

## **PUSLINCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FALL 2021**

Volunteerism has been a way of life in the township since its very beginning, when the young men went from clearing to clearing to build log homes for their fellow settlers. This was followed by an era of barn raisings, wood, quilting and threshing bees, participated in by the neighbours. The major tasks were always accomplished through helping one's neighbours, who also helped you.

Residents then turned to community welfare as a whole. Each community within the township built its own school and formed its own school board. Religious groups built their own churches. Church activities expanded with the forming of choirs, Sunday Schools, missionary societies and women's aid groups. Cemeteries were opened and operated by volunteer trustees, as almost all of them are still today.

Organizations were created to fill needs, as the government supplied only a small portion of that required. The Puslinch Agricultural Society planned and co-ordinated the Aberfoyle Fair. Farm organizations were among the first groups to arise and the Puslinch Farmers Club was possibly the first farm organization in Ontario. Not long afterward, football (soccer) teams, were set up and soon, baseball. At the same time, literary and debating societies and volunteer-operated libraries appeared. Seven separate Women's Institutes began to enrich the quality of life in their corners and beyond. Dealing with the First World War caused a number of Red Cross branches to arise in the township. During the 1950's, there was a multiplicity of church groups for all ages.



**Badenoch Red Cross, World War I, packing boxes to send to soldiers from the section.**

Through the years, volunteers have provided much to the citizens of Puslinch and in the process enjoyed the activities, in which they chose to participate. Inhabitants of our township are still the beneficiaries of the Red Cross, the work of churches, soccer and baseball associations and the Agricultural Society. New groups, the Badenoch Community Centre Board, the Puslinch Optimist Club, the Puslinch Historical Society, the Puslinch Fiddle Orchestra, the newspapers, the Puslinch Pioneer and Puslinch Today and the

Aberfoyle Farmer's Market, have been instituted to meet new or different aspects of those same needs. Notable also recently, was the effort of the Puslinch Threshing Bee Committee, providing a threshing bee each year for five consecutive years and combining its forces for another year with the Aberfoyle Agricultural Society.

The history of Puslinch, too, was recorded and preserved by volunteers. Matthew McPhatter collected information from the settler generation in 1897, in what he described as letters. These were kept and finally published by the Puslinch Historical Society in 1991. Simon Morlock wrote a history of early Morriston. Representatives of each of the twelve school sections in the township wrote short descriptions of settlement in their respective sections in 1950. This was published by the Township as Annals of Puslinch 1850-1950 in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the township. Another book produced on the same basis was printed at Canada's centennial in 1967, Annals of Puslinch 1950-1967 .

The Puslinch Historical Society, a volunteer group established in 1984, continues this important work. Our collection is large and contains a file on nearly every early family resident in Puslinch and books on many families, as well as information on places, businesses and other relevant topics. In 2000, the Society published its own book, Puslinch Profiles 1850-1950 to document life in Puslinch from the creation of the township in 1850 to 1950.

A big part of our effort is spent in opening the Archives to the public every Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. We enjoy hosting researchers from as far away as Florida, California, Kansas, Oregon, Germany and Scotland, providing them with files, maps, books and photographs to study for information on their former Puslinch families and also directing them to the properties, which they settled upon and even suggesting places to eat in the township. It is very gratifying to witness their excitement as they learn about their ancestors. Due to Covid 19, we are presently opening the Archives only by appointment but the Saturday openings will resume again. Members also answer queries by e-mail. These, too, come from many places and it is a pleasure to deal with satisfied and happy enquirers.

The group takes its outreach to the public. Several meetings, featuring presentations, speakers or events, are held each year. Tours of our villages and guided walks in our cemeteries are among these outings. We present displays at other local events, such as the Canada Day celebrations at the Puslinch Community Centre and Aberfoyle Fair. These activities enable us to engage with residents of the township.

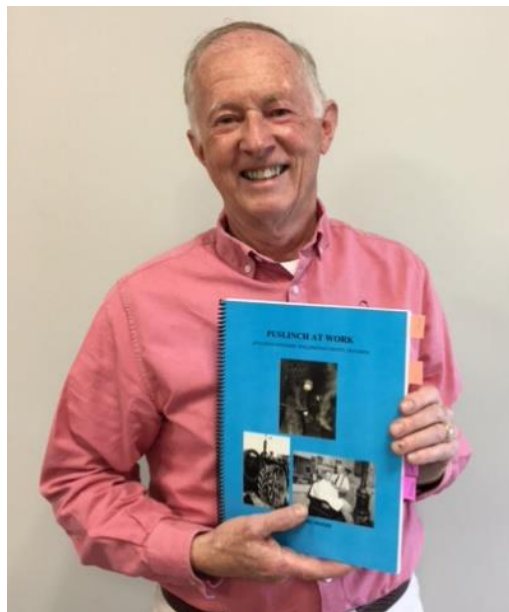
Historical work is enjoyable, rewarding and very interesting. Each of us participates in whatever way we wish. The group is currently led by the Planning Committee of the PHS.

It is an active group. If you live in the township or vicinity, consider joining us on the Planning Committee. Contact us at [marjorie@clarksoftomfad.ca](mailto:marjorie@clarksoftomfad.ca).

**Join us and help to collect, save and display  
the history of Puslinch.**



**PHS display for Canada Day at the Community Centre 2017**



**Robert Moore, author of “Puslinch at Work”, holds his book at a book launch held by the PHS – an exciting day for the PHS.**