

OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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“ACCESS BEYOND THE RAMP” PART SEVEN: DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:
THE KEY TO ACCESS AND INCLUSION

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Editor's Note: In his first six articles for the *OHS Bulletin*, John Rae examined a variety of access issues for museums and heritage organizations. In his seventh installment, John discusses the importance of involving members from the disabled community in your efforts to make an organization or institution more inclusive. John, an OHS member and volunteer, is also a member of the Inclusive Design and Accessibility Committee at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg.



Photo Aaron Cohen / CMHR

John Rae experiments with one of the CMHR's new digital kiosks, designed to increase accessibility.

Even before the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opened last year in Winnipeg, former president and CEO Stuart Murray promised that “Smithsonian guidelines for accessible design will be met or exceeded, as will the most stringent criteria under the National Building Code and Web-based accessibility standards. That means using things like multisensory technology and design expertise, so everyone can participate equally—whether blind or Deaf, in a wheelchair, intellectually challenged or culturally diverse. No other Canadian institution has ever been able to approach accessibility in this way.”

But this commitment may not have been realized if the Museum hadn't actively involved the disability community throughout the development process. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) led the charge.

“From the announcement by Izzy Asper of his vision for a human rights museum in Winnipeg, we (the disability community) knew that we must engage as fully as possible to ensure access and that the disability rights story was told,” said Laurie Beachell, former National Coordinator of CCD.

“The exciting thing for people with disabilities is not only that a space is being created for a new understanding of human rights, but also that it will be fully accessible,” she added. “As our understanding of human

FRIENDS OF BEAVERDAMS CHURCH SAVE BOTH THE CHAPEL AND THE CEMETERY

IMPRESSIVE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN ALLOWS
GROUP TO PRESERVE COMMUNITY LANDMARK



Photo Tony Vandermaas

Beaverdams Church and the adjoining cemetery in autumn. The Friends of Beaverdams Church took ownership of both the church and cemetery in 2014. The Friends were incorporated by the OHS in 2013.

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Looking back on early 2014, it is unlikely any one of the Friends of Beaverdams Church could have foreseen the great strides that have been made toward the restoration of this important historic and cultural heritage landmark over the past eighteen months. In fact, it's simply stunning to see how much has been achieved.

From a corporate point of view, 2014 was crucially important for the Friends. From the first official elections in April to the purchase of the former Methodist chapel in August, president David Cowan explains the process from start to finish:

“The decision to purchase the building was not an easy one. It was preceded by a letter from the executive to each member explaining the benefits and responsibilities of ownership as well as the protections offered by our comprehensive liability insurance. We made it possible to vote by email or by attendance at the regular meeting, and the result was unanimous approval of the motion by the entire membership.”

There were a few other hurdles to overcome before the deal was done, as Cowan explains:

“In order to finalize the purchase, we also had to obtain a Cemetery Operator's Licence from the province, and thereafter to attain registered charity status from the Canada Revenue Agency. By November of 2014, these factors were in place and the property was ours. Thanks to a talented executive and energetic membership, much progress has been made since.”

Indeed, a common vision coupled with tenacity and hard work meant that the restoration of this important early Upper Canadian building could begin. The first stage involved stabilizing the foundation in mid-2014, followed by the replacement of the roof and removal of the chimney in early 2015. Forthcoming are detailed engineering drawings that will help direct the planning of subsequent restoration efforts.

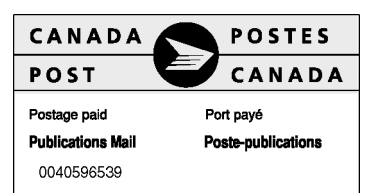
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PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Joe Stafford, President
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As I begin my second year as President, I look forward to a very productive year. In this report, I would like to focus on a new Ontario Historical Society (OHS) initiative: Our Student Publishing Program. This program has two goals—to promote the study of local history in Ontario high schools and to encourage students to become involved with the Society. As the OHS eyes organizational change and expansion, youth outreach becomes more important than ever. I would like to thank Andrea Izzo, our former OHS Coordinator of Communications, and Daniel Dishaw, our new Communications and Outreach Coordinator, for all of their efforts! For a number of years, Andrea and I have discussed different ways to increase student involvement with the OHS. During the summer, Andrea, Daniel, and I met and put together a concrete program to accomplish this objective. Special thanks must be given to Daniel and Jonathan Silveira for designing the program poster and the website page.

Since all of the information concerning the program is available on the OHS website, I will only highlight a few important features. This is the first time that high school students will be invited to write for the OHS. Each semester, student articles will be short-listed, with some of them appearing on our website! The three best submissions will receive a provincial award from the OHS. The publishing program also meets the academic requirements for the grade 10 and grade 12 Canadian history courses, so we have encouraged teachers to use the students’ submissions as class assignments. This is a great opportunity for students to develop their writing and research skills while learning more about local history—the history of their own communities.

As OHS members, you can play a critical role. If you are involved in your local historical society or archives, be sure to contact the high schools in your neighbourhood and invite the history teachers to participate. They are often very busy people, so it would be great if you could give them a friendly reminder. If any of your neighbours have children in high school, you could contact them as well. During my teaching career of almost thirty years, there is one thing that I am sure of: students love to study the history of their own communities. Invite them to visit your historical society or archives, and the students will gain a new perspective on their local history, which is everywhere, especially in their own backyards.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since
July 2015

Peter Myler

Betty Lou Michael

Richard Hess

Jeff Boggs

Henriette Keusch

Heritage Toronto

Friends of Battle Island
Lighthouse

Centre Lochiel Centre

McNab & District
Celtic Heritage Society

THANK YOU DONORS!

