

OHS BULLETIN

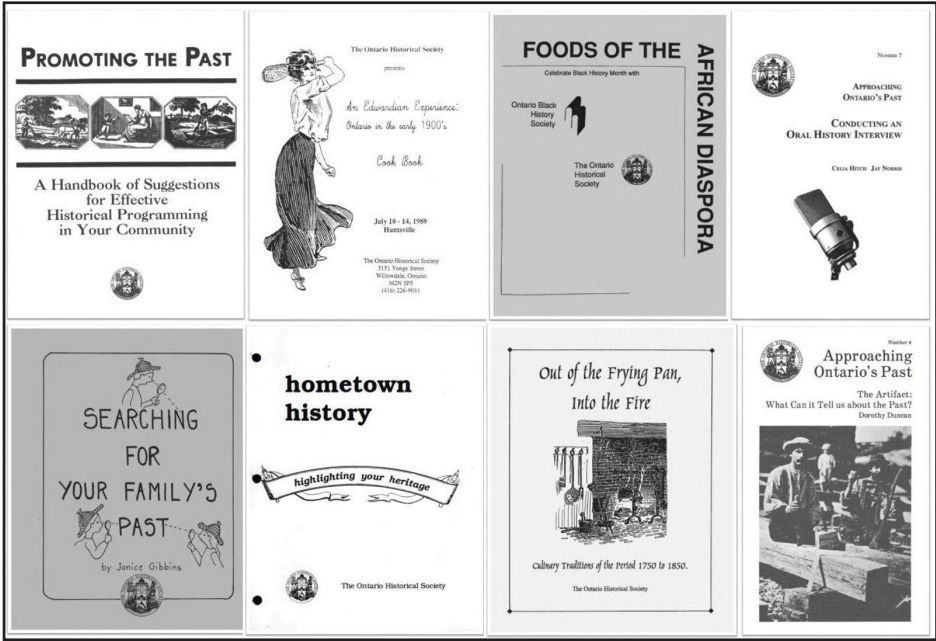
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 214

AUGUST 2020

NEW OHS ELIBRARY FEATURES OVER 110 DIGITIZED PUBLICATIONS

ACCESS BEYOND THE RAMP PART 10: AUDIO GUIDES AND MUSEUMS



Sarah McCabe, OHS Project Manager and Librarian
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The OHS is excited to announce the launch of a new educational benefit for our members: over 110 digitized books and booklets in our online Elibrary. Publications from the OHS's extensive catalogue, long out of print, are now available to meet the growing needs of researchers, scholars, students, and the general public to do their research and reading online.

Food historians and anyone looking for a new recipe will enjoy titles including *An Edwardian Experience: Ontario in the Early 1900's Cook Book*; *Foods of the African Diaspora*; *Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire: Culinary Traditions of the Period 1750 to 1850*; and *Serve it Forth! Festive Desserts from the Nineteenth Century Adapted for Modern Times*.

There is help for heritage organizations and museums in numerous publications from the 1980s to 2000s with evergreen advice including *Approaching Ontario's Past: Conducting an Oral History Interview*; *Let's Get Organized! Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Operating An Historical Museum But Were Afraid to Ask*; *Promoting the Past: A Handbook of Suggestions for Effective Historical Programming in Your Community*; and *My Cultural Handbook*, which explores the rich cultural diversity of the many celebrations of the people of Ontario.

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Photo - Courtesy of Casa Loma

The audio tours at Casa Loma offer guided direction through the grounds, and comprehensive information on the features and exhibits.

John Rae
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Editor's Note: In his first nine articles for the OHS Bulletin, John Rae explored a variety of access issues for museums and heritage organizations. In his tenth installment of this series, John returns to the subject of audio tours at art galleries and museums, and offers his critique of what he has discovered and experienced. John Rae, 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.

At this time when many museums, art galleries, and historic sites are trying to diversify their approaches and reach out to new patrons in their communities, many are introducing audio tours. These tours take various forms and have different goals. Some audio tours are mainly intended as self-directed tours when there are no docents or guides available, while others provide a considerable amount of background information on many of the items on display. Are they also intended to increase access and inclusion? Some of them do promote greater appreciation of displays for patrons who are blind or partially sighted and wish to appreciate the remains from the past that may be on display.

Some of these tours are delivered in a rather canned manner with a sterile voice, while others project real enthusiasm and life.

The most comprehensive example that I have experienced was at Toronto's Casa Loma. The device served as a guide, directing visitors through the building, providing fairly brief descriptions of the most important items on display in each

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PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Michel Beaulieu, President
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Hello. Bonjour. Boozhoo.

As I continue to enthusiastically push forward in my quest to read every issue of what is now *Ontario History* (I am in the 1950s now), I am increasingly been amazed that, whether there are periods of war, dramatic social change, or economic upheavals, the Society has consistently continued in its activities and mission.

