

## MEMORABLE NAMES AT CRESMOUNT

By Robert Williamson

To add more dignity to the visitation facilities at Cresmount Funeral Home on Fennell Avenue, Manager Phil Seagrove decided to give his conventional viewing rooms and parlors, memorable names associated with the history of the Hamilton Mountain community. His source of information came from copies of popular heritage publications by the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society such as "Mountain Memories" and the heritage column in the Mountain Community News.



*Phil Seagrove displays a plaque dedicated to the heritage of the Mohawk Road pioneer Burkholder family. He is standing in front of Cresmount's newly named BURKHOLDER CHAPEL along with a Burkholder Church archived memorial pulpit, which is held in trust.*

Photo by R. Williamson

Several other rooms have been honorably identified for historic Mountain figures or place names with titles over the room entrance and a story plaque displayed just inside the door.

These include:

**CHEDOKE ROOM** - The name originating from an Indigenous word meaning many oaks, was given to a large stone home in 1836 overlooking Chedoke ravine on Scenic Drive. Owned by business and railway executives until 1906 when publishing empire executive, William Southam, gave it to his daughter as a wedding present. She married the successful Balfour Wholesale Merchant and called the property Balfour Park.

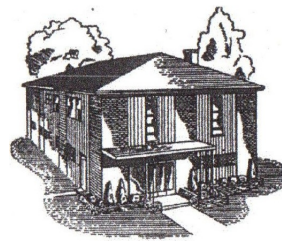
**ONTEORA SUITE** - It too is a name based on an Indigenous word possibly meaning "pure air" and was given to a brick school built in 1922 to replace the original township school built in 1882 at the corner of Upper Wellington and Fennell Avenue. It is now a townhouse complex.

**BRUCE ROOM** - It is a name best associated with a central mountain park where the Elmwood estate of William Bruce once stood on Brucedale Avenue. He was a teacher, artist, justice of the peace, an inventor and registrar of patents. He was president of the newly formed Royal Astronomical Society of Canada and owned the largest telescope in the country. His son, William Blair Bruce was one of Canada's finest artists. His work formed the nucleus of the Hamilton Art Gallery in 1907.

**BUCHANAN ROOM** - This room is named in honor of Isaac Buchanan who played a major role in Hamilton's emergence as an important centre for railway transportation, wholesale trade, and manufacturing. He had a passion for politics, education, religion, and many social issues. His grand estate named Auchmar on Fennell Avenue was one of the largest properties on the Hamilton Mountain. Not to be overlooked as an enduring legacy was his formation of Hamilton's 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which evolved into the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry of today.

**BECKETT RECEPTION CENTRE** - The Beckett family with a professional engineer background, emigrated from England in 1855 at the height of Hamilton's burgeoning railway building age. They formed a company that manufactured locomotives and marine steam engines on MacNab Street. Henry Beckett Senior retired at age 69 in 1871 to become a gentleman farmer on Garth Street. The farm developed into the Beckett Apple Orchard occupying much of what today is the Buchanan Park neighborhood. His oldest grandson, Fredrick envisioned a large housing survey on the west mountain and created a scenic escarpment drive which became Beckett Drive and is also now part of the Bruce Trail.

Because Beckett was a Mountain visionary, Phil Seagrove assigned the name Beckett to the Cresmount Reception Centre in keeping with the speculative business philosophy of founders Murray and Norm Cooke in 1954. They foresaw the need of a funeral home in the rapidly expanding Mountain community along with their ambulance service. Upon trying to register the name Crestmount, they found that a restaurant held that title so they eliminated the middle "t".



Cresmount Funeral Home, Then (1954) and Now (2022).

**Mountain Memories** by award winning writer Robert Williamson appears monthly for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society. Story source: Phil Seagrove.