

# OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issue 200

SEPTEMBER 2016

## GRAND REOPENING OF ORO AFRICAN CHURCH AN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

## AAO ADOPTS PROVINCIAL ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Photo - Daniel Dishaw



The grand reopening of the Oro African Church is made official at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, led by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell (centre), Oro Medonte Township Mayor H.W. Harry Hughes (first left of centre), direct descendant Helen Thompson Miller (second left of centre), The Rt Reverend Chester A. Searles (third left of centre), and Janie Cooper-Wilson (fourth left of centre).

**Janie Cooper-Wilson**, Director, OHS Board of Directors  
janiecooperwilson2.on@gmail.com

The Oro African Settlement was established by the government of Upper Canada in 1819, during the uneasy peace that followed the War of 1812. The site is one of the oldest African Canadian settlements in Upper Canada, pre-dating both the Wilberforce Settlement and the Buxton Settlement by 11 and 20 years, respectively. The first Black settlers in Oro Township (now Oro-Medonte Township) were veterans of Runchey's Coloured Corps, who fought in every major battle along the Niagara Frontier. Some of the original settlers were former slaves, while others were free Blacks who were already living in Upper Canada when the War of 1812 broke out.

The earliest documentation of the Oro African Church comes from May 26, 1849, when Noah Morris (a Black settler) transferred a one acre plot of his land to Henry Montgomery, George Eddy, Luther Barber, Henry St. Dennis, and Benjamin Johnson, trustees of the "Colored African Episcopal Methodist Church in Canada", for use as a "chapel and burying ground".

The settlement began to break apart in the early 20th century as, one by one, the Black families were forced to move to other parts of the Province in search of better employment opportunities. Though some descendants would return to bury family members, the church was considered abandoned and



**Charlotte Chaffey**,  
Archivist/Records Manager, ROM Library & Archives

The membership of the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) unanimously endorsed the AAO-sponsored Provincial Acquisition Strategy at its recent Annual General Meeting held in Thunder Bay on May 12, 2016. The Strategy is available on the AAO's website: <http://aao-archivists.ca/provincial-acquisition-strategy>.

The idea of a collaborative acquisition strategy for Ontario archives is not new, there have been many conversations and reports since the 1980s that advocated building archival networks and encouraging cooperation among Ontario archives. The Canadian Council of Archives promoted the development of acquisition strategies at both the national and provincial levels as far back as 1990. The 2014 Canadian Archives Summit called for increased collaboration among archival institutions and the sharing of information to strengthen partnerships in the archival community. The AAO's Institutional Development Committee (IDC) held an Institutional Development Forum at the Archives of Ontario in October 2015, which led to the formation of the Provincial Acquisition Strategy Working Group. The Group's mandate was to develop an acquisition strategy for the province using the Council of Nova Scotia Archives' Cooperative Acquisition Strategy as a model, which would then be presented at the Annual AAO Conference in 2016. The Provincial Acquisition Strategy Working Group's membership included Charlotte Chaffey (ROM Archives), Sarah Ferencz (Whitby Archives), Aaron Hope (Archives of Ontario), Sean Smith (Archives of Ontario), and Charlotte Woodley (Region of Waterloo Archives).

By agreeing to the principles of this strategy, the Ontario archival community recognizes that a collaborative approach will best enable it to safeguard the preservation of significant private and government records in the most appropriate repository and ensure every effort is made to make them accessible to all Ontarians. Further, it will allow Ontario's archival community to share and acknowledge the individual and collective mandates for private and government records in the province. It is hoped that a provincial acquisition strategy will position Ontario's archival community to

'ORO AFRICAN CHURCH' CONTINUED ON PAGE 7...

## IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT	2
ACROSS THE PROVINCE	2
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT	3
JACOB LEWIS ENGLEHART: THE ORDER OF THE NORTH	4
POINT ABINO LIGHTHOUSE	4
MUSEUM MILESTONES & WINDSOR'S NEW CHIMZUK MUSEUM	5
BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO	6
CEMETERY NEWS	7
FROM THE BOOKSHELF	8

'AAO' CONTINUED ON PAGE 6...

The Ontario Historical Society  
34 Parkview Avenue  
Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2  
CANADA



OHS@ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA

ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA

/ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY

@ONTARIOHISTORY





## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**Caroline Di Cocco**, President  
carolinedicocco@gmail.com

My relationship with the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) goes back about 30 years. The work done by the Society for over 125 years has been instrumental in the preservation of Ontario's history. As I take on the role of President for this amazing organization, future sustainability is what will shape our path moving forward.

The OHS is more crucial today in its role of protecting and promoting Ontario's history than ever before. The Society is a leader in showcasing our province's history. It is the support system for hundreds of small not-for-profit historical organizations who are the collective voice of history across this province. The Society faces many challenges in dealing with constant changes in technology in all facets of its work. Making the most of new technological tools is critical to staying relevant and effective in the digital age.

The Society continues to provide leadership and carry on their tremendous work in spite of drastic cuts to provincial funding made in 1995-96. The Society's level of funding has been frozen ever since. This needs to change in order for the OHS to continue to carry out its important work and fulfil its unique legal responsibilities. Although the provincial government and a number of cabinet ministers have applauded the Society's great work, it seems that, to date, the words have not been followed up with action. Increased funding is needed in order to retain the talented staff the OHS trains to fulfil their ever-expanding responsibilities, and to support adequate human resources to provide responsible succession potential for the future.

These are some of the main challenges on which I will focus during my tenure as President. As someone who has worked closely with not-for-profit organizations for many years, I understand the dynamics of this organization and its unique responsibilities and challenges. In addition,



Photo - Rob Levery

As part of the OHS incorporation process, Executive Director Rob Levery met with the Board of Directors of the Halton Black History Awareness Society (HBHAS) in Burlington. On Friday, July 29, 2016, the OHS Board of Directors voted to incorporate HBHAS as a not-for-profit corporation through affiliation with OHS.

having spent more than eight years at Queen's Park as a parliamentarian, I bring my experience as an MPP and former Minister of Culture to help navigate these challenges on behalf of the OHS.

I look forward to working with our talented group of volunteer board members and with OHS Executive Director Rob Levery and supporting staff. Rob in particular has shown outstanding leadership over the years, having faced numerous challenges and obstacles. Of course, the OHS would not be what it is today without the support and work of so many member organizations, institutions, and individuals all across this great province.

Together we will move forward with a strong commitment to the preservation of Ontario's historical legacies, providing an even stronger foundation to sustain the OHS for future generations.

## ACROSS THE PROVINCE

**Dorothy Duncan**,  
Former OHS Executive Director

It has been a busy summer for the heritage community in Ontario and, as we look to the coming months and the year 2017, there is much for us all to celebrate. Canada 150 in 2017 has museums, historical societies, communities, and many more calling for volunteers and funding. Contact your Regional Consultant with the Ministry if you do not have the details for the Province's 150 Community Partnership Program and get busy!