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(in memory of Les MacKinnon)

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Robert Halfyard

Bruce Elliott

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Photo Ross Lee

At Thornton, on Sunday, August 9, 2015, the Essa Historical Society officially launched the publication of their revised *History of Thornton*. The book found immediate success, selling out in only seven days. Olive Lee, secretary of the Essa Historical Society, presents OHS Past President Brad Rudachyk with the first copy of the revised *History of Thornton* at the official book launch. The Essa Historical Society was incorporated by the OHS in 1980.

ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Dorothy Duncan
Former OHS Executive Director

The Ontario Historical Society would like to congratulate the Stayner Heritage Society (SHS) on securing a home for their organization in the co-op building beside the railroad tracks in Stayner (Clearview Township). The building was purchased by Clearview Township and is now home to the SHS, an Ontario Tourism Information centre, and the Stayner Chamber of Commerce. Congratulations on this achievement, SHS!

The Markham Historical Society and Markham Museum have brought to our attention the opening of a new school in Upper Unionville. Beckett Farm Public School, which opened earlier this year, was built on the 200-acre, former Beckett Farm land. The farm was sold for development back in 2009 and is now home to over 5,000 residents and a brand new school.

December 13: The Jane Austen Society will host Donald Gray, filmmaker and storyteller, speaking on “Jane’s Navy” at the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury, at the corner of Broadway and Bayview Avenues, Toronto, at 2 p.m. : 416.425.2195.

...FOR MORE EVENT INFO, SEE OUR HERITAGE EVENTS
CALENDAR ON THE OHS HOMEPAGE

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 4: “An Author’s Journey: How My Writing Journey Helped Me Discover My Own Genealogy” with Elaine Cougler at St. David’s Towers: 51 Donlands Avenue, Toronto at 7.30 p.m. The event will be hosted by the Governor Simcoe Branch of the U.E.L. Association.

December 5, 6: Historic Bovaird House will host a Victorian Christmas Open House & Carriage House Gift Show, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Located on the southeast corner of Kennedy Road North and Bovaird Drive East, Brampton: 905.874.2804.



Photo Katrina Schmitz

On August 29th, the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) attended a cairn dedication ceremony in Port Maitland, Ontario. The Port Maitland “On the Grand” Historical Association (PMGHA) designed the cairn in honour of the former Naval Depot, the Naval Depot Cemetery, the Feeder Lock and Canal, and the Commercial Fishing Industry that helped shape this wonderful community. OHS Communications & Outreach Coordinator, Daniel Dishaw, is seen here presenting PMGHA President, Bill Warnick, with a certificate celebrating the PMGHA’s 10-year anniversary. The PMGHA was incorporated by the OHS in 2005.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rob Leverty, Executive Director
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I am pleased to report that the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) has incorporated two more historical organizations, both of them based in Eastern Ontario. On August 21st, the OHS Board of Directors voted to incorporate the McNab & District Celtic Heritage Society and Centre Lochiel Centre, as not-for-profit corporations through affiliation with the Society. Congratulations to both organizations, and all the individuals who donated their time and skills during the incorporation process.

The McNab & District Celtic Heritage Society will support and promote the unique Celtic heritage in the Township of McNab/Braeside and the Ottawa Valley through education, community festivals, and events. Centre Lochiel Centre will preserve and maintain the historic building, formerly known as St. Alexander's Church (1851), located in Lochiel, for the use of the local community and the enjoyment of future generations. Since January 2014, the OHS has incorporated 15 not-for-profit organizations. I am presently working on three applications to incorporate new historical organizations in Northern Ontario.

In the last two issues of the *OHS Bulletin*, we reported on the struggle to save the Bishop's House, on St. Raphael's Ruins National Historic Site in Eastern Ontario. I can now happily report that this stunning historic landmark was acquired in August by the Glengarry Fencibles Trust (GFT).

The GFT was incorporated in 2010 by the OHS. The Fencibles (named after the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles formed by Vicar General Alexander Macdonell during the War of 1812) has worked tirelessly the last five years to acquire ownership of the building and its cultural landscape. Members of GFT have donated countless hours raising the awareness of, and fighting for, the 1808 Georgian house and its landscape, which were designated in 2011 under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

With the help of the South Glengarry Township Council, GFT saved the Bishop's House from demolition in the spring and will now take possession of this architectural treasure on December 2nd. Across the road from the beautiful ruins of St. Raphael's, GFT plans to restore the building and its landscape to use as an interpretive and arts centre for the greater Glengarry area. For more information, see www.bishopshouse.ca.

This tremendous victory by the GFT is great news for all of us to celebrate. But why, in this province, do our grassroots member organizations have to continually struggle to save and promote our history? If our fellow citizens did not stand up and fight for our heritage, if these brave individuals did not volunteer their time and expertise to preserve our local history, it would be ignored, neglected, demolished, or desecrated. We salute each



On September 9th, The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) attended the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario's Aboriginal Forum. Marie Wilson, Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, gave the keynote address, urging all of us to study the Commission's Final Report, embrace its recommendations and make a firm and lasting commitment to reconciliation. Seen here with Marie Wilson is OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty who gave Commissioner Wilson numerous special issues of *Ontario History* dedicated to Aboriginal history. *Ontario History* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that is published bi-annually by the OHS.

and every one of you for your courage and unrelenting dedication to the history of Ontario.

Finally, I am pleased to report that since May, the OHS and the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) have submitted detailed records of the unregistered cemeteries for Kent, Lambton, Lanark, Leeds, Lennox and Addington, and Lincoln Counties to the Government of Ontario. The joint OHS/OGS Unregistered Cemeteries Committee has worked with our members to compile as much information as it can in order to positively identify the locations, owners, and scope of the unregistered cemeteries across the province.