In that vein, the foreword to the 1933 volume has become a favorite of mine. In the midst of the Great Depression, it began with a quotation from Alexander C. Flick’s “Our Buried Treasures,” which appeared in “New York History” (published January 1933). Serving as a reminder of how important the work of the Society remains, the forward begins with a prompt that, “Buried in old chests and trunks, concealed in cluttered attics, and hidden in bureau drawers, congested closets and a hundred other places are treasures more valuable than pirate doubloons.” It ends with a call to action and reminder that “it remains for member of historical societies to discover and unearth these buried treasures and to use them to give form and meaning to the past.”

At the time of writing, it has been just over a month since our 132nd Annual General Meeting and, without a doubt, we are living in historic and challenging times. The Society is in a good position to weather the crisis and has also been able to continue its efforts on behalf of our affiliates and members. When the realities of the pandemic became apparent, we took advantage of opportunities provided by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, and all other relevant Provincial bodies to relay the concerns expressed by our affiliates and members across the province. Rob Leverty and I have also assured the Government of Ontario that, as we have for the last 132 years, we again stand ready to help in these challenging times. Rob also made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs (which is included in this *Bulletin*).

For the first time in our history, our AGM was held virtually and, thanks to the work of staff behind the scenes, it went off relatively smoothly. I certainly missed the conversation and the opportunity to explore the Korean Canadian Cultural Centre and interact with members (both vintage and new). However, the format did allow for participation from all corners of the province.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Tim Cook of the Canadian War Museum, provided an excellent talk on “Public, Popular, and



The OHS was thrilled to have Dr. Tim Cook of the Canadian War Museum present this year's keynote address: “Public, Popular, and Academic History in Canada.” This was the Society's first virtual AGM and keynote address. Holding the meeting virtually gave all of our members from across Ontario the opportunity to participate. For those who missed it, you can watch both the presentation and the Q&A period on the OHS website: tinyurl.com/yynswcuz.

Academic History in Canada.” For those who missed it, you can now watch both the presentation and Q&A period online. A link is provided in the photo caption accompanying this article. We also welcomed to the Board at our AGM Dr. Michael Dove, Director and Internship Coordinator of the MA and Minor programs in Public History at Western University. Many members will be familiar with the War of 1812 smartphone app for the Southwestern Ontario Region Bicentennial that he helped develop. Once again, welcome to the OHS Board of Directors, Michael.

I am also thrilled to report that the OHS has welcomed so many new members in the past four months, that we cannot even fit all of their names in this *Bulletin*! We are pleased that members have been taking an interest in our new Ebook Store, the Elibrary, *Ontario History* online, and are following our activities on the OHS website. Thank you to everyone who has joined us during this pandemic, and welcome to the OHS network. I would also like to thank our generous donors, who have continued to support the work of the OHS throughout these past challenging months.

What is on the horizon? As you will read elsewhere in this *Bulletin*, it has been a very busy period for staff. In the coming months we will also be announcing this year’s award recipients and the Board will begin the early stages of developing the Society's new strategic plan.

All my best,
-Michel

Leave a Legacy of Heritage Preservation

For more information about the benefits of making a bequest or becoming an OHS donor, please contact:

Rob Leverty, Executive Director
The Ontario Historical Society

rlleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca
416-226-9011



All inquiries will be kept confidential

We deeply appreciate previous legacy bequests from:

- Estate of Jean Burnet
- Estate of Helen Marie Smibert
- Estate of Eber Pollard
- Estate of Mary C. J. Campanella
- Estate of Ruth E. Day
- Estate of Helen Marguerite Barons



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rob Leverty, Executive Director
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Since my last report in early March, I am pleased to inform you that the OHS has incorporated four more historical organizations through affiliation with the Society. These new not-for-profit corporations are located in Brant County, Dufferin County, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry United Counties, and the City of Hamilton.

It has again been a great honour and privilege to work with all the volunteers who donated their time and skills in partnership with us to establish and incorporate these grassroots, community-based organizations. I am now going to let their four founding Presidents tell you about their mandates to preserve and promote local history for all Ontarians.

Middleport Heritage Society
Incorporated March 11, 2020
Founding President Mary Anne Rose

In 2015, the Ontario Historical Society was first contacted by concerned residents in the County of Brant about the Anglican Diocese of Huron's proposed demolition of the historic St. Paul's Anglican Church (1868) on the Grand River. The County of Brant has engaged a community group, now the incorporated Middleport Heritage Society (MHS), and offered support and direction in terms of the County's requirements to facilitate transfer of the church structure to a community group. The MHS, now a not-for-profit organization, is willing to restore and maintain this historic building, to the best of their ability. The purpose of the Middleport Heritage Society is to advance public education through greater awareness and understanding of the history and the built, cultural, and natural heritage of Middleport and adjacent communities in the former Township of Onondaga, County of Brant. For further information, please contact: Middleportchurch@xplornet.ca.

East Luther Grand Valley Historical Society
Incorporated March 11, 2020
Founding President Rick Taylor

The East Luther Grand Valley Historical Society was formed in 2004 by a group of people interested in the preservation and promotion of the cultural and architectural history of our rural area in Dufferin County. Our mandate is to enhance and encourage the preservation of the historical heritage of East Luther Grand Valley. Through our many presentations, information sessions, displays, newsletters, and social media posts, we endeavour to arouse an interest in the past and an understanding of the importance of our local history. In 2019, we determined that our next step was to become incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society. This seemed a good fit for us as we have been members of the OHS for many years. With the assistance of the OHS, we are now officially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. For further information, please contact: mullisstaylor@rogers.com.