Congratulations to St. John's York Mills Anglican Church in Willowdale, which is celebrating 200 years since the tiny congregation laid the cornerstone for their first church building on September 17, 1816.

Nancy Mallett, Archivist for St. James Cathedral in Toronto, is preparing a special exhibit about Black Loyalists and Slaves in Toronto beginning in 1793, for 2017. Can you assist Nancy in her search for lists, documents, etc? Email her at: [archives@stjamescathedral.on.ca](mailto:archives@stjamescathedral.on.ca).

Are you a senior (60+ years)? Black Creek Pioneer Village is offering free general admission until September 30! Details: 416.736.1733.

The John R. Park Homestead is hosting a temporary exhibit titled "The Fox Family Farm". The Canadian Club Questers in Windsor was successful in their application for a grant to assist in the restoration of the leaning Homestead Smokehouse. Congratulations!

A series of Family History Courses sponsored by Toronto Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society and Toronto Public Library are planned for this fall. For registrations and fees: [courses@Torontofamilyhistory.org](mailto:courses@Torontofamilyhistory.org).

Mark your calendars! The Annual Meeting and Conference of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology is planned for October 7-9 in Ottawa, with the Lord Elgin Hotel and Ottawa City Hall hosting many sessions. Further information: Joe Last at [joseph.last@sympatico.ca](mailto:joseph.last@sympatico.ca).

Richmond Hill Public Library is continuing the popular Local History and Archaeology in York Region lecture series on October 22, November 19, and December 3. To learn more: Cameron Knight, 905.884.9288, ex. 320.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

What is happening in your community? Here are a few events from your newsletters:

- September 24: Fall Festival at Gibson House Museum, Willowdale, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call 416-395-7432.

- September 25: The World's First Museums, with Tory Tronrud at 7:30 p.m. at the Thunder Bay Museum, 807-623-0801.

- October 2: Harvest and Horses begins at noon and goes until 4:00 p.m. for the Fall Festival at John R. Park Homestead.

- October 22: Wet Felting Workshop, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with instructor Edy Marlatt, also at the John R. Park Homestead. For more details or to register, call 519-738-2029.

- October 25: Early Airfields of Toronto with Dr. Robert Galway, Canadian Aviation Historical Society at the Scarborough Historical Society meeting at Bendale Library, 1515 Danforth Road, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m.



Photo - Daniel Dishaw

Willowdale MP Ali Ehsassi visited OHS headquarters in August to meet with our two summer student employees, Jessica Di Laurenzio (R) and Stephanie Leung (L). The Society was pleased to welcome Mr. Ehsassi and appreciated his personal interest in the success of our students, and their impressive work for the OHS this summer. We look forward to maintaining a strong and meaningful relationship with the Member of Parliament and his staff.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

**Rob Leverty**, Executive Director  
rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

I am pleased to report that on July 29th, the OHS Board of Directors incorporated the Halton Black History Awareness Society (HBHAS). This new historical society is led by an impressive Board of Directors whom I met with in Burlington as part of the incorporation process. The objectives of HBHAS are “to advance education by improving the public’s understanding and awareness of Canadian Black history and culture; to develop self-identity and esteem through education, discovery, celebration and collaboration; to recognize the diverse cultural origins of Canada’s Black history and its contributors; and to establish a Centre of Black History Excellence and Resources celebrating community, roots and culture towards an inclusive society.”

In 2016, the OHS has incorporated six other not-for-profit historical organizations: Friends of Wesleyville Village, Ontario, on March 12; Elgin Historical Society on April 14; Friends of Historic Bovaird House on May 7; and Lakehead Transportation Museum Society, Green Machinery History and Heritage, and Friends of Grain Elevators on June 11. We salute all the dedicated volunteers of these seven new not-for-profit historical organizations who are working hard to preserve and promote our history.

Established in 2008, the OHS Insurance Program remains very popular with the Society’s membership. It provides protection for the volunteer board of directors of OHS member organizations across Ontario. In 2015, the OHS held 27 insurance consultations and witnessed a 16.2% growth in the number of new insurance policies issued to member organizations across Ontario. I am pleased to report that by the end of August this year, the Society has already approved 36 new applications from member organizations.

In July, I was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden death of Ron Raffan. I had the great privilege of working with Ron for many years in his capacity as Treasurer, Brampton Historical Society, and this year during our incorporation of the Friends of the Historic Bovaird House. Ron generously donated countless hours of his formidable skills and time to the history of Brampton. He was a gentle giant and a true champion of local history. I attended Ron’s funeral to express condolences on behalf of the OHS.

Congratulations to long-time OHS member Carolynn Wilson for being honoured as one of 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women at the Book Launch & Gala Event held June 16 in Toronto. Carolynn was recognized for her outstanding contributions to promoting cultural awareness and as an advocate for Black history. Using her retired teacher’s skills, Carolynn has continued to teach community youth and seniors by “Bridging the Gap” and assisting new Canadians with English as a Second Language. Since



Photo - Rob Leverty

OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty recently visited the life-size bronze statue honouring Corporal Francis Pegahmagabow at the Parry Sound waterfront. Pegahmagabow was the deadliest sniper and scout in the First World War, credited with 378 kills and 300 captures. He volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary force in 1914 soon after Britain declared war on Germany, despite a general ban on Indigenous Peoples joining the military. He was a leader in battle, but also in peacetime, serving as chief and councillor of what is now Wasauksing First Nation. Pegahmagabow would eventually become the Supreme Chief of the Native Independence Government, an early forerunner of the Assembly of First Nations.

1998, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Carolynn on many heritage and educational initiatives, including the incorporation of the Old Durham Road Pioneer Cemetery Committee (ODRPCC), Priceville, Grey County. Carolynn is Past President, ODRPCC and co-owner of Sheffield Park Black History and Cultural Museum in Clarksburg, Ontario. She is also a dedicated supporter of the OHS Cemetery Defense Program. OHS proudly salutes the achievements of our dear friend Carolynn Wilson.

I want to thank our three outstanding and talented students who worked so hard on behalf of the OHS this summer. Jessica Di Laurenzio was our Membership & Public Outreach Assistant; Stephanie Leung was our Creative Content & Production Assistant; and Kate McGrath was a Research Assistant for the OHS/OGS Unregistered Cemeteries Committee, documenting burial sites at former Ontario Residential Schools. In September, Jessica starts her MA in Public History at Western University, Stephanie returns for her fourth year of study in Ryerson’s Media Production (BA) program, and Kate will begin her first year at Queen’s University Faculty of Law. Jessica, Stephanie, and Kate – we deeply appreciate your help this summer and send you our very best wishes for your studies.