Since 2012, the OHS and OGS have also submitted to the Ontario Government lists of unregistered cemeteries in the Districts, Counties, and Regions of Algoma, Brant, Bruce, Carleton, Cochrane, Dundas, Durham, Elgin, Essex, Frontenac, Grey, Glengarry, Haldimand, Halton, Hastings, and Huron.

Our expert volunteers are working very hard to complete this massive project as soon as possible. We have listened carefully to our diverse membership and we believe that it is in the public interest that all cemeteries in Ontario be accorded the same legal status, and be equally protected and respected. Therefore, it is our duty and responsibility to keep shining a light on this important issue.

... 'BEAVERDAMS' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Underpinning this progress were focused efforts to streamline grant applications and fundraising activities, and to create persuasive promotional collaterals and a well-directed application of social media and electronic resources. The story of Beaverdams Church has always been about the community, stretching back to the earliest history of Niagara's first European settlers. Built in 1832, the handsome meetinghouse-style building not only served the local farming community as part of the St Catharines (Methodist) circuit, but also became the setting of a well-loved Sunday school by the 1890s.

And yet, despite direct community involvement and recognition by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario in 1965, the church began to deteriorate in the late twentieth century. Several individuals and groups like Heritage Thorold LACAC attempted to galvanize local support and spearhead restoration efforts, but it was not until the church was purchased by the City of Thorold in 2009 that it became possible to take stock and move forward. In 2011, the City established the Beaverdams Church Community Centre Board to coordinate fundraising for the building's restoration.

The Friends of Beaverdams Church group was founded in 2012 to help facilitate the Board's fundraising efforts. Incorporation by the Ontario Historical Society in 2013 provided the stimulus for the inauguration of several highly successful events, from the "Mapping the Gravestones" event in 2012 to perennial favourites like the Spring Yard Sale and the autumnal Trivia Night.

Over the past four years, close to \$100,000 has been raised through fundraising and the generosity of private donors alone.

Stay posted for new developments by visiting our website: www.friendsofbeaverdamschurch.com; or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/historic.beaverdams.church.

If you'd like to help or would like more information, please contact The Friends at beaverdamschurch@gmail.com.



Photo Leanne

Beaverdams Church and Cemetery in the winter.



CEMETERY NEWS

Marjorie Stuart, Editor
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- The Unregistered Cemetery Project will soon begin researching information related to burial locations in Nipissing and Northumberland Counties. We would like to learn about small—perhaps forgotten—burial locations. We welcome photograph submissions from across the province. We cannot use photos of tombstones with dates later than 1900. Cemeteries that are not registered or listed with the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services can be officially closed and moved with minimum notice, and no input and no right of appeal.
- The Municipality of Lambton Shores has recognized **Port Franks Squatters’ Cemetery** with a historical plaque. Eleven years ago, local citizens raised concerns over the future of this overlooked burial ground. It is believed that there were Aboriginal burials here that predate the establishment of the town in 1851. Anna McGhee was the first white person to die in Port Franks in approximately 1855—1856. The estimated 19 burials include victims of shipwrecks and local residents who died before 1900. This is an unregistered cemetery.
- One thousand acres of land on Manitoulin Island are now owned by the Canadian Government. This site includes the former town and mill—which were destroyed in a fire c.1900—and five cemeteries. Concern is raised about the future of the cemeteries when the property is sold for development. They are not registered.
- The long forgotten cemetery behind the **Cathedral of St. Alexandra** in St Catharines is still under investigation. The cemetery, which dates from 1827 to about 1856, was discovered during construction. Efforts are being made to establish the boundaries of the cemetery. The cost of disinterring the bodies is enormous and leaving the remains in situ presents other problems. This issue will not be resolved quickly. This is an unregistered burial site.
- The Port Colborne Marine and Historical Museum is sponsoring six tours, two for each cemetery this fall. These will be held at **Oakwood, Overhold, and St. Paul’s Lutheran** cemeteries. The tours, designed by the museum staff, tell the story of the town, its cemeteries, and some of the people interred there. They also stress the conservation of gravestones. There is a small fee and space must be reserved by calling the Museum. These cemeteries are all registered.
- The Bradford West Gwillimbury Local History Association recently held a tour of local historic cemeteries. These included the **Dunkerron Quaker Cemetery, Dunkerron United Church Cemetery, 5th Line Scotch Settlement Presbyterian Cemetery, Auld Kirk Cemetery, Christ Church Cemetery, and Bond Head United Cemetery** (all registered cemeteries).

• The **Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital Cemetery** Volunteer Committee recently held their fall clean-up. They also welcomed descendants and visitors.

• We recently learned of a burial ground near Porphyry Point Lighthouse on Edward Island in the Thunder Bay area. The lighthouse has been designated as a Lake Superior Water Trail location. The burial ground is believed to have been an Ojibwa First Nations burial site. It is also possible that some were buried there in 1907. We would like to learn more about this unregistered burial ground.

• Bill Steer, writing in North Bay’s *The Nugget*’s “Community Voices” describes an abandoned but *not* forgotten cemetery: the **New Post Hudson’s Bay Company Cemetery**. The area on the Abitibi River, once tranquil, is now the site of a new hydroelectric development. New Post was in operation from 1857 until 1924. There are a number of headstones and unmarked graves there. One burial site has an iron fence and an iron marker in memory of Alexander McLeod, a native of Caithness, Scotland, who died in 1885 (age 60) and his wife, Jane Turner, who died in 1886 (age 50). Alexander McLeod had 43 years of service with the Hudson’s Bay Company at various locations. He was the Factor at New Post from 1870 to 1885. In 1917, his son, George McLeod, returned as Factor and erected a commemorative plaque to his parents. George completed 47 years of service with the Hudson’s Bay Company. Recently the Cree First Nation, Taykwa Tagamou, and the builders of the new generating station have cleared the brush in the cemetery. Northern Superior Adventures take visitors on day trips in voyageur canoes to New Post. These voyages explore the rich history of aboriginal Canadians and the fur trade. This burial ground is registered.

