

ANNUAL REPORT
of
The Ontario Historical Society
1993



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President's Report

This report gives the President an opportunity to speak to the Society about the role of the OHS and the challenges facing heritage movements and historical societies, as well as to provide a reckoning of the Society's successes and frustrations during one's tenure in office. To say that it has been an immense privilege to have served the OHS as President would be an understatement. The OHS is a remarkable organization with a dedicated and gifted staff, led by an Executive Director who gives her time and her considerable talents unstintingly to the service of our Society and its members. To acknowledge their work and to thank them on behalf of all of the members of the OHS seems somehow inadequate. Not to be forgotten is the extraordinary work of our Treasurer, James M. Clemens, who has guided the finances of this Society for more years than I would care to recall; and Jean Burnet, the editor of *Ontario History*, whose stewardship of the Society's quarterly journal has won our praise and gratitude. Through the efforts of Dr. Burnet and the members of our Board of Directors, especially Everette Moore and Mary Lou Fox, the OHS has benefitted greatly from cooperative ventures with the Ontario Black History Society and Ontario's First Nations in ways that are both timely and appropriate.

As I write this report, plaster dust fills the air and workmen are swarming through the John McKenzie House at 34 Parkview Avenue, under the watchful eye of OHS staffer Rob Leverty, restoring and refurbishing this splendid historic landmark as the "New Home" of The Ontario Historical Society. After decades of uncertainty and years of making-do with whatever temporary quarters could be found, this Society has entered into a long-term lease with the City of North York to provide the OHS with an historic site from which to serve the province and our members. The acquisition of 34 Parkview was undoubtedly the highlight of the Society's achievements this year. It was the culmination of many years of planning, countless hours of negotiations, timely interventions on our behalf by more than a few individuals, support from members of the Society throughout the province who believe in the relevance and importance of the OHS, the untold, but not forgotten kindness and dedication of support staff of the OHS and our volunteers, as well as assistance from both the municipal and the provincial governments. As I look back over past OHS meetings, the cramped office space, freezing in the winter (we actually sat through Directors' meetings wrapped in our winter coats), sweltering in the summer, surrounded by archival boxes and groaning filing cabinets, the move to the McKenzie House at 34 Parkview seems unreal. It is not, though, and all members of the OHS are warmly invited to visit us there.

Your support is as necessary now as it has been in the past. The challenges to our history and our heritage are many and varied and unexpected. It has been an honour and a privilege to have served as President during 1993 and 1994.

Kenneth McLaughlin
President

Executive Director's Report

I have always found it a difficult task to write a report that covers a year's activities at The Ontario Historical Society because of the diversity of projects and programmes that we undertake over any 12-month period. The year that has just passed, 1993, marks the 105th year since our organization's birth, and, in my mind, at least, it has been the most rewarding in the Society's history. In retrospect, I believe this for two major reasons. The first is the work of the New Home Task Force, a combination of members, neighbours and staff, who continued to come up with innovative and challenging ways to raise money for the restoration and re-use of the John McKenzie House as our new headquarters. Support from our membership, from the many communities (geographical, cultural and interest groups) that we represent and support, and from jobsOntario assured us of meeting our financial goal for the first two phases of the project. The various fundraising initiatives were planned and, for the most part, implemented from our 1993 office at 5151 Yonge Street in Willowdale. By the time you read this report, we will be bringing those endeavours to a conclusion at our new home at 34 Parkview Avenue in Willowdale.

The dollars raised were contributed right back to the community through employment for a great many dedicated professionals and craftsmen, including Eire Masonry, Wooden Expressions, Traditional Styles, Service Iron Works Ltd., Cartwright Plumbing and Heating, hy-Tech Air Systems, Paynel Electrical Contractors Limited and Ian K. Woods and Partners Inc. Every workman on the site quickly learned to answer the telephone with the words "The Ontario Historical Society", and many of them have become supporters and donors to the cause.

Work with our local historical societies took on new vigour in 1993 as several new affiliated societies were accepted by the OHS including the Thunder Bay Finnish Historical Society, Lakefield Historical Society, the Central Manitoulin Island Historical Society, Mactier Railroad Heritage Society, Lundy's Lane Historical Society, Friends of the Brockville Museum, Wikwemikong Historical Society and the Historical Lighting Society of Canada. Many communities are forming new societies such as Marathon, Schreiber, Princeton, Newboro and Belfountain.