Finally, I encourage you to take a close look at our 2016 Honours & Awards Brochure. There is undoubtedly an individual, organization, or book you have come across this past year that deserves to be recognized. I wish you an enjoyable autumn.

## NOMINATE EXCELLENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY WITH OHS HONOURS AND AWARDS

THE OHS WILL  
BE ACCEPTING  
NOMINATIONS FOR  
ITS 2016



HONOURS  
AND AWARDS  
PROGRAM UNTIL  
JANUARY 13

Do you know of a volunteer or professional working tirelessly to preserve and promote your local history?

Are you inspired by an excellent program, service, or exhibit offered by a local heritage organization, museum, or other institution?

Have you recently come across a book on Ontario’s history that stands above the rest?

Recognize excellence in your heritage community today. Visit [www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/awards](http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/awards) or call 1.866.955.2755 to learn more.

A nomination brochure has been included with this edition of the *Bulletin*.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since  
March 2016

- Grant Karcich
- Gail Driedger
- Candace Nast
- Hon. Jean Augustine
- Sarah King Head
- Kate McGrath
- National Presbyterian Museum
- Whitby Historical Society
- Petawawa Heritage Society
- Whaler-Provincial Marine Amherstburg
- Town of Caledon
- Green Machinery History & Heritage
- Friends of Grain Elevators
- Halton Black History Awareness Society
- Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society
- Lakehead Transportation Museum Society

### THANK YOU DONORS!

- Bob Saunders
- Molly Saunders
- E.J.B. Anderson
- Carmela Andraos
- Robert & Virginia Atkins
- Hon. Jean Augustine
- Maragaret Barret
- Gyuszi Berki
- Gerald Boyce
- Arthur Bullen
- Pamela Cain
- Paul Carroll
- John Carter
- John Case
- Janet Cobban
- Chandra Copeland
- Ralph Cunningham
- Audrey Fox
- Helen & Aarne Juhola
- Barbara Kane
- Ann Martin
- Catherine McEwan
- Joan Murray
- Cheryl O’Dette
- Allan Sherwin
- M. Helen Small
- Thorold Tronrud
- Frederick Turp
- Ross Wallace



## JACOB LEWIS ENGLEHART: FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE ORDER OF THE NORTH

**George Lefebvre,**  
Secretary, Jack Munroe Historical Society of Elk City

The rain stopped and skies cleared as The Order of the North was presented for the second time on July 9, 2016, at a ceremony in Englehart during their “Day in the Park” celebrations. Jack Munroe Historical Society of Elk City (JMHSEC) president Terry Fiset made the presentation in front of a gathering of residents and visitors numbering in the hundreds. The posthumous recipient was Jacob “Jake” Lewis Englehart for whom the Town was named and who served as the Commissioner of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (T&NO) from 1906 until 1919. Mr. Englehart was nominated for the honour by Fred Deacon of Englehart, who was in attendance at the ceremony held by the historic “Engine 701” in that community.

While the late Mr. Englehart is best recognized as a founder of Imperial Oil and the Chairman of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway Commission, his contributions to the betterment of the North and its people are significant. During his tenure as Chairman of the Commission, the railway attained its greatest stature in the North. He guided it as it sent branch lines into Charlton, Elk Lake, and the Porcupine mining camp. While the T&NO Railway was the transportation ribbon that tied the North together, it is said that it was Jake Englehart who fashioned the bow.

Despite never residing here, he made countless trips to the North, driving the last spike at many of these branch line openings including Elk Lake. Even from a distance, Jake Englehart demonstrated his love and care for the North, which was exemplified by a sign he had posted on the Englehart Station after the Great Porcupine Fire of 1911. It read simply, “NO ONE NEED PASS BY HERE HUNGRY, J. L. Englehart”.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, on November 2, 1847, Mr. Englehart came to Canada in 1866 and settled in London, Ontario, where he became actively involved in the new petroleum industry, eventually setting up business in Petrolia, Ontario. After the death of his wife in 1908, Mr. Englehart moved to Toronto where he resided until his passing in 1921. He was buried in Petrolia beside his beloved wife, Charlotte.

The Order of the North was created by the Jack Munroe Historical Society of Elk City with the endorsement of the Council for the Township of James. In 2009, shortly after their affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society, the society attempted to nominate their namesake, Jack Munroe, for the Order of Canada. They were advised that this honour could not be bestowed posthumously. Undeterred, their research with Canadian Heraldic Authority and other sources revealed that while most other countries bordering the Arctic Ocean had established an Order of the North or equivalent award, Canada had not.

The JMHSEC corrected that when they created the Order of the North. It had initially been posthumously bestowed on the Society’s namesake and the primary reason for its creation, Jack Munroe, during the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry visit to Elk Lake on Labour Day 2014, at a ceremony in which many of Mr Munroe’s relatives were in attendance.

The Society is confident that there are other worthy recipients for this honour and we continue to welcome nominations for the Order of the North. Information for nominations to the Order of the North are available through the society at the Elk Lake Municipal Office, P.O. Box 10, Elk Lake, Northern Ontario, POJ 1G0. Email: [elklake@ntl.sympatico.ca](mailto:elklake@ntl.sympatico.ca) or [shasonje@ontera.net](mailto:shasonje@ontera.net). The Society’s secretary, George Lefebvre, can be reached at 705-648-8298.



Fred and Annette Deacon (nominators of Jacob Englehart) accept the award from Englehart Mayor Nina Wallace (second from the right) and JMHSEC Secretary George Lefebvre (far right) holding a sketch of Mr Englehart.

## POINT ABINO LIGHTHOUSE

**Rick Doan,**  
President, Point Abino Lighthouse Preservation Society of Fort Erie

Point Abino Lighthouse sits on the rocky shores of Point Abino on Lake Erie. It is located on the south-western border of Fort Erie. In the late 1800s and early 1900s many ships came up Lake Erie to Buffalo, New York. Many of these ships were loaded with grain from the western United States and would unload in Buffalo at the large grain silos there. The ships also brought steel to the large steel factories in Lackawanna, New York.



Photo - Rick Doan

The Point Abino Lighthouse Preservation Society of Fort Erie was incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society in September 2005. They work tirelessly to protect and preserve one of Ontario’s architectural gems.

The rocky shoals of Point Abino extend for two to three miles underwater, which made this stretch of Lake Erie a potential hazard. Acetylene gas buoys were stationed off the Point to warn the sailors. As traffic on the lake increased, the US Coastguard was forced to station a lightship about halfway from Point Abino to Sturgeon Point (a distance of approximately

4.5 miles). This floating lighthouse directed ships south of the station to prevent shipwrecks on the shoals. The crews aboard these Lightships were responsible for maintaining their position at all times.

