Springfield”* which served to emphasize the connection of the human settlement to the water.

In fact, the significance of water in establishing Harrington as a place for human settlement is demonstrated in the anecdote below that tells of young travelers in 1802 who decided to camp where a *“spring creek of clear water flowed northward through the spot and it is known today as the village of Harrington”* and the lads *“noticed an Indian camp twenty rods down the valley by the creek”*.

The nature of Harrington is very much connected to the water that first attracted people to this place and that was then used to power industry that fueled the growth of a village. That water fed the village’s interaction with surrounding farms who took advantage of the services available in Harrington. It is this interaction that has caused me, personally, to commit time and energy to the restoration of the

Harrington Grist Mill. I want people, especially coming generations, to be shown why places like Harrington grew up – because of the pond.

The way in which the pond serves to draw attention to human interaction with water has led to the development of a few initiatives that serve to enlighten people about this vital relationship:

- The annual fishing derby attracts fisher folk who can see an idyllic trout pond in a village setting, establishing the fact that nature, sport and community can co-exist when handled well;
- The annual BBQ put on by the Harrington & Area Community Association, brings hundreds of people to see the pond and tour the mill
- The naturalized area serves as a quiet testament to the value of native plants;
- The trail around the pond encourages enjoyment of nature and bird watching.

There have been many other developments, but these four of which I am aware, emphasize for me the value that can be brought by retaining the pond as it is. It's not just nostalgia, it's a demonstration of positive human interaction with nature. If the dam stays, the pond stays and UTRCA can continue to forge partnerships with the people of the village and with the Township of Zorra to find new and better ways to enlighten folk about the value of working in harmony with nature.

(And, if for technical reasons, keeping the pond requires the dredging of the pond, I would like to request that the sludge be examined for historical and even archaeological artifacts. Since David Demorest's time 165 years ago or so, many artifacts must have fallen into the pond and, if retrieved, could add to the record of Harrington's history. Also, many people in the area have found considerable evidence of aboriginal activity, as supported by the story about the lads camping in 1802. Dredging the pond, if it necessary to be done, might unearth artifacts of historical value.)

Sam Coghlan

Excerpt from "Class of 1840" 150 Years in Harrington Methodist / United Church
(Harrington: F. Sharon Rounds, 1990)
[pages not numbered]

" To give an idea of conditions at that time, from the Montreal Witness, 1867, comes the following excerpts, an account of an incident which happened to two young men who had arrived in Canada from Scotland. "About sixty-five years ago (1802), two young men came to this country in search of a home in the wilds of Ontario. Arriving in Hamilton, they went west to Oxford County, where they struck out (on foot) for the northwest part of Zorra Township. At that time it was almost a solid wilderness. Here, in passing along a slope on the west side of the valley where cedar and other evergreens grew, they were overtaken by night. A spring creek of clear water flowed northward through the spot and it is known today as the village of Harrington. The young men started a fire, put on their overcoats, and sat down to have some lunch, intending to rest there until morning.

" Shortly after sitting down to lunch, they noticed an Indian camp twenty rods down the valley by the creek. This made them uncomfortable and to make matters worse they saw some Indians approaching from the camp. These saluted and commenced talking; the boys didn't understand a word, so the Indians motioned for them to come down to their camp. The boys, terror-stricken, complied. At the camp, the boys were shown a place in front of a large fire in the centre of the camp. They were

brought some edibles but they ate little. (part of the article is missing which describes the evening activities).

“ In the morning, the Indians, who had proven most friendly, brought some more edibles, after which the boys settled with them for their trouble. These young men never returned to the Indian valley of Zorra, one of these men in his later years appears to have living or staying in the town of Ingersoll, however, no names are included with the article.”

Email from Dave Franks Jul 17, 2015

Wonderful memories of being a youngster and enjoying the facilities. The pond water was crystal clear for swimming. In fact, you might see a fish beside you or even a turtle. The park area was well maintained and family members gathered there for picnics and fishing. I recall the old wooden outhouse, then a modern one with brick blocks (no running water but a real improvement). My mother even pondered the idea of buying and running the convenience store on the main street. As I 'matured' into a teenager, I would bring my girlfriend and sister for swims at the pond. Even our cat, harnessed on a leash, took a walk with my wife while I fished. On becoming a parent, our young daughters would run to their heart's content, roll in the grass and then sit at the picnic table for some refreshments. At times, we would stroll around the pond, remarking on the history of the area. Later as our girls also matured, they took up the hobby of fishing beside their dad. It is by chance that I became a member of the Tavistock Rod and Gun Club some nearly fifteen years ago. Over the years, the club has held the annual Kids' Fishing Derby on the grounds and stocked the pond with trout. We always had good rapport with the Upper Thames for permits and also with the Harrington Pond Committee. Our Club focus is for the children to fish and enjoy the conservation area. Hopefully this will also encourage the parents to bring them back year after year. Many 'city slickers' were not aware of the pond and the peaceful country setting.

Dave Franks

Email from Cathy Eastman to UTRCA, July 14, 2015

I am a resident of Harrington...what drew my husband and I to build our home on the location and with the orientation it has is the Harrington Pond. Moving from London to this little gem of Oxford county was one of the best decisions we made. We exchanged the noise of traffic to the overhead clamour of Canada geese landing on the pond. Our 3 children have spent numerous afternoons either walking around, sitting by or floating on the pond. We have enjoyed identifying the various kinds of wildlife that live in the pond and park area. A quick walk from our home across the mill bridge/dam and we walk past many people fishing in the tranquil setting. This area is enjoyed by not only residents of Harrington, but people travelling from across the county. It is a significant natural resource as a spring fed pond and home to many endangered species...it would be a shame to upset the balance of nature and lose this historic site.