The series of community meetings held in northern and southern Ontario, with some support funding from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, brought organizations and institutions together to learn about ministry programmes, new regulations from the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations affecting corporations, and for general discussions, assistance and advice. The year placed a great deal of pressure on our staff as we tried to meet all the new demands, while keeping our regular programmes running smoothly. To each and every one of them - Barbara K. and Barbara T., Cathy, Lorraine, Meribeth and Rob, as well as Dr. Jean Burnet, editor of *Ontario History*, a great big thank you for bringing new meaning to the expression "grace under pressure".

Dorothy Duncan
Executive Director

COMMITTEE AND PROGRAMME REPORTS

Communications

The Communications Department had a very busy year in 1993, producing publicity materials and publications to meet the ever-increasing demand from the heritage community for OHS programmes and resources. Prior to the move to our new home at 34 Parkview Avenue, the Society presented many special activities and fundraising events to raise the necessary capital for the project. Media attention was captured for two of the projects in particular - Preserve the Pudding! and the Young Ontario Programme Christmas Card contest. Puddings were highlighted on the CFTO television morning programme, "Eye on Toronto" and in several Toronto newspapers, while the Christmas Card contest winners from throughout the province were featured in their local newspapers, including the *Hamilton Spectator* and the *Barrie Advance*. Coverage by local Willowdale newspapers of our fundraising events and of the new home has increased as well. In addition to the local media, the Society's anticipated move to the John McKenzie House has been highlighted in several heritage organizations' newsletters, including Heritage Canada's *Impact*. *Century Home* and *ReNew*, two popular magazines with subscribers across the country, have also featured the new home.

We have been busy refining the look of our publicity materials, and the use of a new computer system will assist in generating more professional-looking flyers, brochures and publications with greater speed and ease to better serve our membership.

Fundraising

Towards the end of 1993, the Fundraising Committee purchased cotton bags with the OHS logo, to sell for the first time at the 1994 Annual Conference in Hamilton. Following the success of the Peterborough Conference in 1993 in attracting donors, businesses in the Hamilton area were approached for gifts in kind or cash to support this conference. These contributors are acknowledged in the conference kit.

Historic Structures Advisory Service

This programme assists municipalities in preserving and protecting designated properties. A one day site visit is made by an appropriate consultant to provide advice on specific questions relating to the conservation or alteration of a designated property. The service is available at no charge to the municipality. The OHS administers this programme, in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation. The services carried out in 1993 include Armoury Hall, Elora; the Sault Ste. Marie Museum and Ermatinger Old Stone House, Sault Ste. Marie; former St. Andrews Parish Hall, Township of Cornwall; Franzel-Kuebert Log House and Old Wellesley

School, Township of Wellesley; Nor'Westers Museum, Township of Charlottenburg; Allen Macpherson House, Napanee; and the Kramer Property, Millbrook.

History to Go

History to Go is an outreach programme that The Ontario Historical Society takes out to groups with special needs. Seniors clubs, nursing home residents, hospital patients, the physically disabled or others who face special challenges in accessing OHS services, are reached through History to Go. The goals of the programme are to stimulate interest in Ontario's heritage, to make heritage more accessible to those with special needs and to serve the community. Client groups served in 1993 included Buchanan Social Club (seniors), Canadiana Group (Mississauga University Women's Club), Victoria County Craft Guild, Sheldrake Second Mile Club, Highgate Retirement Home and the Stroke Club (Central Neighbourhood House). These groups enjoyed a variety of presentations, such as Stories from Our Past, Early Toys and Games, Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Making and 19th Century Paper Crafts. The History to Go programme is available to groups by enrolling as OHS members, which entitles them to two programmes at no additional cost, or they are asked to make a minimum donation of \$10.00 per programme.