Friends of Grand Trunk Railway 1008
Incorporated March 11, 2020
Founding President Gardner Sage

In 2019, The Ontario Historical Society was approached by citizens concerned about the planned divestment by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission of the Grand Trunk 1008 locomotive and adjoining cars in the community of South Dundas. A bid to acquire the engine, tender, baggage car, and passenger car was submitted by volunteers who would incorporate through affiliation with the OHS if their submission won the competition. Beating out numerous bids (including two American bidders), the volunteers have now incorporated Friends of Grand Trunk Railway 1008 in order to refurbish and maintain this historic train located in Crysler Park, Morrisburg, and promote greater understanding and awareness of Ontario's railway history. For further information, please contact: gardnerS@live.ca.

Ancaster Village Heritage Community
Incorporated June 5, 2020
Founding President Bob Maton

Ancaster Village is the heart of the third-oldest police village in Ontario, established in the 1790s. We were once the largest Township in the Province, and some of our early buildings survive. Developers have demolished important heritage buildings in our district, and plan to replace them with new developments that threaten to obliterate our history and reduce our quality of life through increased traffic congestion and over-densification. Ancaster Village Heritage Community was formed to protect our heritage buildings, our streetscapes, and our quality of life. We were incorporated with the wonderful assistance of the Ontario Historical Society on June 5, 2020, eight months after our first neighbourhood meeting with our Ward Councillor to begin a



Photo - Rob Leverty

On June 21st, OHS ED Rob Leverty conducted a heritage site visit after accepting an invitation from The Sheffield Park Black History and Cultural Museum (SPBH&CM) in Clarksburg. Seen here at the former Tabernacle Church (circa 1900) are Sylvia and Carolynn Wilson, Co-Founders and Directors of the Black History Museum.

Recently through private donations, the museum structurally restored the magnificent wooden former Tabernacle building (60' x 80') for its new exhibit, African Beginnings. 24 skylight panels still need to be replaced at a cost of \$12,000. This as an example of why a heritage infrastructure grant program is needed to help volunteer organizations with shovel-ready projects, especially when heritage organizations have had to cancel all public events, tours, and income-generating activities this year.

The SPBH&CM is a Black-led, all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization representing African Canadian Freedom Seekers, Underground Railroad refugees, and direct descendants. It helps to tell the story of the Black pioneers and settlers of Grey and Simcoe Counties, and welcomes all visitors, from local community members to international travellers, to learn about their history in an inclusive environment.

The museum is a longstanding member of the OHS, and Rob has worked closely with heritage advocates Carolynn and Sylvia Wilson since 1998 on issues surrounding the preservation of early Black history, particularly on such projects as the preservation and incorporation of the Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemetery near Priceville. For further information or donations, please contact: sheffieldblackhistory@gmail.com.

discussion about these issues. For further information, please contact: bobmaton@hotmail.com.

The OHS remains dedicated to the Society's core mandate and unique legal responsibilities granted by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1899. As the only non-government entity in North America with the legal authority to incorporate historical organizations, we know that our unique *Act to incorporate the Ontario Historical Society*, enacted 121 years ago, is a vital tool and more relevant than ever in the fight to preserve and promote our diverse and rich history in communities across Ontario.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report to our membership and the general public that since January 2015, in service to our fellow citizens, the OHS has incorporated 40 new not-for-profit historical organizations: six in northern Ontario, six in eastern Ontario, five in central Ontario, eleven in southwestern Ontario, eleven in the GT&HA, and one provincial not-for-profit corporation.



"Delivering the Past"

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GLENGARRY FENCIBLES TRUST: MASONRY WORK AT THE BISHOP'S HOUSE

Brenda Baxter, President, Glengarry Fencibles Trust
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On July 13, 2020, the board of Glengarry Fencibles Trust learned that masonry restoration plans for the Bishop's House will benefit from a \$98,572 Parks Canada cost-sharing grant.

This 1808 landmark in Glengarry County, within the National Historic Site of St. Raphael's, was almost demolished in 2015, so news of the proposal's success was especially encouraging. The goal is to adapt the building for reuse as a cultural and conference centre.

With this grant, two walls on the rear of the building will be restored, one on the back of Bishop Macdonell's headquarters itself (the wings of the building were added in 1924 to accommodate Iona Academy). Its heritage masonry became visible again when a number of dilapidated, unsympathetic additions—one a two-storey 1930s kitchen/bedroom wing—were carefully demolished last year.

The exterior of the building and the two-acre grounds have seen other significant improvements. Besides the roof, which was replaced in 2017, the stately veranda and Juliet balcony were restored, the heritage metal trim repainted, and the mansard tiles repaired. In addition, the 1826 drystone retaining wall, which arches along a knoll in front, has only a small portion left to rebuild.



Photo - Scott Campbell

The OHS incorporated Glengarry Fencibles Trust in 2010. The group has been working on restoration and revitalization projects since taking possession of the Bishop's House in 2016.