• Theft in cemeteries, particularly of bronze vases and other ornaments continues unabated. **Innisvale Cemetery & Crematorium** in Simcoe County reported losses worth thousands of dollars. Recently there was a theft of 250 bronze vases at **Mount Lawn Cemetery** in Whitby. These cemeteries are both registered. The recurring theft of flowers from a particular grave site in London has also become a problem. Theft of bronze vases or flowers adds unnecessary grief for families.

• **Lundy’s Lane Cemetery**, a registered cemetery in Niagara Falls, is to be expanded. The cemetery has acquired additional land and hopes to have the space ready for interments this fall. The cemetery had been considered full with no plots available until recently. It was first established in 1817 by the “Red Meeting House” Methodist Church and was abandoned in about 1869. The Township of Stamford assumed operation of the cemetery in 1934.

DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE OHS CEMETERY DEFENCE FUND

THE OHS IS COMMITTED TO DEFENDING THREATENED CEMETERIES ACROSS THE PROVINCE, BUT WE CAN’T DO IT ALONE.
ALL DONORS WILL RECEIVE A CHARITABLE TAX RECEIPT

...‘ACCESS’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

rights evolves, so too will our understanding of access and inclusive design. The disability community is pleased to be part of something that can raise awareness about what inclusion really means.”

“Collaboration was the name of the game; on design, on content, on sharing information and knowledge. The CCD’s commitment to work with all partners (engineers, architects, curators, media relations) has resulted in a very disability-friendly and accessible museum,” added Beachell.

“The Museum’s bold, new approach is an amazing opportunity for accessibility to permeate all aspects of design right from the beginning—as opposed to tacking it on later,” said Jutta Treviranus, Director of the Inclusive Design Research Centre at the Ontario College of Art and Design. “The timing is perfect because the technology now exists to take accessibility to a new level that was not possible before,” she added.

Winnipeg human-rights lawyer Yvonne Peters, who is blind, said that access issues go far beyond moving wheelchairs through doors. “I get very frustrated when I go to museums,” she said. “I want to be included in an experience that is designed to include me, where my needs are not considered as an afterthought.”

The CMHR is the first museum solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights in Canada. While it has a diverse permanent collection along with visiting exhibits, it focuses primarily on providing information to help enhance our understanding of human rights.

The CMHR’s accessibility features include:

- A unique tactile keyboard designed by the Museum and vetted by the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD—which is incorporated into touchscreen installations—will enable vision-impaired and mobility-restricted visitors to navigate digital exhibits independently.
- Software interfaces that exceed best practices in areas like colour

contrast, reach, and functionality (for ease of digital navigation and comprehension).

• Tactile wall and floor elements to indicate the location and orientation of various exhibits and assist in wayfinding.

• Film and video displays that include open captioning, descriptive video, American Sign Language (ASL), and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ).

• High-contrast visual elements and text to accommodate low-vision guests and visitors who are colour blind or dyslexic.

• Mobile and digital media that incorporate elements like closed and open captioning, described video, ASL, and LSQ. The Museum is also investigating Near Field Communication technology that would prompt visitors (via proximity) when to access descriptions and supplemental interpretation on mobile devices.

• Staff training, which is designed to ensure that interpretive programming and visitor interactions are inclusive and mindful of a full range of accessibility needs.

• Graphic standards that meet or surpass Smithsonian guidelines for text organization and visual presentations. Examples include easily legible typeface, font size, weight, contrast, and proportion.

• Consideration of the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, children, the elderly, those with language barriers, and the mentally ill.

READ THE FULL SERIES OF “ACCESS BEYOND THE RAMP” ON THE OHS WEBSITE

MUSEUM NEWS

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Interpretation is central to the learning process in all Ontario museums. This is especially true at living history sites. When interpretation takes into account an event in history that is directly connected to the museum, the impact is even more pronounced.

Interpretation of the 1837 and 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellions is offered at very few museums throughout the province. This is unfortunate because at least 14 armed events took place during this period, which ideally could be interpreted by museums located near these battles/incursions. It is therefore exciting to learn from this issue's article (see below), of an innovative, experiential learning program at Kingston's Fort Henry National Historic Site. Mark Bennett describes the program as one that makes history fun and results in more interest for, and added retention by, students taking part in this educational opportunity.

Congratulations to the Bruce County Museum for winning the OHS Museum Award of Excellence in Community Programming, and to the Gore Bay Museum for receiving the Russell K. Cooper Award (see photo). If you know of a worthy applicant for this year's Museum Awards, please contact the OHS for further details on how to nominate and prepare a submission

LEARNING HISTORY BY LIVING IT

Mark Bennett
Supervisor, Programmes
Fort Henry N.H.S.

Fort Henry runs a series of experiential learning programs that allow our visitors to learn about life in the past by acting as soldiers living in a garrison at Fort Henry. These programs were created in order to offer our clients more than just the standard one-hour tour. Designed in partnership with the Limestone District School Board, this hands-on approach to education achieves various curriculum objectives. Core curriculum includes: language studies, technology and design, social studies, physical education, history, geography, and geology.