In November of 1913, a massive storm often referred to as the “White Hurricane” hit the Great Lakes. Lake Erie saw waves 30 feet high and 70 mph winds. Light Vessel 82, carrying a crew of six sailors, was pulled beneath the surface. The Canadian Government decided to take action and, in an effort to replace the lightships, began planning the construction of a lighthouse. The Point Abino Lighthouse was completed in 1917 and has been described as the Taj Mahal of the Great Lakes. The Lighthouse was fitted with a diaphone foghorn and a fresnel lens. The Lighthouse operated without electricity until 1942, relying on natural gas and kerosene. Point Abino’s fresnel lens has over 300 pieces of glass and was lit with pressurized kerosene. The keeper had to climb to the top of the tower every six hours to wind the clock mechanism that kept the lantern spinning.

When electricity reached the lighthouse in 1942, the tower was fitted with a 2,500 watt light bulb and an electric motor. A much brighter mercury vapor bulb was installed in the 1970s. The light could be seen 20 miles from Point Albino. The diaphone foghorn was powered by large tanks of compressed air. In the late 1970s the machinery for the diaphone foghorn was removed and replaced with an electronic, omni-directional foghorn.

With the inception of affordable GPS, the lighthouse became obsolete and was closed in the 1990s. The Town of Fort Erie purchased the lighthouse and restored the exterior in 2012. The city runs tours for visitors and local residents during the summer months.

This coming year is our 100th anniversary and we are celebrating by issuing this 100th anniversary token (pictured at right) for \$5.00 each. The proceeds will go towards the interior restoration of Point Albino Lighthouse. For more information about our tour schedule or to purchase a token, please visit our Facebook page “Point Albino Lighthouse” or contact Rick Doan at [rdoan5@cogeco.ca](mailto:rdoan5@cogeco.ca). These commemorative tokens can be shipped across Canada and the United States.





# MUSEUM MILESTONES

**Dr. John Carter,**  
drjohncarter@bell.net

In the late 1970s, the Hiram Walker Historical Museum (now Windsor’s Community Museum) was well known for its (then) state-of-the-art collection storage. However, the confines of a historic house severely limited space for administration, public programming, and alternating exhibits and displays. Curator R. Alan Douglas began his quest to expand. A number of studies were undertaken to determine options, but no substantive progress was realized for either upgrades or site relocation to ameliorate these challenges. In this column’s lead article, current curator Madelyn Della Valle picks up the story and explains the positive outcome of a process that started many years ago.

## WINDSOR’S CHIMCZUK MUSEUM A POPULAR NEW DESTINATION

**Madelyn Della Valle,**  
Curator, Museum Windsor

On February 18th, 2016, the Chimczuk Museum opened its doors to the public. Located on the ground floor of 401 Riverside Drive W. (which houses the Art Gallery of Windsor on the 2nd and 3rd floors), the Chimczuk Museum is the brand new site of Museum Windsor.

For this \$5.7-million project, close to \$2 million came from the Federal Government’s Canada Cultural Spaces fund, over \$3 million from a generous bequest from Joseph Chimczuk, and the remainder from the City of Windsor’s capital budgets. This project was realised with the assistance of the following partner companies: Hariri Pontarini Architects, Lord Cultural Resources, Oscar Construction, and Holman Exhibits.



The Chimczuk Museum’s “The River and Land Sustain Us” exhibit contains a variety of permanent installations. In the “Before People” section, visitors can explore how the Windsor area has changed over millions of years.

The Chimczuk Museum site offers 11,000 square feet of space. Just beyond the welcome desk, a large-scale image of the Detroit River winds its way along the floor of the imposing and spacious concourse, which also features a reproduction of a horse-powered ferry that visitors can climb on for a great photo op. Across from the ferry is the Windsor A-Z wall, which features an iconic artifact or image for each letter of the alphabet.

The new permanent exhibition entitled “The River and the Land Sustain Us” is an engaging and interactive trip through the highlights of Windsor’s history, beginning with a geologic time exhibit. Did you know that 400 million years ago, this whole area was covered in a warm tropical sea? In fact, the salt in the Windsor salt mines comes from this period. Interactive activities punctuate the exhibits. “Be an Archaeologist” invites visitors to reassemble clay pots. In the “Underground Railroad Corridor”, visitors find their way north to freedom by locating the Big Dipper shining up in the night sky.

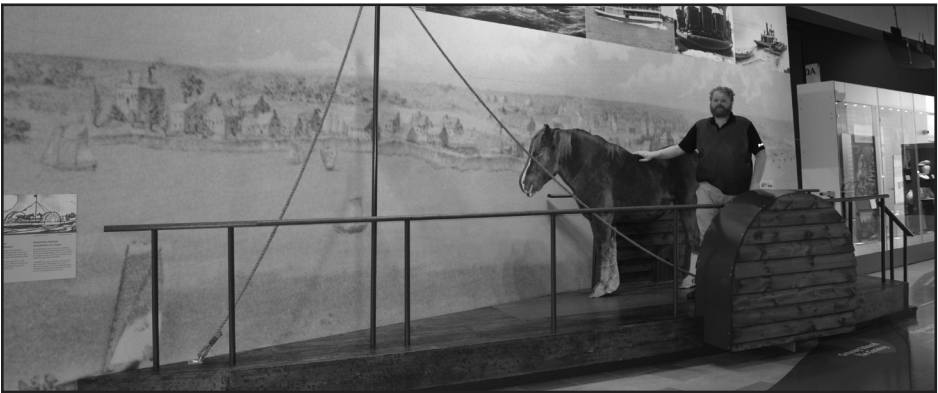
The museum has also added the Original Peoples Culture and Legacy Gallery. This gallery tells the ongoing story of the First Nations people in the region. Created in consultation with Aboriginal partners, the topics covered include treaties, residential schools, cultural expressions, language, 60s scoop, Canadian “Indian policy”, smudging, the medicine wheel, and First Nations community organizations.

The “Hands On History” exhibit is a dedicated interactive gallery where children can cross a reproduction Ambassador Bridge, sail ships down a

Congratulations to the Assiginack Museum at Manitowaning on Manitoulin Island. The site celebrated its 60th anniversary earlier this summer. At a well-attended ceremony on the museum’s grounds, this significant event was celebrated. Congratulations also go to Elise Harding Davis, former long-time curator of the North American Black History Museum in Amherstburg. Elise was recently presented with the Carnochan Award at the OHS Annual General Meeting and Honours & Awards Ceremony.

