

# Henry House Photo and Poetry Contest Winners

Thanks to everyone who entered the Henry House Poetry and Photo Contest!

Poetry Contest Winner – Phyllis Diller Stewart “Old Henry House”

## **OLD HENRY HOUSE**

By Phyllis Diller Stewart

Old Henry House, a Lakeside gem today,  
Is empty, yet its door is open wide,  
Inviting all who come to swim and play –  
“Look! ‘Elder’ Henry’s history’s inside.”  
This house has seen his fam’ly come and go;  
Sheltered, hosted, listened, heard, and held  
Whispered secrets, shared in voices low;  
Within its walls, the generations meld.  
Now, all who come can learn of days gone by:  
From Ireland, trav’ling here to Oshawa,  
Hard times to break the land, a wife who died,  
A man of faith, a friend to all he saw.

This house, restored, transports us to a day  
When Thomas Henry lived here by the lake.

Poetry Honourable Mentions

## **Lurenda’s Legacy**

by Linda Cory Bazowsky

I sit in the Henry House Heritage Garden  
Enjoying a beautiful Victorian Tea.  
My mind wanders to thoughts of Lurenda  
Wife of Reverend Thomas Henry.

Elizabeth, his first wife had died very young,  
And his life seemed to be at a standstill.  
He had a family to raise - life’s work to be done  
For this was God’s will.

The loss of his 'Betsey' inflicted sorrow and pain,  
He yearned for another true heart to love.  
One to share in his life - to make him whole again,  
Under the guidance of the Father above.

In time he asked favour of Lurenda Abbey,  
A Christian woman of strong body and mind.  
Her concern was the happiness and welfare of family,  
And like his first love, she was committed and kind.

Lurenda accepted his hand and soon they wed,  
In Hope Township, the place of her birth.  
Vows of love, faith and honour were said  
They were truly, words of worth!

The Henry family grew throughout the years  
An upper floor was added to their 'new' house of stone.  
There was sunshine, darkness, laughter and tears  
This is what made their house a home.

Perhaps it was the loss of loved ones so dear  
That inspired her compassion and desire,  
To comfort the sick, alleviate their fear  
Of this she would never tire.

A well-known herbalist amongst her peers,  
Remedies were prepared from the herbs she'd grown.  
Perhaps she made bandages from Woolly Lamb's Ears  
A reprieve or a cure: The seeds were sown.

To her children and patients, she had a mother's touch  
A nurse's instinct to lend a helping hand.  
Perhaps the reason she was loved so very much,  
And was well-respected throughout the land.

I finish my scone and a cup of tea,  
And join the Henry House tour inside.  
The large portrait of Lurenda speaks to me  
I listen: I must confide.

Perhaps it's a figment of my imagination!  
I see reflections on the windowpane.

Or is this simply my fascination  
To walk in the past lane?

Family heirlooms are on display  
Her brooch and scarf, Reverend Henry's chair  
I wish that I were a 'Henry' today,  
As I feel their presence everywhere.  
The kitchen is an engaging sight  
All of the old-fashioned things,  
The pump, the iron and the lamp for light  
Many thoughts of Lurenda, this room brings.  
It's time to leave this lovely house at the lake,  
I have a warm smile upon my face.  
For a beautiful memory I will take,  
And the rich history I'll embrace.

## **Master Thomas Henry (1798 – 1879)**

By Suzanna Schmidt

I, Thomas Henry was born in 1798 to John and Nancy Henry in Drumless, Ireland  
Famine forced Ma, Pa and us six kids to Canada when I was only 13  
I was proud to buy 110 acres just north of Pa's farm in Oshawa Ontario  
The babies started coming soon after I married a beautiful young lass named Betsy Davies  
And I worked hard farming the land, but my real passion was public speaking

My dear wife Betsy died of consumption at the young age of 27 leaving 5 kids for me to raise  
The Lord must have been watching over me while I was preaching in Hope Township  
For that's where I met my angel, Lurenda Abbey who became mother to my young family  
She was well known as an active and devout Christian, who travelled the countryside  
Giving relief with herbs and roots to those in need and He blessed us with 8 more children

I became an ordained minister when I was 34 and I knew that this was my calling  
Later, I was chosen as pastorate of the Church of Whitby, but my interests began to change  
Before I knew it, I became president of the Sydenham Harbour Company  
And in 1850, Harbour Master, where I took great pride in the confidence the people had in me

Later that year I bought Joseph Wood's farm which was originally part of Pa's farm  
I built a stone house with the lake at our doorstep and surrounded it with maple trees  
I died at the age of 81 and was survived by my wife Lurenda who died in 1888  
Ten sons and three daughters were left behind and the house remained in the family until 1920

It was purchased by the McLaughlin brothers who deeded it to the city

The house was given to the Oshawa and District Historical Society and is now a museum  
There is a small metal horse out front to greet you, should you want to come and visit

Photo Contest Winner – Tammy Gay





Honourable Mention – John Stephenson