

BEECH HILL  
TREE PLANTING CEREMONY  
May 19th, 2002

photos courtesy of N.Gardiner

# Bringing beeches back to Beech Hill Road

At present there are no beech trees left on the Beech Hill Road. (Ward 2, Municipality of Port Hope) A Committee has been formed to remedy the situation. The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority will be assisting in locating suitable trees for planting and providing support to the project.

Through many years, children travelled the road to Beech Hill School – S.S. No. 15 Hope, and rested under the shade of the beech tree. As a living memorial to those happy school days, and to the many who still continue using the busy road, the committee hopes to purchase beech trees to be planted in the early spring.

Would those interested please contact:

Ona Gardiner at (905) 797-2625 or Geraldine Smith at (905) 797-2647.

A plaque will be erected to commemorate the completion of this endeavor.

## Restocking Beech Hill Road

BY STEPHANIE  
ZACHARIAS

*Special to the news*

**NORTHUMBER-**  
**LAND** - It seems kind of silly to call it Beech Hill Road when there aren't beech trees left on it, so residents who remember it from greener days have decided to fix the dilemma.

A small committee has been formed and is asking for donations to help purchase six beech trees for the road. The trees cost approximately \$200 each and the labour will be taken care of

by committee members.

Geraldine Smith and Ona Gardiner are two committee members who remember resting under the shade of a grand old beech tree during their travels to Beech Hill School, before it closed in 1960, says Ms. Gardiner.

"We just thought it's sad that it's called Beech Hill Road and there are no beech trees left on it," says Ms. Gardiner.

Anyone interested in making a donation to the fund can call 905-797-2647.

*Port Hope Evening Guide  
February(?) 2001*

# Beechless Beech Hill Road

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Through many years, children travelled the road to Beech Hill School – S.S. # 15 Hope, and rested under the shade of the beech tree.

As a living memorial to those happy school days, and to the many who still continue using the busy road, the committee hopes to purchase beech trees to be planted in the early spring, and would greatly appreciate monetary contributions towards that project.

Would those interested please contact:

Ona Gardiner:

Or

Geraldine Smith:

A plaque will be erected to commemorate the completion of this endeavor.



February 24th., 2001

Trees on Beech Hill Road

Dear Larry:

I am addressing this request to Councillor Hall because he is a graduate of Beech Hill School S.S.#15 Hope Township and is familiar with the area.

The beech tree which gave the road it's name is long gone and former Beech Hill School pupils, local residents and I would like to see young beech trees growing just within the road allowance on the West side of the road at the top of the hill.

Five trees have been suggested and the funding would be donated by interested persons.

Thanking you for your cooperation in this matter.

*Geraldine Smith*

**A list of former pupils contacted:**

Norman Clark	David Wilson
Jennie Houston	Grace Cann
Stewart Gray	Leo Cann
Mary Augustus	Larry Hall
Rellon Beatty	Lynda Challice
Lawrence Finnie	Jim Moore
Margaret Budd	Raymond Gowland
Jack Retallick	Judy Aust
George Retallick	Barry Gray
Roy Elliott	Larry Cann
Eileen Turck	
Nelson Gardiner	
Frank Gardiner	
Mary Gardiner	
Orville Woodley	
Mildred Cook	
Lambert Beatty (and family)	
Gordon Wilson	
Jackson Wilson	
Barbara Wilson	
David Lockwood	
Helen Lackey	

# Beech trees return

## Residents planting Sunday on Beech Hill Road

BY ANDY JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

Beech Hill Road hasn't seen a beech tree in years.

Once upon a time, a proud Beech Tree crowned the top of the hill, stood as a landmark for locals, and was a resting spot for students on their way to or from Beech Hill School.

The Ward 2 landmark has long-since been removed, but local residents will be doing their part Sunday to reinstate a piece of their past.

They will be planting 10 beech trees on Beech Hill Road, and erecting a sign to commemorate the historical significance of the area.

The committee to reestablish beech trees on Beech Hill Road was formed by long time Ward 2 residents Ona Gardiner and Geraldine Smith.