Photo St. Lawrence Parks Commission

Visiting students plug their ears alongside one of Fort Henry's historic cannons while two Fort guards stand at attention.

The class is transported to Fort Henry as it was in 1867, the year of Canada's Confederation. As they experience life in another century, new "recruits" follow the proverb "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

In designing our experiential programs, we focus on creating a realistic and exciting atmosphere. When they're having fun, people tend to remember what's being discussed. For us, laughter leads to learning. We must also stay conscious of the different ages represented in each visiting group, which can range from junior primary through to high school. The concept that works for us is to tell all our visitors that we are going to be performing a play in which they are the stars. As actors, they need to be in costume and character for the duration of their stay. All of Fort Henry becomes the stage, and our script is based on the Fort's heritage.

With our experiential programs varying in length, we simply have more "acts" in our play when running the full-day and overnight programs. Each act tends to involve scenarios that have universal appeal, and can easily facilitate a comparison between life in 1867 and life in 2015. Our acts tie in

for consideration by the OHS Honours and Awards Committee.

All the best to Andrea Izzo, who has recently taken up teaching as a profession. I've worked with Andrea for the past couple of years when he acted as editor of the *OHS Bulletin*, and appreciated all his efforts. I look forward to working with the newly appointed editor, Daniel Dishaw. If you have any ideas about future lead articles or have news about your museum that you'd like me to include in this column, please contact me at drjohncarter@bell.net.



Photo Tom Sasvari, Manitoulin West Recorder

Gore Bay Museum Chair Perry Patterson (center, left) and Curator Nicole Wepler (center, right) receiving the 2014 Russell K. Cooper Award from former OHS Board members Linda Kelly and John Carter.

very well with the new inquiry approach method. These scenarios involve giving our new recruits a taste of life in garrison for a young soldier. Some of the important aspects include going to class in the Fort's schoolroom, eating their daily rations, living in their barrack room, getting ready for an inspection, and using the privies (toilets).

“ When they're having fun, people tend to remember what's being discussed. ”

For our overnight program, we're able to create a very unique act in our play: the "ghost hunt." Throughout the course of our hunt, students get a tour of the spookiest nooks and crannies while their guide explains the darker side of the Fort's history. Students learn that the walls were occasionally used to house prisoners, and though some inmates were able to escape from their cells, others were not so fortunate. One of our favourite stories is that of the daring escape plan executed by John Montgomery and 14 of his fellow prisoners on July 29, 1838. Our recruits retrace Montgomery's escape route as we tell tales of the curse he left behind.

For more information about Fort Henry's experiential programs, please visit our website at www.parks.on.ca. Go to the Fort Henry tab, and click on Schools. Your experience awaits!

Fort Henry is part of The St. Lawrence Parks Commission, an agency for the Ministry of Tourism.



Photo Rob Levery

Establishing not-for-profit organizations to save historic lighthouses and preserve Ontario's maritime heritage has been a major focus for the OHS. The Society attended the session "Save Our Lighthouses" at the 2015 Ontario Heritage Conference Niagara. Seen here from left are: Charlene Nigh, Point Abino Lightstation Preservation Society (PALPS); Paul Morralee, Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior (CLLS); Stewart Patch, Beach Lighthouse Preservation Group (BLPG); Marc Seguin, Save Our Lighthouses; Susan Ratcliffe, Friends of Cabot Head Lighthouse; and Robert Square, Cove Island Lighthouse Heritage Association and the Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society (NLPS). The OHS incorporated four of these lighthouse organizations as not-for-profit corporations through affiliation: BLPG (2004), PALPS (2005), CLLS (2014), and NLPS (2015).

BARRY PENHALE’S ONTARIO

JAMES H. PRICE: A PASSIONATE PROMOTER OF COBALT’S PAST

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In 2001, Cobalt, the town that silver built, was named “Ontario’s Most Historic Community.” A distinguished panel of judges comprised of Dorothy Duncan, Ron Brown, and Professor Desmond Morton made the announcement on TVO to the delight of many, myself included. For me, there is no place quite so historically important in our province. There is much more to Cobalt than old buildings, mine sites, and head frames. It was then, and still is today, the impressive preservation efforts of native Cobalters that keep the fabled old mining camp alive.

For a southerner with a tape recorder in search of Northeastern Ontario’s storied past, it was as if I had discovered the motherlode. Not riches beneath the earth’s surface, mind you, but a wealth of memories, treasured by native sons and daughters. With every meeting, I learned that these individuals possessed the warmth and friendliness long associated with Ontario mining communities. An added bonus was the discovery that each person represented a piece of living history and had made a commitment to preserve their local history.

“It was then, and still is today, the impressive preservation efforts of native Cobalters that keep the fabled old mining camp alive.”

Cobalters through and through, most of these men and women destined to become cherished friends are no longer with us. But their dedication to the heritage of Northeastern Ontario cannot be overstated. They were the foot soldiers who, like the prospectors before them, blazed the trails that left important reminders of an earlier time. A select few by name include: the Hermiston brothers, Paul and Les; Paul’s wife, Ila; Hughie Armstrong and his wife, Bella; Jim Price; Gladys Wilcox; and the mining magnate and my own mentor, Murray Watts. Time in their company remains etched in my memory.



Mining contractor Ted Brown of North Cobalt (standing) visits Jim Price during an annual Prospectors and Developers Association convention held at Toronto’s Royal York Hotel in the early 1970s.

