

The Way We Were

The Buttrum Family—Early West Hamilton Settlers

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Buttrum Farm 1880 (near Oak Knoll Drive). Back row, L to R: Unidentified worker, John Buttrum, Edward Mills, Robert Buttrum, Harold Buttrum, Frank Buttrum, James Forsyth, Hugh Buttrum, Fred Buttrum, Bill Buttrum, Sam Buttrum, and Garnett Real. Front Row, L to R: Francis Buttrum, Pricscilla Buttrum, unidentified child, Annie Buttrum Binkley, and Kate Binkley.

Picture: Courtesy Grace Buttrum, in David N. Jardine, *West Hamilton, a Village and a Church* (1990).

Most of West Hamilton's streets are named after families who first owned the land. They include **Ainslie, Bamberger, Binkley, Bowman, Buttrum, Cline, Forsyth, Horning, Newton, Paisley, and Stroud.**

In 1854 Francis Buttrum, his wife, Lydia, and their six sons and one daughter emigrated from England to New York, later moving to Canada in 1863. They eventually settled in 1867 in West Hamilton on a portion of Maple Grove Farm, formerly owned by Elias Forsyth. McMaster University now occupies 70 acres of the former farm.

Many of the Buttrum children married and moved away, but Robert stayed on at the homestead and married Isabella. In the 1930s Maple Grove Farm was subdivided into building lots. The back parcels of the Forsyth and Buttrum farms ran from Main Street West all the way back to the ravine where Oak Knoll is now located. These woody ravines and hillsides became building sites for many fine homes on Mayfair Crescent and Oak Knoll Drive.

John F. Buttrum, son of Francis Buttrum Jr., farmed 11 acres of vegetables on the south side of Main Street West from 1910, where the hydro towers are now. John's son, Harry Buttrum, married Ivy in 1942 and had three children—Jim, Judy, and Elaine. Harry worked the 11-acre farm until the day he passed away in 1992. Harry's son, Jim, still works a farm in Waterdown. The Buttrums have had a stand at the Hamilton Farmers' Market for well over a century. They are famous for their potatoes but also sell a variety of vegetables, homemade jams, and knitted items. Jim's daughter, Shelley, now runs the market stall.

In 1967 Ivy started taking bookings from her market booth to fill a couple of buses for the trip to Expo 67 in Montreal as a favour for a friend. From this modest beginning evolved the Ivy Buttrum Travel Agency on Emerson Avenue. Cookies and tea always awaited a visitor. Under new ownership since 2001, but retaining the original name, the business changed location and continues on Main Street West near Cline Avenue South.

In 1880 an old tannery at Binkley's Corners (Main Street West and Osler Drive) was demolished and a 1787 Bible containing parts of the Old and New Testament was discovered; this Bible is still owned by the Buttrum family.

I wish to thank Ivy Buttrum for her numerous anecdotes and allowing me the privilege of an interview.

Sources: *A History of Ancaster Township* (Ancaster Township Historical Society, 1973); *Hamilton City Journal*, Jan. 9, 1980, p. 10.