

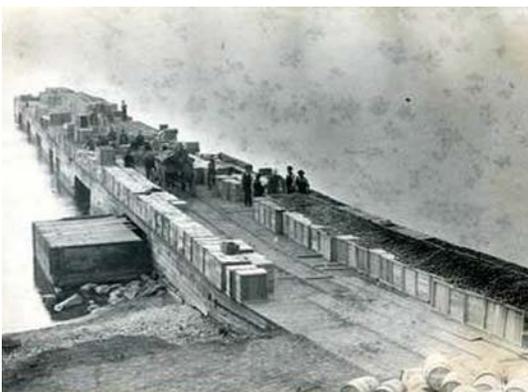
storyBOOK

Story 2 Port Nelson

It is 1810 and an oversized canoe glides with nary a ripple into the Port Nelson harbour, now the site of tiny Port Nelson Park at the foot of Guelph Line.

Despite its silent entry, it carries three tons of cargo and 60 men. People on shore watch and wave at the navigator to give a noisy welcome for the goods carried here have been much anticipated.

The ship's navigator knows that Port Nelson, a significant lake port, does not have a sheltered natural inlet like Bronte's, but the large wooden dock and the sandy sloping beach make it easy to unload the huge bateau. In fact, navigating is quite simple as there are two sentinel 100-foot pine trees that serve as benchmarks for sightlines to the wharf. cont...



Story 1 Hamza's Syrian Journey



Hamza says "he is so blessed to be in Canada. He is at ease and it is safe here." He is the fifth child of 8 for Omar and Raeda Raslan. In 2011 Havis, the older brother was taken by Syrian government troops following a raid on their home. He is presumed to be deceased. In 2012 at the age of 15, with the encouragement of his family Hamza fled Homs, Syria to Jordan.

The Siege of Homs was a military confrontation between Syrian military and Syrian opposition as a part of the Syrian Civil War. Nationwide anti-government protests began in March 2011, and clashes between security forces and protestors in Homs intensified.

The journey to Jordan in 2012 was not an easy one. He was labeled as a UN refugee, and sheltered with his aunt. Hamza noted "the majority of Jordanians do not show respect for Syrian refugees". As of Dec 2015 Jordan was still hosting over 632,000 Syrian refugees, severely straining its infrastructure and economy. The UNHCR financial support for Hamza was skimmed by Jordan authorities as he received \$20 CDN, 50% less than was promised per month.

On Dec 10, 2015 Hamza arrived as part of the first wave of Syrian refugees. John and Margaret Ashfield are hosting Hamza until his own accommodation is available. Port Nelson as his sponsor provides financial assistance through member donations, and Hamza receives \$750 each month, for six months from our Federal government.

Priority #1 is learning our language. Hamza is enrolled in ESL training. He is a pleasant, sociable person, attends a local mosque where he has started to connect with others. Reaching English proficiency is his primary goal. Seeking and finding work is next. Hamza truly wishes to be self supporting. With our assistance and guidance this will happen.

Recently Hamza has learned that his father is very sick. I can't imagine the how difficult that must be with his family so far away.

A few thoughts...

For generations stories have been shared in every culture as a means of entertainment, education and cultural preservation. The Port Nelson storyBOOK provides an opportunity to grow spiritually through sharing stories about our community and the lives of people close to us. If you have story ideas please contact Lorraine MacMaster lormacmaster@sympatico.ca

Story 3 Remembering Grace Hall 1928 - 2015



Grace was a person of strength, passion, and fire. She led an enthusiastic, fulfilling, spiritual life; one in which she excelled at 'action'. In 'doing', she gave us a legacy of gifts. She thrived in a setting of prayer, intuition, and progressive thinking.

Teaching. Leading. Grace was a natural born teacher. It's incredible to imagine all the people she has influenced in her career as a teacher.

Writing. Organizing. Grace wrote and 'published' several books about her life in Toronto growing up in the 30's and 40's, a world that no longer exists but is fascinating to read about.

Researching. Scrapbooking. Grace was somewhat of a museum curator, as she researched and organized family trees, old postcards, stamps, artifacts, and furniture inherited by the family.

Travelling. Reading. Learning. Grace's lifelong desire to learn played out in many ways; one favourite was travelling with the whole family using a tent trailer, then later with Harold to exotic destinations.

Believing, Trusting, Praying. Grace's connection to prayer and to God was made palpable in 1959 when Harold went into a coma caused by encephalitis. In Grace's own words, "Elsie drove me home, and insisted she stay the night. When we were ready for bed, Elsie suggested we should get down on our knees and pray. Now, this rather took me back because I had, for the last couple of years, been questioning all the beliefs I had been raised with and was actually at the point where I wasn't even sure God existed! So, we got down on our knees beside the bed and Elsie said, "Do you want to start or shall I?" In shock I replied, "You mean we're to pray out loud?" When she agreed that's what she meant, I said, "I think you'd better; I haven't been doing this much lately". As she prayed, I began to feel goose bumps and then almost shivery – a feeling very difficult to describe. The details of exactly what happened at this point, I can't explain, except to say that I was conscious of a spiritual presence that was with me during the entire period of Harold's illness. That 'God' presence was so palpable that I could close my eyes, reach out my hand and actually feel that something or someone was in contact with me....People often say what a dreadful experience Harold's illness must have been, especially for me. It was difficult, but it also was a 'mountain top experience' for me; one through which I came to know beyond a shadow of doubt, that God does exist. I know that we are not alone, we live in God's world."

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Story 2 Port Nelson *cont.*

Along the shoreline there are three more docks: Bunton, Baxter and Torrance. Farmers in the area grow wheat everywhere there was a bit of earth. Traffic jams on Brant Street and Guelph Line develop with streams of carts hauled by oxen and horses taking this grain to Port Nelson to be dumped into bins and loaded into waiting boats.

Burlington has the most important grain shipping point, bigger than Hamilton, and consequently this has spawned a flour processing industry with a huge steam flour mill built in 1812.

The small community of Port Nelson was part of the "Brant Block" which had been deeded to Chief Joseph Brant in 1798.

James Gage, the founder of Burlington, bought land from the heirs of Chief Joseph Brant. Gage then developed Port Nelson and a square piece of land known as Wellington Square.

Burlington Post 2008