Honours and Awards

The Honours and Awards Committee is responsible for inviting nominations for the awards presented by the Society, and for ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed for the selection of the winners. The awards and recipients for 1993 are:

B. Napier Simpson Jr. Award of Merit in recognition of a LACAC for special contributions to heritage conservation in its municipality: **Heritage Cornwall** (nominated by Dennis Carter-Edwards)

Janet Carnochan Award for a significant contribution of service to the heritage community: **James Anderson**, Stratford (nominated by Deborah Jesshope Cushing)

Cruikshank Gold Medal presented on rare occasions to individuals who have performed with distinction on behalf of The Ontario Historical Society: **Gerald Boyce**, Belleville (nominated by the Hastings County Historical Society)

Dorothy Duncan Award presented to a non-profit organization which must be nominated by a First Nations' Band Council or a Municipal Council for outstanding service to its region: **Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society** (nominated by the Corporation of the Town of New Tecumseth)

Fred Landon Award for the best book on local or regional Ontario history published in the past three years, 1991 through 1993: *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900-1939*, Ruth A. Frager (nominated by the University of Toronto Press)

Honourable Mention: *St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City*, John Jackson and Sheila Wilson
Joseph Brant Award for the best book dealing with Ontario's multicultural history published in the past three years, 1991 through 1993: *In Search of Paradise*, Susan Gabori (nominated by McGill-Queen's University Press)

Museum Award of Excellence to a non-profit public museum in Ontario for excellence in community programming and involvement: **The Perth Museum** (nominated by Mary K. Young and Bruce M. Young)

President's Award to a business which contributes significantly to the awareness and promotion of Ontario's heritage: **J. L. Bowerbank and Associates**, Vaughan (nominated by the Heritage Vaughan Committee)

Riddell Award for the best article in any field of Ontario history published in Canada during 1993: "*The Softball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923-60*", Joan Sangster, published in *Labour/Le Travail* (nominated by G. S. Kealey)

Scadding Award of Excellence in recognition of an historical society or heritage group making an outstanding contribution in the field of history: **South Fredericksburgh Heritage Committee** (nominated by the Council of the Township of South Fredericksburgh)

Membership

In 1993, The Ontario Historical Society welcomed over 160 new members. Many of our new members are neighbours of our new home at 34 Parkview Avenue in Willowdale, and some are as far away as California, USA. We are pleased to see that many people who let their memberships lapse years ago have rejoined our Society.

Museums

In 1993, the Museums Committee prepared to celebrate its 40th anniversary. The principal undertakings included preparing a publication to commemorate the anniversary by gleaning articles from its archives. Several celebrations were also planned to generate donations in support of the John McKenzie House. To further support Ontario's museum community, the Committee has developed a workshop series to assist museums in dealing with changes in school curriculum, as dictated by the Ministry of Education and Training. Other projects have included a review of the proposed Ontario Heritage Act, consultation in the Canadian Museum Association's Human Resource Strategy, and ongoing museum-related discussions with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation and the Ontario Museum Association.

Ontario History

As usual, four issues of *Ontario History* were published. Three were general; the fourth, the December issue, was on the history of education in Ontario. In addition, a supplement to the *Index to the Publications of the Ontario Historical Society, 1899 - 1972* was published. The publication covered *Ontario History* for the years 1973 to 1992. It was prepared under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Bloomfield of Guelph, Ontario, with the assistance of Linda Foster of Cambridge, Ontario, using computerized methods. It has already proved to be extremely useful.

Preservation

A lead article in the *Ottawa Citizen* regarding the fate of the historic Gillies property in Arnprior captured the spirit of the past year by noting "Historic preservation hits hard times". Regrettably, the recession continues to take its toll on the province's stock of historic properties - heritage churches, houses, bank buildings, railway stations and even historic ruins have been demolished, or threatened with demolition. As well, the long-promised new Heritage Act has yet to be introduced into the legislature, while the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation has demolished heritage properties to make way for its "new" office building in Niagara Falls. The protection and revitalization of the province's built heritage has indeed fallen on tough times.

However, there is some reason for optimism. The Preservation Committee has contributed to several planning initiatives such as the Sewell Commission on Land Use Planning and Metro Toronto's Cultural Policy. A sound planning framework that recognizes heritage concerns will help alleviate the all-too-familiar crisis of desperate last minute efforts to preserve an historic structure. The Ontario Government anticipates introduction of the new heritage legislation in the Spring of 1994, which, if passed in its improved form, will contribute to the protection and respectful rehabilitation of heritage properties. Also, the boost to the province's economy from the Federal Infrastructure programme and jobsOntario holds out the prospect of direct public expenditure to maintain and upgrade heritage structures. New investment by the private sector in such major redevelopment projects as the nationally-significant Gooderham and Worts industrial complex in Toronto will challenge the thinking, creativity and energy of the heritage community to apply restoration and presentation principles to the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The Preservation Committee of The Ontario Historical Society will continue to represent the interests of its membership in responding to these challenges.

