

## **Heritage Society Celebrates 20 Years**

by Murray W. Aikman

Did you know that the City of Hamilton is home to several historical societies enabling many former towns and villages of Wentworth County to promote their heritage? Twenty years ago Hamilton Mountain followed suit.

On September 14, 1996, Hamilton historian, the Rev. T. Melville Bailey and his wife Janet, hosted a gathering of 20 long-time Mountain (former Barton Township) residents. With great enthusiasm they began the task of forming an organized group to pursue their mutual interest in the heritage of Hamilton Mountain. The first public gathering of those wishing to form a Mountain historical society took place on November 28, 1996 at The South Gate Presbyterian Church. A steadily growing attendance at our meetings resulted in a move to Olivet United Church in 2001.

The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society has accomplished much during the past two decades. Early in 1997 an Executive was approved and the name of the Society was adopted. Some of our General Meetings have taken place off-site, at the location of the topic under discussion. By the Fall of 1997 publicity posters were being produced and a Society logo was developed.

Our first "June Outing" field trip instituted in 1998 is a practice which continues to the present day. A year later Mel urged the group to consider more challenging undertakings. Work was begun on the society's Millennium project, **Mountain Memories**, a pictorial history of Hamilton Mountain. This was followed by the video, **Auchmar: The War Years**. Also in 1999 the HMHS began its annual participation in Concession Street Fest. Other outreach endeavours include lobbying for the preservation of Century Manor, ongoing support of the Friends of Auchmar, the placing of a portrait of the Honourable Isaac Buchanan in the lobby of Buchanan Park School, participation in Heritage Day and Canada Day festivities, authoring or promoting heritage plaques for various Mountain locations, and in 2005 the publication of **Our World's A Stage, The Summers Family Story**, the famous Hamilton Mountain theatrical company that

operated the Mountain's first live theatre at the head of the Wentworth Street Incline.

It remains important that as a "local" heritage society, the HMHS, continue to focus its energies on Hamilton Mountain heritage topics and issues. An open invitation is extended to anyone who values heritage, especially that of Hamilton Mountain, to join with us.



Photo by Murray Aikman

Don Babb, Sandra Beveridge & Ellen Aikman proudly present our wonderful Mountain Heritage at Concession Street Fest June 3, '06.

***Mountain Memories***, by **Robert Williamson** for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society appears monthly. See the Society's website ([Hamiltonheritage.ca](http://Hamiltonheritage.ca)) for more information.