While each of those named deserve the telling of his or her own particular story, space does not permit my doing so. Here I will focus on James H. Price, who epitomized the enduring Cobalt spirit every bit as well as the others. Like such giants in the mining world as the Mosher brothers (Murdock and Alex), Jim Price also had a father who had worked in the Nova Scotia goldfields before settling in Cobalt in 1907. The younger Price would find work in many of the once-prominent Cobalt mines, including Nipissing, Savage, Bell Ellen, Silver Miller, and the Cobalt Coalition. As others have done before and since, Jim eventually owned some local mining properties and leased others. When we became acquainted, he was living on the old Kerr Lake Road, surrounded by mining history that included the Fred LaRose blacksmith shop and the original J.M. O’Brien Mine site. Legend has it that LaRose threw his hammer at an inquisitive fox and exposed a rich vein of silver—a charming story but totally without foundation.

Still prospecting when we met, Jim Price’s activities involved leasing the old Dumas mine, as well as some work at Silver Centre, about twenty miles from his home. A ghost town—except for the now closed Trout Lake Mine—Silver Centre in the late 1920s and early ’30s was an exceptionally famous and prosperous silver producer. As I was to discover, “Silver Jim,” as Price was known locally, had come up with his own method of screening the tailings from old abandoned mines. Using a homemade metal detector comprised of a small plastic battery-operated radio, mounted on a stick and attached to a simple electric coil, which was in turn attached to a piece of scrap plywood, he combed the abandoned tailings. His ingenious piece of equipment would produce a unique howl that Jim could instantly recognize as silver, cobalt, or lead. Salvaging waste rock from old local mines, though time consuming, produced frequent payoffs.



Jim Price spent many productive hours combing through the mine waste rock of former mine sites. Here he works over one of the old O’Brien mining properties on the Kerr Lake Road, circa 1975.

In later years, as Price’s lapidary interests grew, he would produce bolo ties sporting magnificent pieces of native silver. In an act of generosity during a visit to his home, he insisted on giving me two such ties, one of which I gave to my father, who was delighted and wore it frequently. By this time, Silver Jim had a full-fledged home business going, fabricating jewellery that featured his finds. The Price homestead had also become something of a museum. The full-width veranda was a depository of Canadiana. Pioneer cookware, church pews, and a horse-drawn cutter were just a few of the items on display. Similarly, Jim’s garage-workshop resembled a gallery of work clothes, jackets, and miners’ hats and boots for prospecting. Jim was indeed a savvy collector.

Any visitor to Cobalt will know the importance of the Cobalt Mining Museum. The building was fortunate to have had Jim as curator in the early 1970s. He was also named Cobalt’s Man of the Year in 1974, an honour bestowed by the Cobalt branch of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. The award recognized his many contributions to the mining industry. Prospector, miner, collector, and historian in his own right, Jim Price made a meaningful contribution during his lifetime to our appreciation of Ontario history. His work to preserve the rich story of the Tri-Town of Cobalt, Haileybury, and New Liskeard should never be forgotten.



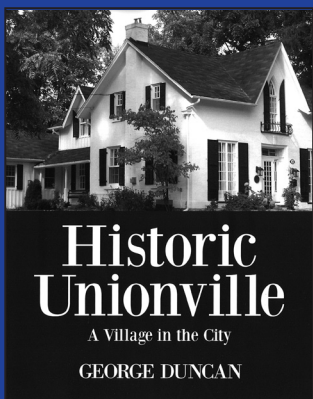
FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Dr. Cynthia Comacchio
ccomac5702@rogers.com

The wind is noisily blowing leaves around outside my window as I prepare this column. Autumn truly has arrived! In my view, autumn is the most amazing season Ontario has to offer. With an abundance of wondrous natural spaces in every part of the province, a drive to see “the colours” is an annual ritual that many Ontarians enjoy. Of course, just looking out the window from a comfy armchair will suffice for those of us who can’t go autumn-tripping—perhaps with one of these fine books in hand...

TOWN AND COUNTRY: LOCAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The books considered in this section, “Town and Country: Local History and Heritage,” are intriguing examples of the interrelations of land and people, family and community, geography and history. Each provides glimpses regarding what it meant to “settle,” despite the challenges, hardships, and even the tragedies of beginning anew, establishing roots, building a legacy, and working toward preserving that heritage, whether cultural or architectural, and mostly some of each.



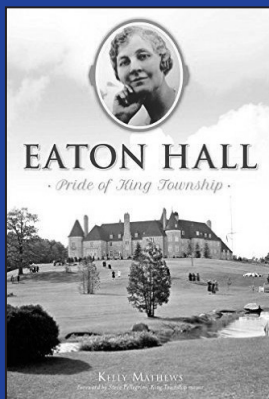
Historic Unionville: A Village in the City

GEORGE DUNCAN

Toronto: Dundurn, 2015
Paperback; 183 pp. \$24.99

www.dundurn.com

Historic Unionville is a beautifully produced and illustrated history of the “unexpected oasis” that is Unionville, a charming “village in the city” that was “discovered,” in terms of cultural tourism, during the 1960s. Yet the village itself has 18th century foundations, here explored, along with the several centuries unfolding since then, by George Duncan. A founding member of the national Association of Heritage Professionals, Duncan provides armchair tourists and heritage buffs—those who plan to explore, or have already explored, Unionville—with a lovely walk through its many heritage sites. Those without such plans or experiences will no doubt want to make a well-informed visit after reading this book. Duncan’s historical tour is informed by his insights as a heritage professional; his meticulous examination of the City of Markham’s heritage files brings his knowledge of architecture and urban planning to this story. At the same time, his focus on the built environment nonetheless includes stories of human interaction with those buildings and spaces. All told, this is a thoughtful and informative examination of a town that is, as he contends, “a showcase of Ontario vernacular architecture” (the buildings in which ordinary people lived and worked) during the two centuries from the earliest settlement to the present day.



