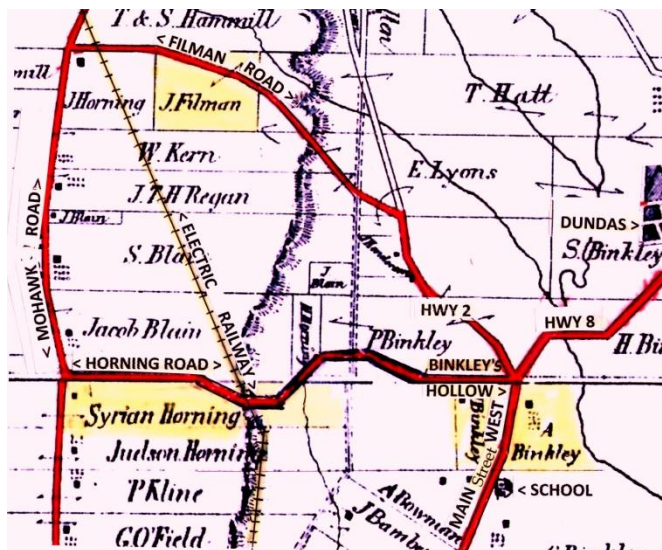


ABANDONED MOUNTAIN ACCESS ROUTES

By Robert Williamson

The escarpment face of Hamilton Mountain has been wearing away since time in memoriam. Consequently access routes are in a constant state of change. This column has touched on east mountain access routes such as the incline railways and private wagon tracks built by east mountain farmers/businessmen such as Kerr, Flock and Jolley. We can find a similar pattern on the west mountain. According to the 1875 Wentworth County Historical Atlas, Mohawk Road farmers, J. Filman and S. Horning had linked their mountain properties to the community of Binkley's Hollow at the junction of Main Street West, Hwy. 2 and Hwy. 8. This site dates back to the arrival of U.E.L settlers from Pennsylvania prior to 1800. The Binkley family provided land for the first school and church in the area known today as the University Gardens and Ainslie Wood neighbourhoods of West Hamilton.



Adapted from the Wentworth County Historical Atlas of 1875

Both Horning Road and neighbouring Filman Road of Ancaster, despite their primitive status, continued to serve the west mountain after the construction of the Hamilton and Brantford Radial Electric Railway in 1907. It provided excellent service to the Hamilton Golf and Country Club, the exclusive Tamahac Club at 180 Filman Road and the Sanatorium near Horning Road. Rural residents of the west mountain could now attend high school at Hamilton's Central Collegiate Institute or find employment in the city.



Courtesy D. Jardine, Ancaster A Pictorial History

To remain open, Horning Road in 1907 had to bridge the Hamilton & Brantford Radial Railway cut at the top of the escarpment shown above, but neither Horning nor Filman access roads survived the building of Hwy 403 Chedoke Expressway in 1966. Both were truncated. Horning Road became an extension of Scenic Drive but severed from Lower Horning Road. Filman Road today is little more than a private drive for a few aging sequestered homes, an extension of the Bruce Trail.

This Mountain Memories column appears monthly for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society. See their Website: Hamiltonheritage.ca or call (905) 575-9326
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