Sad to report that Lindsay Hill, former curator and honorary director at the Port Carling Pioneer Museum (now the Muskoka Lakes Museum), has passed away. Lindsay will be remembered for her long service and dedication to this site. The Ontario museum community also mourns the loss of Marguerite Caldwell. When Norman and Ina Hagedorn donated a building and its collection to the Town of Paisley, Marguerite and Judy MacKinnon began their long-time volunteering at the Treasure Chest Museum. Their selfless efforts continued when Paisley was amalgamated into the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie. Condolences to both the Hill and Caldwell families.

magnetic Detroit River, build a wooden car on a miniature assembly line, dress up in period costumes and take photos behind a full-size photo frame, play a whole range of musical instruments, and enjoy a variety of crafts in the maker’s space.

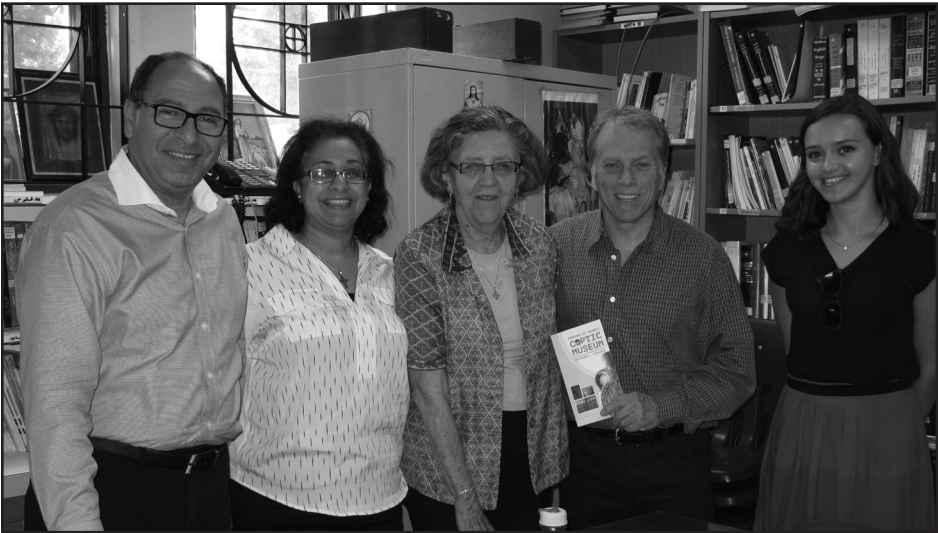


Chimczuk Museum’s Matthew Pritchard stands aboard the reproduction of a horse-powered ferry that offers guests a chance to take some great photos.

The Chimczuk Museum also features two temporary programming spaces and a number of smaller temporary display spaces. Currently on display are “Folk Art of George June of Cottam” and “The World of Japanese Children: Traditional Aspects from 1850 to the Present”.

But what about the François Baby House? This location now features several new exhibitions, including “Windsor’s French Roots”, “Windsor and the War of 1812”, “Windsor and the Upper Canadian Rebellion”, and a small exhibit on the history of the François Baby House. These exhibits closely relate to the actual history of the François Baby House. In late September, an open storage exhibition entitled “The Vault Exposed” will open. The Baby House also houses the reference library and the artifact storage vault.

Museum Windsor invites everyone to come and explore the incredible history in the Windsor area. For more information or to plan a site visit, check out our website at [www.museumwindsor.ca](http://www.museumwindsor.ca).



On July 12th 2016, the OHS held an exploratory incorporation meeting at St. Mark’s Coptic Museum, Scarborough. Seen here (left to right) are Labib Mousa, member at large for future museum space and building maintenance; Hanaa Mekhael, member at large for links to St. Mark’s Coptic Church related groups; Helene Moussa, Volunteer Curator, St. Mark’s Coptic Museum; Rob Leverty, OHS Executive Director; and Jessica Di Laurenzio, OHS Membership & Public Outreach Assistant and 2016 summer student.

Photo - Madelyn Della Valle

Photo - Madelyn Della Valle



# BARRY PENHALE’S ONTARIO

## DAVE AND HIS PICTURES: REMEMBERING PARRY SOUND’S DAVE THOMAS

Barry Penhale,  
barry@naturalheritagebooks.com

It was during the 80s at the time of my involvement with the syndicated television series *Sketches of Our Town* that I first met Dave Thomas. It happened as we were getting underway with research and filming for a program focusing on the unique history of Parry Sound with its spectacular

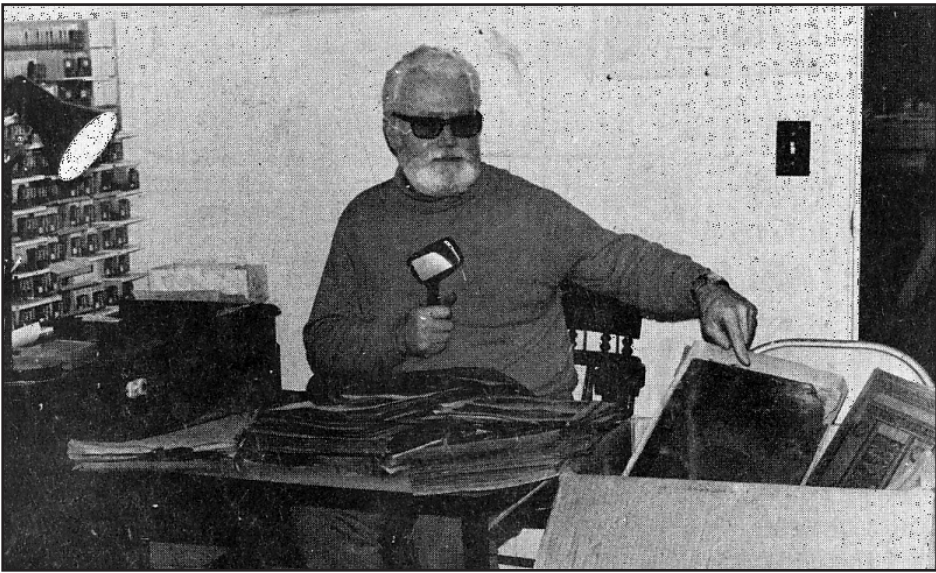


Photo courtesy of Rick Thomas

Known as “The Man and His Pictures”, Dave Thomas (1919–2014) left behind a remarkable legacy. In 1979, he was named Parry Sound’s Citizen of the Year and in November 2013 received the Governor General’s Caring Award for selfless contribution to community.

setting on Georgian Bay. The series, though modestly budgeted, gave prominence to many of Ontario’s smaller cities and towns. We were a small hard-working team and the series director, Conrad Beaubien, possessed a passion for Ontario’s heritage that matched my own. As I was to wear three hats – researcher, host, and narrator – the *Sketches* experience added immensely to my appreciation of the stories and people associated with the varied small-town settings of Ontario. In the category of personalities, few could top Parry Sound’s Dave Thomas – a truly delightful individual whose contribution to his community cannot be overemphasized!