Ever since taking possession in 2016, the focus has been on bringing the landscape back into perspective and securing the envelope of the building. Now we are turning to the interior. With its deep stone walls, many windows and scenic location across from the St. Raphael's Ruins, the building's spaces have spectacular potential.

Some of you have already helped fund our improvements; for this we remain grateful. We remind others that our board has no employees; any charitable donation goes right into the project (www.bishopshouse.ca).

Please note that our mailing address has changed: Glengarry Fencibles Trust, 4739 Frog Hollow Road, Green Valley, ON K0C 1L0.

MANVERS TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY: 37 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Kathy Morton, President, Manvers Township Historical Society
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The society was formed in 1983 to preserve the Old Bethany Post Office. The building was moved back from the street to become our headquarters. That same year, *Rolling Hills Volume 2* was published. Last year the building was restored with insulation, siding, and windows, and repurposed as a research centre. In 1984, Manvers Township Historical Society incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society.

A workshop for cemetery restoration was conducted with participants from five municipalities and presentations by funeral directors and monument companies. A review of the *Ontario Cemeteries Act* and Charitable status rules was also conducted. Each year a cemetery tour includes families of the deceased to volunteer information and is recorded by the society.



Photo - Andy Harjula

Honouring the last Pontypool Jewish family: Thomas White and family at the official opening of the outdoor history display beside Pontypool Grain Elevator. Second from right is former councillor Heather Stauble.

Celebrating Jewish Cottage Days in Pontypool was attended by 1,000 Jewish families from North America. This inspired Alex Poch Goldin to write the play *The Right Way to Pontypool*, which was produced by 4th Line Theatre Millbrook. Grant Curtis wrote and published the book *Laugh and the World Laughs With You in Pontypool* for this event.

Honouring a local WWII unsung hero who hid the Jews in Holland from the Germans was an emotional ceremony attended by many survivors of the WWII.

The locally designated Pontypool Grain Elevator, one of nine left in Canada, was leased from the City of Kawartha Lakes and the exterior was restored by our society

and local community. A celebration recognizing the restoration with a floral display also features outdoor display boards of Pontypool history that also honoured the last remaining Jewish Family (Thomas White).

Canadian war brides were honoured at a ceremony with legion, federal, provincial, and municipal representatives. 48,000 British brides and 27,000 children followed Canadian husbands to settle in Canada after WWII. Less than 259 are still alive.

‘MANVERS TOWNSHIP H.S.’ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...

...‘OHS ELIBRARY’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Of particular note is *Hometown History: Highlighting your Heritage*, a guidebook for local historical societies across the province of Ontario and all organizations and institutions that are interested in preserving and promoting the heritage of their communities. Also, *Discovering Your Community: Activities and Suggestions for Developing Local History Projects for Young People* is a resource book for teachers, youth leaders, parents, and all those working with young people, which proved so popular that it was revised, updated, and reprinted in English and French.

For children, there's the charming three-book *Rainy Day Detective* series, including *Book 2: Searching for Your Family's Past*, an illustrated publication for children to learn about family history and genealogy.

For the first time, the OHS's own historic annual reports from 1898 to 1931 are online. These publications provide insight into the state of heritage in Ontario at the time, including reports from the OHS's affiliated societies.

Finally, we're very pleased to offer to our members the full run of the 30+ volumes of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto's (WCHST) Transactions and Annual Reports from 1896 to 1970. Established in 1895, the aims of the WCHST were the encouragement of a study of Canadian history and literature, the collection and preservation of Canadian historical records and relics, and the building up of Canadian loyalty and patriotism. When the WCHST dissolved in the late 1990s, they donated their valuable scholarly work to the OHS, along with furniture, library books, and funds to refurbish the coach house at the OHS's John McKenzie House headquarters.

The OHS acknowledges the many generous members, subscribers, and donors who have contributed to this digitization project, including the financial support of the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Visit our new Elibrary on our website at ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/elibrary/.

Note: An additional 15+ OHS publications are available for purchase in our Ebook Store, where OHS members receive a 30% discount.

MUSEUM MILESTONES

Dr. John Carter
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From one end of the province to the other! In the previous column we learned about the South Western Ontario Heritage Village & Transportation Museum, one of the most southerly sites in Ontario. The lead article this time comes from Lori Nelson, Director of the Lake of the Woods Museum in Kenora, one of the most north-western museums in the province. Great to see the progress being made there, as noted in Lori's article below.

COVID-19 continues to keep museums and heritage sites closed across Ontario. While many museums are not open to the public, they are taking innovative steps to continue their important work. The Museum of Dufferin (MoD) was not able to hold its very popular Cornflower Festival in June. Instead, the Cornflower Glass Collector Facebook group sponsored an online version, which enabled Cornflower enthusiasts to participate virtually.