Ms. Gardiner attended the school from 1928 all the way to Grade 10. She feels it is important to remind people of the past.

"I've seen a lot of changes over the years ... It's important to keep the past in people's minds," she said.

"That there was a school there, that there was such thing as a one room school house. It is a means

of keeping history alive."

Ms. Gardiner, now 80, vividly remembers enjoying the shade under the beech tree after a long walk to school.

"When we were little kids, we would be pretty tired when we reached the top of the hill, and we would rest for a while under the tree," she said.

"That's why we're doing this, to keep history alive. A lot of history gets lost over the years," she said.

Mark Peacock sits on the committee as a representative of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, which is supporting the community-initiated project. He's excited about the event.

"It recognizes some of the interesting history of the area ... It's part of people planting trees and doing the right thing for the environment," Mr. Peacock said. "It is a good thing because it was done by the community, for the community."

Mr. Peacock believes that when a project is undertaken and completed by the community, a sense of community ownership often develops, and people tend to protect and maintain the finished product.

See *Beech* on page 2

## Beech

Continued from Page 1

He is clearly enthusiastic about the undertaking.

"These trees will get water every week," he promised.

The tree planting and sign-unveiling ceremony will take place on May 19, at 2 p.m. on Beech Hill Road. It will be followed by a reception to be held at Dorothy's House Museum at 3 p.m.

The project is a partnership between the GRCA, East Durham Historical Society, and the committee and its members.

Donations to the Beech Hill Tree Project May 19th.2002

Beech Hill Road

Donations

Nelson Gardiner  
Don and Rebecca McKenzie  
Mary Dunbar Augustus  
Eileen Turck  
Helen Lackey  
George Retallick  
Larry Cann  
Larry Hall  
Doris Bartholamew  
Linda Leoen  
David Wilson  
Jim Moore  
Lawrence Finnie  
Donald Morton  
Port Hope and District  
Horticultural Society  
Mary Gardiner  
Ona Gardiner  
Elizabeth Vercoe  
Gary Johnson  
Jackson Wilson  
Jenny Houston  
Virginia Wright  
Audrey Wilson  
Geraldine Smith

Expenses

5 Beech trees-Sheridan Nursery  
1,150.00  
Sign, L.B.Graphics 109.25  
2 Posts,  
Mark Peacock 57.50  

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1,316.75

1,316.75

Mr. Graham Brown of Port Hope donated 5 trees that were planted beside the other trees.

Gordon, Jim, Laura and Cameron Wilson helped with the tree planting using their tractors and equipment.

The Ganaraska Conservation Authority helped support the project in numerous ways.

Ronald Howe of the Roads Dept gave his support.

Dorothy's House Museum very kindly served lunch after the tree planting.

Thank you notes, receipts and a picture were sent to the people that donated.

The committee consisting of Mark Peacock  
Larry Hall  
Elizabeth Vercoe  
Ona Gardiner  
Geraldine Smith

wishes to thank everyone who helped in any way for their support and interest in The Beech Hill Road Tree Project.

All information regarding this project will be kept at Dorothy's House Museum.



**Geraldine Smith**

**Larry Hall**

**Mark Peacock**

**The Beeches  
of  
Beech Hill Road**

Through many years, children travelled the road to Beech Hill School - SS #15 Hope and rested under the shade of the beech tree.

As a living memorial to those happy school days and for future travellers to pause and remember, the community has planted these beech trees on May 19, 2002.

**Elizabeth Vercoe**

**Ona Gardiner**

***Beech Hill Tree Planting Committee***



First of all I want to thank Geraldine  
and Ona & whoever else dreamed up the  
idea of perpetuating "Beech Hill". Surely  
our ancestors - the Moulton  
Gardeners  
Dunbars  
Grays

Beattys who must in all  
likelihood have cleared this land  
& built Beech Hill School are with  
us to day in memory & in spirit as  
we plant living beech trees to  
commemorate & preserve a special  
place for a few more hundred years.