Before singling out Dave’s own story, I feel its important to share with readers the Thomas family history he so greatly treasured. His father Benjamin Byron Thomas was born in Birmingham in 1890. As fate would have it, young Ben’s life was altered dramatically at the age of eight when his father died; leaving a widow unable to financially care for their son. Placed in an orphanage for two years, he was labelled a “Bernardo Boy” by the time he and nineteen others were put on a ship destined for Canada. Upon arriving in Ontario, Benjamin Thomas began work as a chore boy at a Lake Joseph tourist establishment. This proved to be a dreadful situation,

consisting mainly of overwork and meals made up of table scraps. After five such years, Ben left on foot and found work at a sawmill where he proved to be a quick learner when it came to firing boilers. Thomas, anxious to yet improve his situation, shifted to lumber mills north of Parry Sound. It was while working for Ernest Crockford that he became smitten with his employer’s daughter, Mercie May, and marriage followed shortly thereafter.

Dave Thomas, christened David Lloyd George Thomas, was born in his beloved Parry Sound on July 29, 1919. It isn’t surprising that, with pioneering parents, Dave himself was a resilient, resourceful individual – one who greatly valued the pioneering contributions of not only his own parents but also of all others of their generation. Their early hardships and perseverance inspired him as he travelled his own path and blazed his own unique trails. When I met Dave Thomas, he was introduced to me as “the man with the pictures”, as he was widely and fondly known. How this came to be is an interesting story.

It all began when Dave’s wife Lenore Cook gave her hubby a second-hand Kodak camera back in 1962. This marked the start of a collection of colour slides, initially consisting of flowers. Accepting an invitation to show his slides at the Belvedere Heights Seniors Home, Dave Thomas was taken aback at the sight and sound of at least one person sound asleep. Before the presentation ended, Dave inserted images of vintage postcards. Immediately, he had the attention of the entire audience. The seniors (without urging) began sharing their stories, adding greatly to the images on the screen. Not only had the viewers become animated, but local history had come alive. From that day on, Dave began collecting and copying historic photos of Parry Sound and its environs. He insisted on returning the originals to their owners and, by conducting himself responsibly in this manner, the floodgates opened. Between copying and doing presentations, a full-time hobby was born. As Thomas himself stated, “My research has taken me into the attics, trunks, old photo albums, living rooms, and hearts of the descendants of our pioneers.”

Dave Thomas, who passed away in 2014, gave more than just pleasure to his audiences – he gave “history” back to his part of Ontario – no small achievement. My files contain copies of typical letters of appreciation received over many years. The man really got around – he truly took his show on the road. Not only Parry Sound but also Midland, Sudbury, and Toronto were treated to the magic of Dave and his pictures. A mound of letters of thanks not only involved the general public but also came from Laurentian University, service clubs, provincial ministries, and the Parry Island Native Friendship Centre, to name but a few.

It has been said many times that if you want to get something done, ask a busy person. Dave Thomas was one very busy fellow, but found time among other responsibilities to serve as chair of The Classic Antique Wooden Boat Show. In a short note he must have dashed off in record time, he said, “Barry, I am playing in two bands, answering the phone every day & being asked to dig out pictures for someone or business who want to set up a display. I’m on the Waterfront Committee, talking & showing history at schools – interviews etc. I love it! .. Dave.” As another journalist, Frank Jones, previously noted in the *Toronto Star*, Dave Thomas’s special gift has been through photographs that in some cases date back 100 years – a window into Ontario’s past unlike any other.

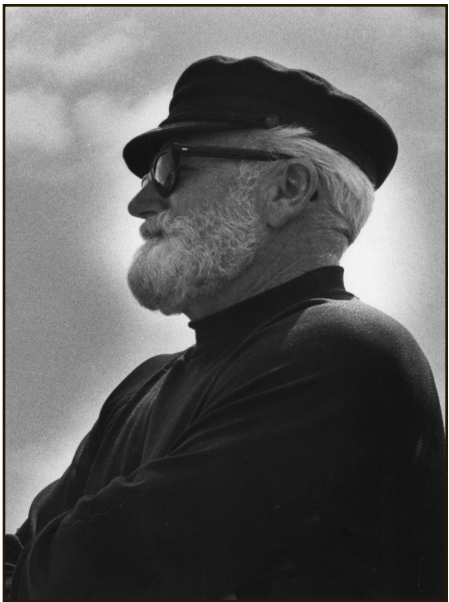


Photo courtesy of Rick Thomas

Dave Thomas was known to many as a savvy sailor.

### ‘AAO’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

identify gaps in the province’s holdings and to build a collaborative archival network that reflects Ontario’s regions and peoples in all their diversity.

In addition to the strategy document, the Working Group developed a number of tools to assist archival institutions with the implementation of the Strategy. All the tools are available on the AAO Institutional Development Committee’s section of the AAO website. The tools are as follows:

- Guidelines for Developing an Acquisitions Policy
- Donor Questionnaire (or “So You Want to Donate Your Records to an Archives?”)
- A note on the role of the Institutional Development Committee in relation to the Provincial Acquisition Strategy
- A proposed Ontario Archival Accessions Register (OAAR)
- FAQ documents to help answer anticipated questions about both the Strategy and the Ontario Archival Accessions Register
- An interactive map of archival institutions in Ontario (with links to the institutions’ profiles in Archeion)

The Use of the Strategy is open to all memory institutions with archival holdings. To participate, institutions may create an institutional profile in

Archeion even if they are not members of the AAO. An institutional profile in Archeion increases an institution’s visibility and allows for inclusion on the interactive map. Questions regarding the Strategy or its implementation can be directed to the Working Group via the Institutional Development Committee chair’s email address: [fdc@aoa-archivists.ca](mailto:fdc@aoa-archivists.ca).



“Delivering the Past”

[rjburns@travel-net.com](mailto:rjburns@travel-net.com)  
[www.deliveringthepast.ca](http://www.deliveringthepast.ca)

### Robert J. Burns, Ph.D.

Heritage Resources Consultant

- Historical Research Analysis
- Heritage Impact Statements
- Corporate and Advertising History
- Heritage Product Marketing Research

“The Baptist Parsonage” (est. 1855)  
46249 Sparta Line, P.O. Box 84  
Sparta, Ontario N0L 2H0  
Tel/Fax: 519-775-2613



## CEMETERY NEWS

**Marjorie Stuart,**  
cemeteries@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

A survivors' memorial procession took place in May at the Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia. Remember Every Name is a group representing those buried in the cemetery and former residents.