Rick Nelson, curator of the Old Mill Heritage Centre Museum in Kagawong, was recently a guest on TVO's popular program, *The Agenda*. In a conversation with host Steve Paikin, Nelson discussed the impact COVID-19 has had on his site and others in the province. He explained that his focus is now on virtual tours, in a partnership with the Virtual Museum of Canada. He noted that because exhibits have been postponed, special events put on hold, bus tours cancelled, and fundraisers in limbo, this is the only way he can continue to present the museum to the local community and tourists on Manitoulin Island.

The Bruce County Museum & Archives, in conjunction with the Bruce County Historical Society, is collecting images and tangible archival items for its collection. Efforts are being made to document the impact of COVID-19 throughout Bruce County, and to acquire artifacts that have been generated by the pandemic.

The John R. Park Homestead received a \$600,000 grant from the federal



Photo - Essex Region Conservation Authority

MP Irek Kusmierczyk presents the cheque to Richard Wyma, General Manager of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. The cheque was presented at the John R. Park Homestead site on February 14, 2020.

Department of Economic Development & Official Languages. These funds, allocated from the Canada Experiences Fund, will be matched by the Essex Region Conservation Authority and the Friends of the John R. Park Homestead. The money is being used to build a new Heritage Centre. This facility will include a climate-controlled creative commons for students, provide expanded exhibit space, include accessible and enlarged washrooms, and be created as a tourism hub for the Essex region. Matching funds are now being raised for this \$1.2 million project. Several large donations have already been made.

There has been lots of activity in Owen Sound, as new appointments have been made at several important museums and cultural institutions in the region. At the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Aiden Ware has been appointed as Director. David Huff, who was Acting Director, will return to his position as Curator of Collections. At Grey Roots, Jill Paterson has won a provincial competition, and is now the new Manager. Jill was previously a Project Manager with the City of Toronto, Museums and Historical Services. Congratulations to all.

THE EXPANSION OF THE LAKE OF THE WOODS MUSEUM

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The Lake of the Woods Museum in Kenora, Ontario, was established in 1964. Originally housed in the town's former land registry office, the Museum flourished in those early years, growing its collection and community support, and developing high standards in exhibition work. The 2,000-square-feet of its premises soon became insufficient and by the early 1980s a new home was being sought. Through the support of all three levels of government, a purpose-built facility was constructed right across the park from the original Museum building



Photo - Courtesy of The Muse

The foundational collection of Walter J. Phillips' Lake of the Woods works was featured in the opening months of the Douglas Family Art Centre. This is the upper floor gallery.

and was opened in 1986. Its expanded facilities provided a better-suited space to preserve, interpret, and display its impressive collection—to more actively engage the community and to provide an opportunity for future growth.

Some 30 years later, another opportunity to grow presented itself. In 2015, Director of the Museum Lori Nelson was approached by long-time summer residents Nicki and Bryce Douglas with a potential donation. For the past 30 years, the Douglas family has been collecting the Lake of the Woods works of Canadian artist Walter J. Phillips. The works in the collection included watercolours, colour woodcuts, and wood engravings, providing a gentle and nuanced interpretation of Lake of the Woods captured by Phillips during his family's summer vacations at the lake from the 1910s until the late 1920s. Although a master watercolourist, Phillips is best known for his colour woodcuts and has been recognized as the pioneer of the colour woodblock in Canada. Among his best-known and most-loved images are those of Lake of the Woods.

This was an amazing offer of a unique and valued collection. However, the physical space of the Lake of the Woods Museum presented challenges in accepting the donation and ensuring that the public would have access to it. Thoughts were cast further afield to see if there was a suitable space to house the collection. The original Museum building, which had been leased out to various businesses and organizations since it was vacated by the Museum, was the first consideration. It was a lovely heritage building, within a stone's throw of the Museum, and still under the Museum's management. Using it to enhance the Museum's offerings was thought to be ideal. However, questions about its suitability as an art gallery were raised.

Funding was sought from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to conduct a feasibility study. The resulting report provided two options—repurpose the building to be a small art gallery or add a purpose-built addition with two galleries, public space, and full environmental controls, while using the original building for administrative and studio purposes. The second option was deemed the wiser choice in fulfilling the dream of a dynamic and active art centre.

Early in 2017, Kenora City Council approved the application to provincial and federal grant programs for capital projects and the establishment of a capital campaign to raise private sector funds for the \$4-million project. The land on which the expansion was to be built was City-owned and made up part of Memorial Park, the only formal park in downtown Kenora. The creation of a "cultural campus" in the heart of downtown Kenora, with the Museum and Art Centre framing the City's cenotaph, gained traction as the capital campaign was launched that summer.

'LAKE OF THE WOODS MUSEUM' CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...

BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

GUARDIANS OF OUR FOREST HERITAGE

Barry Penhale

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It was during the 1960s when Professor Douglas Pimlott, a University of Toronto biologist, became my go-to person for expertise on a range of issues involving the great outdoors. The forests of Algonquin Park were often the subject of environmentally sensitive assignments I was involved with as a broadcaster, and I frequently grappled with the need for information that found me out of my depth. Pimlott was always just a phone call away at his workplace in Ontario's oldest park and always came through with the authoritative comments I had come to expect of him. His important research within Algonquin began in the late 1950s and his monumental efforts to preserve the natural elements of the park, which sprang from his in-depth studies of wolves, certainly deserve to be better recognized. Though not trained as a forester, he truly cared for trees and was especially knowledgeable when it came to the forests of Algonquin. I am pleased to include him along with others who have done much to honour and preserve Ontario's forest heritage.



