

Former museum curator gives locals a taste of history at annual CEDHS meet

By Jasen Obermeyer

The historical relationship between Orangeville and Caledon East was a theme last week when the former curator of the Dufferin County museum addressed the annual meeting of the Caledon East and District Historical Society.

Although originally expected to discuss just the history of Orangeville, Wayne Townsend decided that after some research, he wanted to discuss the historical relationship between the two urban communities.

The annual meeting took place last Wednesday (September 27) at St. James Anglican Church, on Old Church Road, and saw around 40 people attending the event.

Mr. Townsend said that despite having left the museum, he continues to enjoy speaking about history, as "it's a lifelong learning," and he is a big supporter of "you're never too old to learn."

Mr. Townsend first discussed with those in attendance why he likes local history, which he simply said is because of its relevance. "It makes them have a sense of belonging and has a sense of community. It gives you things to look back on, memories to share." He said he believes the small stories have an impact on their community, from there, an impact on the province, to the country, and eventually, worldwide.

Mr. Townsend discussed the various historical relationships and similarities Orangeville and Caledon East have shared, from various aspects of society.

He told of the migration of workers going to Orangeville from Caledon for employment, and how a large number of Caledon East residents would eventually retire in Orangeville, something Mr. Townsend said was surprising, but Orangeville was considered "a relatively good place for people to live when they got older."

He also found residents in both towns were going to the high school in Orangeville, and the "many children" from both being born in the Orangeville hospital as further examples of similarities.

When the topic of marriage came up, Mr. Townsend explained, "political borders didn't stop people from falling in love," mentioning that many marriages took place between two people from both communities.

He further added that political borders "don't really keep people from being friends, and being neighbours."

Mr. Townsend mentioned that when he looked through archived newspapers, he noticed the reporting on each other's towns was done "often in a very indirect, very sly way."

He also used sports as an example, how both towns competed against each other in lacrosse, "which really surprised me."

Mr. Townsend ended the presentation by saying he was very surprised to find the connections, but proud of these "strong links."