Concern has been raised for the fate of Union Cemetery in Canton, Northumberland County. Efforts to preserve the church and its buildings have failed. The cemetery was established in 1811. Sgt. Edward Edwin Dodd, a Hope Township resident and volunteer with the New York Calvary Union Army (who received the Congressional Medal of Honor), and Charles Currelly, founder of the Royal Ontario Museum, are among those buried in this historic cemetery.

The City of Markham and the Markham Cemeteries Advisory Group unveiled two plaques recognizing War of 1812 veterans buried in Buttonville Cemetery. Captain John Button was the founder of Buttonville. He raised the 1st York Light Dragoons, who took part in the War of 1812. They continued to train and serve after the War. Francis Button, John Button's son, served under his father. He later was involved in municipal politics. Land for a Methodist chapel and cemetery was donated by John Button.

In recent months, we have had several inquiries related to small cemeteries or burial grounds. In one case, the query was a recently discovered family burial ground in Russell County. It was determined that the family had settled on the property c.1801. Later generations were buried in local cemeteries.

### 'ORO AFRICAN CHURCH' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

gradually fell into a state of disrepair. The last remaining resident of this Oro Black community was James Dixon Thompson, a sheepshearer and farm laborer by trade. He died in 1949 and is buried in the Oro African Church Cemetery.

In the early 1940s, concerned Oro citizens exerted pressure on the Municipality to take responsibility for the church and volunteered countless hours of their time to assist with the restoration. In 1981, racist vandals rammed the church with two stolen dump trucks, resulting in serious structural damage. Once again, a restoration took place with the assistance of the County of Simcoe. However, this restoration initiative took more of a cosmetic approach and did not effectively address the underlying structural damage. The adjacent roads had been raised and widened, causing increased water runoff through the spring months. Water began to accumulate underneath the church, causing the building and its foundation to rapidly deteriorate. By 2013, the church was in serious danger of collapsing.

The Municipality understood the gravity of the situation and retained the services of qualified professionals to complete an in-depth inspection of the structure and report their findings back to council and stakeholders. In the spring of 2014, an application was submitted to Parks Canada to dismantle the church and relocate the building to a safer plot. This application was denied on the grounds that moving the structure did not comply with *Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. This bump in the road precipitated yet another round of discussions throughout 2014. Then, at the beginning of Black History Month in 2015, the Municipality introduced a major public-relations campaign with the expressed goal of raising \$140,000 to restore the church. Simultaneously, another application based on the decision to preserve the church in situ was made to Parks Canada. The Municipality also partnered with the Vaughan African Canadian Association to submit an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Thanks to all of these wonderful and impressive efforts, the structure was temporarily moved off its imprint and the preservation process began. Less than one year later, the Grand Reopening Celebration was held on August 19, 2016.

Descendants and dignitaries from across the province (and some travelling from abroad) attended to celebrate this momentous and inspiring occasion. The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Elizabeth Dowdeswell was in attendance, as were several representatives from local municipal councils, Members of Provincial Parliament, and Members of Parliament. The Ontario Historical Society and the Ontario Black History Society also sent several representatives to celebrate the reopening. With dozens of descendants from the original Black Oro community in attendance, it was truly inspiring to see such a large and diverse group unite to celebrate their history and the importance of Afro-Canadian heritage in Ontario.

The long-anticipated Grand Reopening Celebration would not have taken place without the vision of H.W. Mayor Harry Hughes, the Council of Oro-Medonte Township, the amazing team of specialized professionals and tradespeople involved, the numerous community groups and organizations, and the overwhelming support of the public. Special gratitude is extended to

A small and dedicated group has worked to preserve the Carscallen-Hinch Farm Burial Ground in Camden East Township, now Stone Mills Township, Lennox and Addington County. They raised the funds to have a large boulder moved to the site. A plaque has been ordered and a fence made of metal posts and chains has been installed. An extensive search of the property deeds revealed that John Carscallen, a Loyalist, was the first owner. In 1897, a grandson of John Carscallen purchased the 75' x 80' cemetery plot from the Hinch family.



OHS Executive Director Rob Levery and OHS Executive Assistant Heather Anderson (right) met with Kate McGrath (mid-left) who worked as a Research Assistant for the OHS/OGS Unregistered Cemeteries Committee, documenting burial sites at former Ontario Residential Schools. They were joined by the Co-Chairs of the OHS/OGS Unregistered Cemeteries Committee, Diane Clendennan (centre) and Marjorie Stewart (mid-right).

Mr. Shawn Binns, Oro-Medonte's Director of Recreation and Community Services. The project would not have reached fruition without Shawn's dedicated service and professional capabilities. He is truly an unsung hero!

**About the Author:** Historian and direct descendant, Janie Cooper-Wilson was appointed as a member of the Oro African Church Steering & Planning Committee (2013–2016) and was considered the “Face of the Public Relations Initiative.” Janie also acted as the liaison between the descendants of the Oro African Settlement and the African Canadian community at large.

**THINK YOU KNOW THESE HISTORIC HOT SPOTS?**

TWO BOOKS WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES ON OUR SHARED PAST

**INSIDE HAMILTON'S MUSEUMS**  
BY JOHN GODDARD

“Will quickly persuade readers to embark on their own historical pilgrimage of this culturally rich city.”  
— *Spacing Magazine*, for *Inside the Museums*

Exploring Hamilton through its heritage museums.

\$19.99

**TORONTO'S LOCAL MOVIE THEATRES OF YESTERYEAR**  
BY DOUG TAYLOR

Grab a seat one more time in the back row of the movie theatres of your youth.

\$21.99

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR FAVOURITE BOOKSELLER

dundurnpress
 @dundurnpress
 dundurn.com

**DUNDURN**



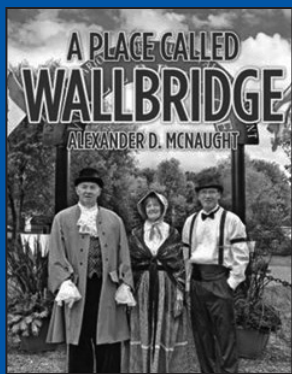
## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Dr. Cynthia Comacchio,  
ccomac5702@rogers.com

I hope that all our OHS members and friends have had a happy, healthy summer. Certainly, no one can complain that we didn't have seasonal weather, though I have heard many complaints about the 30+ degree temperatures and the attendant humidity. Most of them were my own. I doubt that we were affected as much as were the Ontarians who endured the so-called "scorching summer of 1936", which saw temperatures of up to 40 degrees [that's without the as-yet-unheard-of humidex factor!] for nearly two weeks, in a time when air conditioners were truly scarce, and even fans were a luxury. That's suffering! Although the heat wave seems to have lasted for months, where I sit [in Guelph, in mid-August], it seems to have broken. Dare I say it, there's even a hint of autumn in the air. I trust it will get steamy again before it gets cold, but, in the meantime, best wishes for the new season dawning as summer ends! Here are some fine books to finish up, or start off, with.