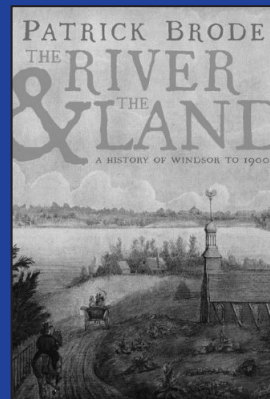
Eaton Hall: Pride of King Township

KELLY MATHEWS

Charleston, NC:
The History Press, 2015
Paperback; 190 pp. \$21.99
www.historypress.net

Eaton Hall, “the pride of King Township” that is the subject of Kelly Mathews’ story, was established relatively recently in historical terms. The 700-acre farm on which it rests was purchased by Sir John Craig and Lady Florence McCrear Eaton in 1920 on the advice of Toronto’s infamous Sir Henry Pellatt. Although Sir John died 16 years before land was broken for Eaton Hall, Lady Florence pursued their joint dream to make it the seat of the Eaton family and its legacy. Dubbing the estate “Canada’s Downton Abbey,” Mathews’ meticulous rendering of the 72-room, Norman-style residence focuses on daily life as experienced by its loyal staff. Under Lady Eaton’s watchful though benevolent gaze, its vast interior was capably managed by a well-trained staff featuring the typical British servant hierarchy, from housekeeper through cook, butler, footmen, and varying degrees of

male and female servants, each with their own “place” and role. Eaton Hall was also, throughout this time, a viable working farm. In addition to the plentiful Eaton family fonds held by the Archives of Ontario and the Toronto Reference Library, which both informed the research and furnished the supporting illustrations, the author was fortunate to have the oral testimony of a number of Eaton Hall and Eaton family members and associates, including that of Lady Eaton’s grandson, Frederik S. Eaton. As the author acknowledges, it proved impossible to chronicle the Hall’s history without also discussing the development of the “Farm & Estate,” Lady Florence’s own lifetime, the history of King Township, and, finally, that of Seneca College, which now owns the estate as its King campus. It is very much to her readers’ benefit that she has done such a masterful job of interweaving these many pieces.



The River and the Land: A History of Windsor to 1900

PATRICK BRODE

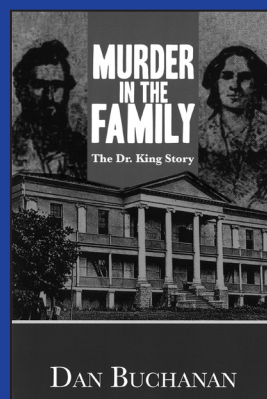
Windsor: Biblioasis, 2014
Hardcover; 192 pp. \$29.95

www.biblioasis.com

Author of many acclaimed works of both fiction and non-fiction, Patrick Brode has produced a number of excellent local histories. His most recent is the first of a multi-volume series that will ultimately provide readers with a detailed historical overview of Windsor-Essex. *The River and the Land* introduces readers to Windsor’s early history, from the days of French exploration and fur-trading, as well as missionary activity in the 17th century, to the dawn of what was optimistically declared to be “Canada’s Century.” Brode’s examination is fundamentally geographic and environmental; he begins with the direct argument that, “What would become the city of Windsor was intrinsically formed by its location” on the Detroit River, singularly important to its French founders for agriculture, trade, and military purposes. The land was settled in the long narrow riverfront strips common to Quebec, establishing a farm community on both sides of the narrow strait in order to serve the French military garrison established there in 1701. Although the river was divided by decree in the 1790s, effectively partitioning the settlement on both sides of the river into British and American, the southern, or Canadian, side, named Windsor in 1836, continued to demonstrate the effects of its French origins, remaining, not without challenge as British emigration proceeded, a French-Catholic enclave in the midst of what would soon become Anglo-Protestant territory. The bordertown effect, Brode notes, was a significant element in shaping the city’s history from that time forward. Brode delves capably into Windsor’s ongoing population growth and intensive industrial development, including cultural tensions between its major ethnic groups: French, English, Irish, and Scottish. He pays due attention to the town’s position on the Confederation project, especially anti-Americanism, the American Civil War, and the Underground Railroad. Although he concludes this volume in 1900, we have a strong sense of the historical drama that unfolded in and around this burgeoning Ontario town that effectively straddled the political boundary of two nations, for good and not so good. This is an eminently readable and thoroughly researched survey, and an opening volume that bodes well for what will follow.

RECOLLECTION: BIOGRAPHY AND FAMILY STORIES

Recollection is fundamental to human nature. It’s also an intrinsic part of what historians do—delving into the memories of others—in order to come to an understanding of what has gone before us. The most personal and intimate forms of “recalling” and “recovering” the past are sometimes offered to us in the shape of biography and family stories, interconnected as they are. These books are fascinating examples of such approaches to our own lives and the lives of others, the individual histories that are the basis of our shared history.