Photo – Edith George

This red oak in Toronto is over 250 years old and truly a sight to behold—a treasure of our natural heritage.

When initially planning this article, a valued friend of many years, Dave Lemkay, and a newer friend, Edith George, came to mind immediately. Both individuals attach immense importance to trees and the invaluable natural history they represent. In Dave's case, one is presented with a career and now avocation that reaches back approximately 50 years. His work first came to my attention when he managed the Canadian Forestry Association in Ottawa. He was also the creative hand responsible for the annual designation of "The Forest Capital of Canada" the now involves communities and regions across the country. One of his foremost interests is the history of our forest industry, going back 200 years to the time of squared timber rafts on the Ottawa River. With few equals when it comes to recreating past history, Dave was successful in bringing the restored 25-ton W.D. Stalker Warping Tug Boat, to his beloved Ottawa Valley by masterminding a daunting transportation experience that began on the Lynn River in Simcoe, Ontario, where the tug was berthed, and getting it safely to Pembroke. Among other appearances, the "Alligator" went on to play a prominent role in steam flotillas from Bristol, Quebec, to Arnprior, Ontario. Since that time, a replica was built by the late Dr. Bill Burwell of Renfrew and is now part of a permanent display at the Shaw Woods Outdoor Education Centre near Pembroke.

I must confess to being one of Dave Lemkay's many unabashed admirers and continue to marvel at his boundless energy, inexhaustible enthusiasm, and never-ending association with trees. It was Dave who delivered Canadian maple trees to Juno Beach for the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994. The same person was also a player on Monty MacDonald's 2018 Vimy Oaks Legacy team. They marked the centenary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge by shipping several hundred acorns to Vimy, France, to ultimately be planted there. These were no ordinary acorns, having been harvested from a stand of 100-year-old oak trees that were planted in

1918 through the foresight of a returning Canadian soldier, Leslie Miller, who had gleaned them from the devastated Vimy site. One dare not say finally but "presently" Dave serves as Chair of the Algonquin Forestry Board of Directors and is Vice-Chair of the Forest History Society of Ontario. One wonders where his forestry pathways will take him next!

The younger Edith George will need time to rack up Dave Lemkay's mileage, but there is little doubt that she is currently on a roll. If her name seems familiar, it will be due to media attention she received as protector of Toronto's oldest tree. This champion of natural history has made many sacrifices to focus so heavily on saving an iconic majestic red oak, believed to be between 250 and 300 years old. As reported in the December 15, 2019, issue of the *Toronto Star*, Edith's battle to protect her towering, centuries-old North York neighbour has been going on for 14 years. Fortunately, Edith George's tireless efforts seem to be heading in a promising direction and public protection could well be imminent. In 2018, Toronto City Council passed a motion, authorizing staff to make a conditional offer on at least half the purchase price of the home and yard on which the mighty oak stands. The well-known gardener and columnist Mark Cullen and his wife gave the fundraising a generous boost with their offer of \$100,000, on the condition that other public donors fulfill the rest of the funding requirements and that the City of Toronto preserves and protects the tree. Both the Cullens and Edith George envision a parkette dedicated to First Nations, a fitting legacy, as the tree has stood firmly for centuries on what was an early Indigenous trail. Edith George continues to keep the pressure on City Hall, while at the same time confidently looking ahead to a time not too distant when visitors to her city will get to enjoy "a natural tree museum".

I must also recognize the fantastic work of E.J. "Edmund" Zavitz. This early forester, originally from the Niagara region, was a remarkable visionary whose efforts made it possible for us to enjoy such commonly taken-for-granted natural treasures as the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Ganaraska Watershed today. It can be said that Zavitz, more than any other single individual, led the charge that changed outdated attitudes, practices, and regulations in forestry. It is largely thanks to his advocacy that the first forestry station in Canada was established near St. Williams, Ontario, in 1908. Zavitz was the second Provincial Forester for Ontario (1917–26), the very first to hold the title being Dr. Judson F. Clark (1904–06). In 1926, Zavitz was appointed Deputy Minister of Forestry but a change in government resulted in his demotion in 1934, at which time he resumed the title of Provincial Forester until 1941. Edmund Zavitz and his pioneering work has been well-documented by the St. Catharine's-based environmentalist John Bacher in his book *Two Billion Trees and Counting*.

Fortunately, Zavitz was to be followed in time by the likes of Herb Richardson, Charles Sauriol, Paul Aird, Ken Armson, Adolph "Dolph" Wynia, Paul Masterson, Jim Coates, and a long line of other dedicated forestry officials. Toronto teacher Herb Richardson, during a most productive lifetime (1890–1971), became an important Ontario conservationist long before our present Green movement. From his early work in a canvas-roofed forestry station in the bush, Richardson went on to establish Scout Forestry camps and played a major role in the creation of the Conservation Authorities of Ontario.