### LOCAL HISTORY: PIECING TOGETHER THE BIG PICTURE - PART 1 -

For this issue, I am concentrating on local histories, recently published and received. As a practicing social historian, I appreciate local histories because the painstaking research they contain often provides the small, but significant – and otherwise difficult to find – details of a bigger picture. Those details really matter when you are looking at society and culture in the past. Moreover, because they are produced by historians who are also members of the communities they write about, their passion and enthusiasm come through very clearly.



### *A Place Called Wallbridge*

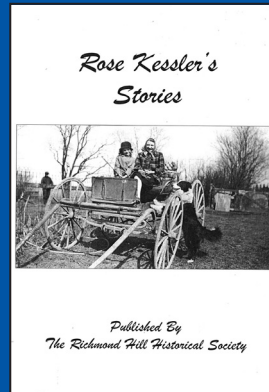
ALEXANDER D. McNAUGHT

Belleville: Epic Press, 2016  
Paperback; 224 pp. \$39.95  
[www.essencebookstore.com](http://www.essencebookstore.com)

Alexander McNaught has deep roots in the rural hamlet of Wallbridge in eastern Ontario, where he grew up on a farm. This well-written and well-illustrated book is the result of some twelve years' devotion to research and writing. As he explains in his preface, what kept him on task, besides his own love of history and obvious pride in his hometown, was the encouragement he received from the town's "oldtimers". I'm sure the "oldtimers" of Wallbridge, and even the youngsters, are very pleased with the result of his efforts. One of the benefits of being a local historian is the generosity and enthusiasm with which fellow residents contribute by granting access to original, and otherwise challenging to find, documents, photographs, and even artifacts. Their involvement appropriately makes the writing of the town's history a community effort. In this case, the author – to his own surprise, as he admits – gained access to invaluable private collections that he could not have recovered on his own. Many of these collections were stored in attics, trunks, "forgotten" boxes, family photo albums, and the files of defunct local businesses. In addition to these rich resources, which illustrate the details of everyday life in Wallbridge's past, McNaught consulted the original minutes of the local school board and the Sidney Township council meetings – remarkably spanning from 1790 to 1998 for the latter. The community story that he presents is chronologically organized in brief chapters that bring to light significant local issues, events, and people that helped to shape Wallbridge. This approach allows readers to trace the changes and continuities throughout the community's history, as well as the impact on this small rural community of larger historic events, such as wars, starting with 1812 and including the world wars of the twentieth century.

It would be impossible to list the subjects that McNaught touches on in this short review. He takes as his starting point the emergence, about 12,000 years ago, of drumlins, the geological name given to the small hills created by glaciers that eventually evolved into the Bay of Quinte lowlands where Wallbridge is situated. He progresses through the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists, who claimed the land of the Mississaugas in and around Wallbridge. Eventually, the colonists held Ontario's first town hall meetings there, and Sidney Township was

among the original municipalities to be incorporated under the Baldwin Act (1849), which replaced the district as a unit of government with the county system. The townspeople can boast that Wallbridge established the first municipal government in the province of Ontario. Wallbridge became the geographic centre, as well as the political, commercial, and cultural heart, of Sidney Township, a position that it held, although with diminishing importance, until the late twentieth century. In 200 pages, interspersed with photographs, drawings, maps, reproductions of official records, and other fascinating visual material – plus a number of appendices – McNaught has easily fulfilled the oldtimers' wishes in a manner that will appeal to all Ontario history supporters, not just those residing in the rural hamlet that is now officially part of the City of Quinte West, but that is, Alexander McNaught would argue, still very much Wallbridge.



### *Rose Kessler's Stories*

ROSE KESSLER

Edited & published by Richmond Hill  
Historical Society; printed by Stewart  
Publishing and Printing, 2014.

Paperback; 120 pp. Andrea Kulesh,  
905-884-2789

Rose Kessler was a beloved columnist, writing her "little stories" for the Heritage on the Hill newsletter produced by the Richmond Hill Historical Society. Born into a farm family in the Bowmanville area during the Great Depression, she began writing for publication while in high school in the early 1950s. One of her stories recollects her birth in the midst of what seems to have been, at least in collective memory, the blizzard of the century. This compilation of select columns, drawn from her many newsletter submissions and other local publications such as *Kindred Spirit*, was put together by the Society because many of its members indicated how they had enjoyed Rose's columns, and often read them before all other content. It is easy to understand their appeal. In her own words, in her own straightforward tone, the stories presented here reflect Rose's rural Ontario upbringing through her strong opinions about diverse subjects, local and otherwise. Rose's voice is one of personal conviction about the importance of rural Ontario culture, and the values of hard work, cooperation, and acceptance of hardship. These values represented her community and her readers in the second half of the twentieth century. Her writings are testimony to everyday rural life in "those times". As such, they are interesting not only for her perspectives on the subjects she chose to write about, but also for what they reveal about the often "hidden from history" private lives that help us paint a clearer picture of Ontario's past.

*Post-script: A gentle reminder to authors and publishers that this reviewer's mandate is limited to works about, or substantially related to, the history of Ontario, including biographies, memoirs, anthologies, compilations of photographs or documents, and any manner of other publications – as long as they concern **Ontario**.*

The *OHS Bulletin* is the newsletter of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS).

December issue copy deadline:  
**Friday, November 18, 2016.**

Reproduction of any content must be acknowledged as such:  
"Reprinted from the *OHS Bulletin*, (issue & date) published by the OHS." All photo credits and bylines must be retained.

Views expressed by contributors and advertisers are not necessarily those of the OHS. The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Types of membership in the Society are: Individual \$40, Institution/Organization \$45, Life \$500.

Membership is open to all individuals and societies interested in the history of Ontario. The *OHS Bulletin* is sent free of charge to all members of the OHS. The OHS's biannual scholarly journal, *Ontario History*, is available to members for an additional \$21 per year; member organizations,

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](mailto:members@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca).

Inquiries about submissions and advertising: Daniel Dishaw, Editor, *OHS Bulletin*, 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2 416.226.9011 [ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca) [www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca)

#### **The Ontario Historical Society Current Board of Directors:**

**Executive:**  
Caroline Di Cocco, President;  
Pam Cain, First Vice President;  
Michel Beaulieu, Second Vice President;  
Joe Stafford, Past President;  
Bob Leech, Treasurer;  
Allan Macdonell, Secretary;  
**Directors:** David dos Reis, Janie Cooper-Wilson, Ross Fair, Kristin Ives, Carolyn King, Ian Radforth.

OHS Executive Director: Rob Leverty  
*Ontario History* Editor: Tory Tronrud