Murder in the Family: The Dr. King Story

DAN BUCHANAN

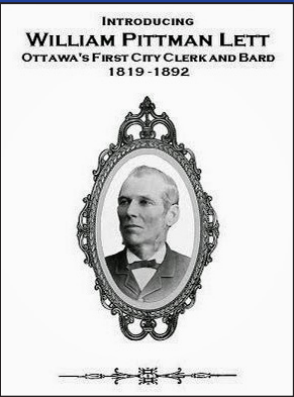
Toronto: Dundurn, 2015
Paperback; 288 pp. \$24.99

www.dundurn.com

Dan Buchanan covers a lot of ground in *Murder in the Family*. This book is at once history, mystery, and family lore, and also reveals much

about the middle-class morés prevailing in Victorian Ontario. The author is a descendant of Dr. William Henry King, the protagonist of this tale set in Northumberland County. His interest in the story was ignited by local legend, supported by the details that his own grandfather was able to [reluctantly!] provide regarding the family’s “black sheep,” and followed up with painstaking research and retelling. As if his philandering, his wife’s murder, and his escape attempts were not story enough, Dr. King, a respected member of the small community, was the only man ever executed in the County’s history. At a time when the press sensationalized every trial, one with such disgraceful and shocking elements was particularly well-documented, to the benefit of the author—and his readers. Most fascinating is how Buchanan uncovered several rare and enlightening pieces of evidence, included here in their entirety, from the King Collection that is now housed in Brighton’s Proctor House Museum. The first is the journal of Constable Alexander Stewart, King’s court-appointed warden, who was assigned to be his “gatekeeper and close confidant” between his sentencing and hanging. Stewart was actually obliged to move into the cell next to King. He made thoughtful daily notes during this time, reprinted here in their entirety. When “the fatal 9th of June” arrived, he noted, there were “some ten thousand people” witnessing the event. We also have King’s own verbose written confession, which he actually hoped to have published in the *Toronto Globe*, although the editor instead attacked it in his own brief article. The document is startling in that King was most insistent that all the “experts” who maintained he drugged his wife with arsenic, or possibly morphine, were simply not well-versed in the physical effects of these drugs, which he discusses in some detail. Ultimately, he reveals, it was chloroform that finished off Mrs. King. Buchanan includes a very helpful cast of characters, a map, photographs, genealogical notes, and a thorough list of the archival materials that he used.

number of roles throughout his lifetime: he was a militiaman, a journalist, a pioneering theatre impresario, and a sportsman. A fierce patriot of the kind since classified “nationalist-imperialist,” Lett advocated for the “British connexion” and against the threat of republicanism as exemplified by the Fenians and the Annexationists who menaced the young Canada during its first few years. Cook manages to detail an interesting life history in interesting times by incorporating Lett’s 118 poems, in which he expressed himself on subjects, events and characters of the day—all of these properly contextualized, and framed by 93 historic images and photographs. This is a comprehensive biography of a man whom, the author argues, deserves to be considered a “Poet of Confederation.”



Introducing William Pittman Lett: Ottawa's First City Clerk and Bard 1819-1892

BRYAN D. COOK

Ottawa:
Ottawa HS/Roland Printing, 2014
Paperback; 412 pp. \$25.00
bryan.cook@rogers.com

Bryan D. Cook’s biography of William Pittman Lett brings to life this clerk and poet who, as the author acknowledges, is largely forgotten—even by Ottawa historians—in the present. Lett was not only the city’s manager during the formative years of the nation’s capital, serving for 36 years (1855–1891)—making him the longest-serving City Clerk to date—he held this position at a time when it was more than a bureaucratic role. In this life history of Lett, Cook demonstrates how he was able to use the power then allotted to the Clerk to involve himself personally, and with determination, in shaping the Capital against the backdrop of a nation struggling to make itself. Moreover, Lett did not merely concern himself with Ottawa, but, as a writer and poet, also with recording his succinct observations of the city, and the nation’s development. A fully-rounded character, Lett held a

James King had a somewhat less daunting task than did our other biographers, in that David Milne does not need to be rescued from obscurity: he is an acknowledged and important Canadian artist. King succinctly sums up Milne’s nature and purpose, as much as any biographer can truly know his subject, he was “the artist as intellectual,” “an artist’s artist,” and a painter/writer for whom “his life was his art” (22). Born into an impoverished rural family in Saugeen Township in 1881, Milne would never see wealth during his lifetime, preferring to eschew material success to pursue his art for his own pleasure. He studied at the Art Students League in New York City in the early 20th century; by 1912, he was married and settled in upstate New York. As a volunteer with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Milne joined the ranks of other postwar artists of note, including members of the Group of Seven, to depict the scenes of battle and everyday life at the western front. He would not return to Canada until 1929, after nearly a quarter century in the United States. He died in Bancroft, Ontario, in 1953. These are the basic elements of David Milne’s life and development as an artist; what follows is an in-depth, sensitively contextualized portrait of a man whose art was his life force, and for whom art captured the life force that is nature and landscape. King was very fortunate to have had Milne’s many writings on art to examine for the artist’s own insights into his work and “art” writ large. More than just the story of an artist and his art, this work captures glimpses into an artist’s mind and his subjective experience of the aesthetic process, both his own and that of others. Clearly and crisply written, and lavishly illustrated with colour plates of Milne’s work as well as his personal black and white photographs, this biography is an effective tribute to an artist who contributed greatly to the modernist art scene in Canada until the mid-20th century—who is regarded by some art critics as Canada’s finest painter—and whose life and work deserve to be better known as such.

**HONOURS AND AWARDS NOMINATIONS
NOW OPEN**

The 2015 Ontario Historical Society Honours and Awards Program is now accepting nominations. A nomination brochure has been included in this edition of the *OHS Bulletin*. The deadline for submissions is Friday, January 15, 2016. Nominate excellence in your community with the OHS!



The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, helped the OHS present the 2014 Dorothy Duncan Award to the Coldwater Canadiana Museum at its 50th Anniversary Heritage Day event in July. The award recognizes a non-profit organization for outstanding service to its region and must be nominated by a Municipal or First Nations Council. Pictured (left) is Wayne Scott, volunteer curator of the Museum, and (right) Dorothy Duncan, former executive director of the OHS.

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institutions and non-member individuals for \$31.50; and to non-member organizations and institutions for \$42. Membership inquiries should be directed to Christina Perfetto at members@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca.

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