

# storyBOOK

## Story 2 Port Nelson

In 1874, the villages of Wellington Square and Port Nelson were incorporated into the Village of Burlington.

The arrival, however, of large steamships on the Great Lakes made the small docks of the local ports obsolete, and the increased use of railway to ship goods marked the end of the commercial wharves.

Farming still thrived though, and the resultant growth resulted in continued prosperity. By 1906, the village boasted its own newspaper—the Burlington Gazette—and a town library as well as a local rail line that connected Burlington to nearby Hamilton.

Burlington was incorporated as a town in 1915. As more settlers arrived the land was cleared for



## Story 1 Planting the Solar Seed



We are blessed with a Port Nelson United Church community that is outward looking with a strong interest in its stewardship of the earth.

In 2011 Jeremy Day, a young man who worked in the solar industry was meeting with Michael Brooks, the minister, to plan his own church wedding. During his visit Jeremy wondered if our church had ever considered placing solar panels on the Sanctuary roof. Apparently our large south-east facing roof was ideal. Michael passed Jeremy's contact info to Cathy Greven who, along with June Wright, pulled together a small group of Port Nelson members including June, Cathy, Mat Ardron, John Zinkie and Rod McGrath. And so began the solar panel project journey.

From that meeting came the core group that eventually formed a solar committee which approached Council, the churches governing body, to see if there was willingness and an interest in starting the process to apply for an Ontario Government contract for a small Feed In Tariff (F.I.T.) photovoltaic system.

Our Council strongly supported the idea with one caveat—the roof condition and structure. The roof material was nearing the end of its useful life so this was a catalyst to move forward with the installation of a standing seam metal roof. The roof structure was ideal for solar panels. Thanks to a generous bequest to Port Nelson, the new roof came to be. The Solar Committee earnestly got to work looking into FIT applications and timing.

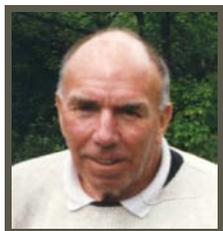
The support of Council gave the committee a huge boost psychologically. It was an idea whose time had come. While awaiting the release of FIT program details, the Solar Committee consulted solar experts, and determined that their best shot at winning a small FIT contract was as a Community Group, meaning a Co-operative. And so the PNUC Renewable Energy Co-operative Inc. was formed to make application for the small FIT contract.

The PNUC Renewable Energy Co-operative Inc. is a separate legal entity with its own Board of Directors.

## 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](mailto:lormacmaster@sympatico.ca)

### Story 3 A Bit of Peter Fisher's Story



There around Peter were stacks of folders, each holding his notes or copies of letters written long before email and the Internet. Peter at 84 is sharp as a tack, and has a wealth of knowledge about both his family history and Burlington's. Here's a bit of Peter's life story.

Peter's grandfather, Wm F.W. Fisher, lived in the Township of Nelson on the farm which Peter's great grandfather, Peter, had bought from Catharine Brant. The land, now known as the Burlington Mall property, was partly cleared and a log cabin was built about 1825. Later in 1837 the 'Shady Cottage' was built and it remained until it was demolished for the Burlington Mall in 1968.

The Fisher family has deep roots in Burlington, in agriculture and in their faith. Peter and his immediate family are some of the earliest members of Port Nelson United Church, formed from Trinity United in the early 1950's. Many recollect the bushels of fruit shared by Peter.

Being conservation oriented is a Fisher trait. Their farm had a smoke house to cure hams, an ash house to store ashes and make soap, and a workshop in which to make boxes and repair equipment. The farm had a big barn with a windmill to pump water for the stable full of horses and cows. Their dairy business supplied the village of Burlington and Freeman. Grocery shopping was done 'on the farm'. They had their own milk, cream, butter, pork, lard, chickens, eggs, vegetables and fruit. They grew their own wheat and milled it at a local mill ground into flour-- course for porridge and fine flour for bread and pastries.

In the 1940's Paul Fisher, WFW's son, laid out the Dundas Street farm, the very place where Peter now lives, on sloping land below the escarpment. He planted on the contour with a terrace for each row and reforested about 40 acres. He created wetlands and built his own ten acre pond for irrigation. It took seven to eight years to coax good yields from the 3,000 pear trees on these terraced 10 acres of new orchards.

The Fishers were one of the first to donate Bruce Trail access through their north Burlington property to create the 14 km Burlington section.

There is an interesting connection between the Fisher family and Roseland, the very area in Burlington where Port Nelson United Church is located. That's for another story.

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### Story 2 Port Nelson *cont.*

and market gardens became the dominant form of agriculture, and in the early 20th century the area was declared the Garden of Canada.

Paul A. Fisher started planting orchards after the Second World War and the Fisher Family has farmed locally, including where Burlington Mall now stands, since 1821.

The first peaches grown in Canada were cultivated in the Grindstone Creek watershed, in the south-west part of the city. Today over forty percent of this area is still devoted to farms, orchards and nurseries. By 1967, the last cash crop farm within the city had been replaced by the Burlington Mall.

Following the Second World War, cheap electricity from Niagara Falls and the new (1939) Queen Elizabeth Way encouraged both light industry and families to move to Burlington. On Jan. 1, 1958 Burlington officially annexed most of the Township of Nelson, as well as Aldershot.

*From Wikipedia & Inside Halton*