One cannot pay tribute to important guardians of our forests without acknowledging the role played by Kenneth Armson, now retired but forever identified with major advances made while serving as Chief Forester and Executive Coordinator for Ontario's forestry program. This well-known expert in his field was the third and last Provincial Forester for Ontario (1986–89). The position no longer exists. A prolific author and contributor to countless publications, including historical accounts of Ontario's forests, Ken is the founder of the Forest History Society of Ontario. A valued member of the OHS, Ken's face is often visible at provincial conferences.

A stand of virgin pine east of Huntsville was reported some winters ago by Natural Resources Information Officer Ross Beagan. He described specimens about 300 years old and more than 150 feet tall, commenting that one giant tree was likely a seedling around the time LaSalle and Marquette & Joliet were engaged in their exploration of the Great Lakes Region in the late 1600s. I would suggest that's history and reason enough to begin looking at our tree canopy differently and with greater appreciation. We need not all be trained foresters to play key roles as stewards of our forest heritage. Edith George's inspiring example is proof positive that individual citizens as guardians of even a single tree can truly make a difference!



Photo – Mark Kulas

Dave Lemkay was both MC and auctioneer on the occasion of a fundraiser gala to support the J. Michael WalDRAM Forest Bursary held at the Rideau Club, Ottawa, in 2006.

Editor's Note: "From the Bookshelf" will return in the next issue of the Bulletin. For this edition, the OHS is compelled to share with our membership the following remarks, presented by Executive Director Rob Leverty on June 25 to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Ontario Historical Society's written presentation to:

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs regarding the Culture and Heritage sector of the Study of the recommendations relating to the Economic and Fiscal Update Act, 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on certain sectors of the economy.

Oral presentation by Rob Leverty, Executive Director, was held:
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020
Time: 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Location: Remote by Zoom

Good morning Members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario,

I am Rob Leverty, Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS). I am speaking to you from the Society's provincial headquarters, the historic John McKenzie House in Willowdale. The main house, milk house, stable, and coach house were all to be demolished in 1992. The Society worked to stop the demolition when I was then the Preservation and Restoration Manager. Our local MPP (Willowdale) Stan Cho visited our historic site last November.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have remained open for business, but like our member organizations in communities across Ontario, we have had to cancel all income-generating activities like rentals and public events such as participating in Doors Open Toronto.

However, I am pleased to report that the adjacent organic community garden that we helped establish in 2008 has been active for the last eight weeks. The volunteers of the Parkview Neighbourhood Garden have just donated the first harvest of fresh produce to a local food bank.

The OHS was founded in 1888 by eight local historical societies, and is a provincial non-government, not-for-profit corporation, and registered charity with a mandate to preserve and promote Ontario's history.

Since 1888, the OHS has received honorary patronage from all Lieutenant Governors of Ontario.

In 1899, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario granted the OHS the unique legal authority, with related responsibilities, to incorporate historical organizations in the Province of Ontario through affiliation with the OHS.

The OHS is the only non-government, not-for-profit corporation in North America with the legal authority to incorporate historical organizations.

We are a membership-based organization—overwhelmingly volunteer organizations with currently over 500 located in communities across Ontario. On behalf of our membership, I would like to thank Minister McLeod and her staff for approving the 2020 heritage grant programs as soon as possible. For example, the Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) and the Community Museum Operating and Pay Equity Grants (CMOG), are grant programs which are fundamental to the operation of historical societies and community museums in Ontario. Release of the funding allows these groups to access their annual funding, helping to ensure sector stability while regular programming, rentals, public events, and visitor fees are not accessible.

I would now like to share with you two recommendations developed in consultation with our members for your consideration.

Planning For What's Next

The OHS believes that you cannot understand our present situation or even plan for recovery from the pandemic unless you fully appreciate at least the recent history of our sector.

Briefly, since municipal amalgamation in Ontario in the late 1990s and the financial crisis of 2008, all levels of government (including government agencies such as Conservation Authorities), as well as the private sector and religious institutions, have divested themselves of Ontario and Canada's unique and valuable heritage assets, off-loading them onto the volunteer, not-for-profit sector.

In response to this crisis, the OHS has been invited by our fellow citizens in communities across the province to establish and incorporate an unprecedented number of volunteer not-for-profit organizations to assume the stewardship and financial responsibility of Ontario's heritage properties. These invaluable national and provincial heritage properties include lighthouses, museums,

archives, train stations, churches, cemeteries, grain elevators, historic community halls, and mills.

Just since 2015, we have incorporated 40 new volunteer not-for-profits including four since the start of the pandemic.

These new volunteer not-for-profit corporations have taken on, most in perpetuity, enormous financial responsibilities for protecting our heritage properties including insurance (e.g. directors & officers, general liability, and property & contents insurance policies), annual maintenance and repairs, and long-term capital expenditures for restoration.

Our first recommendation is that the Government of Ontario immediately establish a new Ontario Community Heritage Infrastructure Grant Program. This program could provide immediate local economic stimulus while helping heritage organizations that own, or lease and operate, built and natural heritage sites (including burial grounds and cemeteries) in communities across the province. The grant could also provide funding for digital infrastructure, for organizations to build or improve robust websites and online programming.