Publications

Two further papers in the *Hometown History - Highlighting Your Heritage* resource binder were published in 1993. "Creating and Maintaining the Image of Your Historical Society" and "Conducting a Walking Tour as a Special Event"; were both written by Mary Harvey of Brampton. Several more papers are on the editing table, set to launch in 1994.

Six issues of the Society's newsletter, the *OHS Bulletin*, were published in 1993. Producing the newsletter by electronic desktop publishing has continued to be a successful step in the publication's evolution.

To complement one of our major fundraising events this year, the Society published *Preserve the Pudding! a book of receipts*. The collection of pudding recipes from the late 19th and early 20th centuries was given to all donors who attended one of the Preserve the Pudding! dinners, held to raise funds for our new headquarters. The booklet, as the dinners, met with immediate popularity.

Workshops

The OHS presented 20 one and two-day workshops in 1993 on a variety of topics. These programmes were offered on a request basis and held in the following locations: Almonte, Brampton, Copper Cliff, Cornwall, Fergus, Harrow, Manitoulin Island, Metropolitan Toronto (4), Niagara-on-the-Lake, Orono, Sault Ste. Marie (3), Smiths Falls, Thunder Bay, Welland and Windsor.

The list includes two inaugural presentations. The first, "The Simcoe Legacy: His Legislative Agenda", focused on Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe. The second, "Canadian Holidays and Holy Days", examined the wealth of celebrations that fill our Canadian calendar in the winter months. The second annual "Heritage Gardening Today: A Symposium Celebrating the Life of John Bradshaw", took place and was supported by special funding through Environment Canada, Ontario Environmental Partners Fund. A new workshop series was developed on "Ontario's Industrial Heritage" and held in seven locations across the province to help raise the profile of this important, yet frequently overlooked cultural resource. OHS Board member, Christopher Andreae of London, developed a publication which illustrated the importance of our industrial heritage.

The summer workshop programme, "Kaashnaa Ki - Our Earth, Our Survival, Our Daily Life" was held on Manitoulin Island, and was co-sponsored by the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation and the Kagawong Historical Society. The two-day event explored healing, food and the natural environment from the perspectives of the First Nations and newcomers to Ontario. It was also supported by the Ontario Environmental Partners Fund.

Young Ontario Programme

The Young Ontario Programme provides workshops, publications and special events for young people ages 6 to 16, teachers and youth leaders. YOP provided activities for children at 15 special events across the province including stencilling, making old-fashioned toys and making paper sweetmeat baskets. In addition, the OHS succeeded in obtaining funding from Environment Canada, the Environmental Citizenship Initiative's Youth Action Fund for "Take a Heritage Break: Springtime Adventures for Kids", held in Toronto and North Bay. Young people tried on pioneer costumes and made old-fashioned bookmarks from recycled materials. YOP was again present at "Winnie's Hometown Festival" held in White River where children tested their guessing skills in a gummie bears contest. Discovery Toys presented a mall show in North York on behalf of YOP as a fundraising event in aid of our new home.

In 1992, the call was sent out to young people to draw a picture that reflected the history and heritage of Ontario, or the work of The Ontario Historical Society. Over 70 entries were returned and six were selected to be made into Christmas cards. All entrants were given a prize, and the winners received an individual membership in the OHS and one for each of their schools for one year, an individual and school copy of *Discovering Your Community* and 100 Christmas cards of their own design. An art show, held at our new home, exhibited all the entries, and included a brief ceremony recognizing the winners who are Nicholas Moreau, age 6, Brampton; Dominique Rabideau, age 8, Vineland; David Mancini, age 9, Hawkestone; Karen Hough, age 11, Napanee; Paula Schwebel, age 11, Willowdale and Doug Woods, age 16, Unionville.

Volunteers

The Ontario Historical Society would like to thank the many volunteers, including our Board members, who, time after time, walked, flew, drove, taught, sold, staffed, stuffed, carried, pushed, priced, packed and unpacked, all in the name of preserving Ontario's history.

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