Those ancestors were very  
proficient in their clearing however.  
for certainly in my memory there were  
no beeches here. But there were plenty  
of maples - a monster at the foot of  
the property & a row down the  
east side just inside the board fence  
newly erected in my time. One of our  
favourite spots for eating lunch on  
warm days was to climb up on the  
fence & thence to the branches <sup>of a</sup> maple  
skitching our honey pail lunches.  
Such was the power of wanting to  
be part of the group that I usually  
there were only 13 of us



made it to a bottom branch (with knots in my stomach)

Trees & wood were a part of our lives. In late winter we would hear the jangle of harness & a loud "whoa" as a local farmer delivered cordwood for burning in our iron stove. The cordwood was piled in front of the blunt roofed woodshed in front of the school. It was a great place to climb upon & eat our lunch & afterwards when it was split & piled in the woodshed to remove pieces & make cosy nests to eat lunch with a friend.

There was wood everywhere - the solid wooden rectangular school-lined with tongue & groove (and painted a sickly green in my time) the hard wood floor oiled every year to prevent dust it was said - but in reality only caused another greasy problem, the woodshed & the "little houses" - the girls south of the woodshed & the boys farther north.

In the spring the trees ~~called us~~ Gardeners woods - called us. We gulped down our lunch at recess so that we could race out the door, <sup>from</sup> down the



path to the road, over the fence, & follow  
the east west fence (we didn't run through  
the field - we were farmers children)  
to the big beautiful maples of the woods.  
Through the deep crispy leaves we ran,  
over a mighty maple that had fallen  
years before across the sparkling pure  
waters of the Ganaraska. But what was  
our main occupation there? Oh yes to pick  
flowers of course. There were there in  
plenty - May flowers - pale pink purple  
& white - dog tooth violets - marsh  
marigolds & TRILLIUMS - hundreds of  
white trilliums. We picked with  
abandon and somehow (without a  
watch among us) were back at school  
by 1 o'clock! The flowers went in jars  
& piles & were often wilted by 4 at  
going home time. We never thought  
of conservation, of fear of accidents, or  
strangers - it was freedom! - what a  
different noon hour the children of today  
experience.

Then of course there was this  
hill & our winter sleigh riding. Everyone  
had a wooden sleigh & some of us a  
"hus" - 2 sleighs joined together by a  
board. When the ice was right we would



climb to the top of the hill - whizz down  
to the snow level spot by the school  
& then on down past Horton's far onto the  
road. About 2 miles was all one could  
manage in a ~~an~~ noon hour.

In Fall it was School Fair  
time. Inside a large white tent in  
Garden Hill we showed our best  
vegetables flowers & baking - outside  
our roosters & hens & calves & wood  
chuck tails (I think people were paid  
10¢ a tail - for of course woodchucks &  
their holes were the lane of farmers)  
About 10 o'clock we assembled school  
by school - in a large circle

Oak Hill  
Elizabethville  
Perrytown  
Beech Hill  
Pine Grove.

The girls were dressed in navy skirts &  
middy blouses with buttoned navy collar  
& cuffs, the boys had white shirts. At the front  
was our banner it was made of  
white cotton adorned with crepe paper.

We marched, sometimes we sang  
But above all I remember the  
yell we shouted -



Kip Rah  
Zip Rah  
Hullo balloo ballie  
Boom wah  
Zoom Rah  
B. H. S.

Razle tazzle - Sis Boom Bah  
Beech Hill, Beech Hill  
Rah! Rah! Rah!

So I ask you to join with me in  
these last 3 lines in memory of the  
past & hope for the future

Ready? -  
Beech Hill Beech Hill  
Rah rah rah!

Speech given by Mary Gardiner  
(age 94)





*Cameron Wilson*

*Gordon Wilson*

*Marilyn Gardiner*

*Dave  
Watson*

*Geraldine  
Smith*

*Neil  
McKellar*

*Mary  
Augustus*

*Ona  
Gardiner*

*Mary  
Gardiner  
(speech)*







*Mary Gardiner  
(speech)*

*Marilyn Gardiner*

*Mary Augustus*

*Geraldine Smith*

*Evelyn Hall*













Photographs by  
Nelson Gardiner