Our member organizations need a heritage community infrastructure grant program—we know that there are both brick and mortar and digital shovel-ready and shovel-worthy projects for the public benefit. For example, on Sunday, June 21st, I visited our member organization, the Sheffield Park Black History Museum and Cultural Centre in Clarksburg, Grey County. The purpose of this museum is to preserve and promote the historical importance, contributions, and accomplishments of early Black Canadian pioneers/settlers to Simcoe and Grey Counties. The Sheffield Park Museum normally attracts tour buses from across North America, but all public events had to be cancelled this year. Therefore, it is a perfect time to start a shovel-ready restoration project. Through private donations, the museum structurally restored a magnificent 1905 former Tabernacle Church building that is 60 feet by 80 feet for a new exhibit. However, 24 skylight panels must be replaced as soon as possible at the cost of approximately \$12,000.

The OHS incorporated the Owen Sound Emancipation Festival in 2006 and the Coptic Museum of Canada in 2017, and we recently received information about modest shovel-ready, shovel-worthy digital projects from both organizations.

The OHS's second recommendation is that the Ontario Government immediately exempt heritage organizations from property taxes. In January of this year, I appeared before your Standing Committee in Kitchener. I submitted then that the Government of Ontario include in its 2020 Budget that "not-for-profit organizations incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society under its Special Act, 1899, be exempt from property taxes, and that exemption remain as long as those members continue in Good Standing with the Ontario Historical Society."

Now more than ever it is imperative that our volunteer organizations owning or leasing heritage properties be exempt from crippling property taxes if they are to resume operations once the immediate response to Covid-19 is through. Otherwise many communities across Ontario will likely lose valuable tourism assets.

Property tax policy in Ontario has not reflected this new reality of volunteer not-for-profits rapidly accepting the main role and financial responsibility for protecting and promoting these historical assets that are vital for community health, economic development, and tourism in a knowledge-based economy.

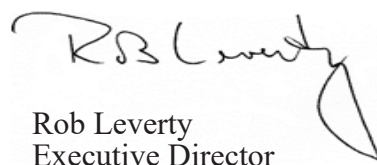
Exempting historical not-for-profit organizations from property taxes will ensure that precious dollars raised by volunteers go directly to maintenance, operating and urgent capital expenditures. We also know that our fellow citizens will now be severely deterred from establishing new not-for-profits, knowing that as volunteer heritage organizations they will also now be burdened with the worry and expense of unsustainable property taxes.

In 2019, the Government of Ontario exempted all Royal Canadian Legion Branches from property taxes. OHS-incorporated, volunteer not-for-profits safeguarding our provincial history also deserve and require the same exemption.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, when many saw our rich and diverse heritage only as a liability, the OHS and its grassroots membership saw opportunities and therefore used our unique authority to legally establish local volunteer control of Ontario's priceless heritage assets. This has made the OHS Act, 1899, more relevant today than it ever was and is a vital tool for the recovery of Ontario's Culture and Heritage sector.

As a membership-based provincial organization, we know that our two recommendations represent the most significant priorities of our members, which are located in all regions of Ontario. Please do get in touch with us to discuss these recommendations further.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.



Rob Leverty
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area, but the device also offered an additional link that the visitor could press to obtain more extensive information on many of the items that were on display.

But audio guides are only one approach to enhancing access and engagement. Technical innovations are increasing opportunities for patrons who have low or no vision. There are four primary approaches being used by organizations that are interested in becoming more accessible to blind visitors—touch tours, beacon technology, audio description, and adding applications to the visitor's personal device.

Offering opportunities for guests with low vision or blindness to touch original objects or 3D printed copies of works in the collection is a time-tested approach to providing access. Touch gives blind visitors the opportunity to gain a better understanding of materials, texture, shape, and form. Some facilities have developed a dedicated touch gallery, while others include some objects that can be touched throughout their galleries.

A growing number of facilities are offering audio tours to groups on a scheduled basis, and some also offer individualized tours by appointment. During these tours, docents or volunteer guides describe sculptures or paintings, and they often include the other senses—hearing, taste, and smell — to help fully describe scenes and colors. Such descriptive prompts and language can easily be included in audio tours allowing low-vision and blind patrons to have access to museums whenever they wanted—not just once a month when a tour is scheduled.

Beacon technology can be used to guide visitors through museums using smartphone apps. Beacons can also notify patrons of nearby works of art, provide descriptive dialogue, and include answers to frequently asked questions.

Museums are also developing applications that users download onto their personal smart devices that aid in navigating the museums. For example, the Warhol Museum developed "The Warhol Out Loud" to enhance engagement with blind and low-vision patrons particularly in mind. The Out Loud app — designed for iOS devices — provides users with stories about Warhol’s life and works on each floor of the museum, including information about 3D-printed reproductions. Beacons placed around the museum send Bluetooth signals to patrons’ devices to present stories based on their location in the museum.

“Smart Braille” is an app available for Android devices through Google Play that not only allows users to communicate more quickly by tapping combinations for braille figures, but also reads descriptive text to Out Loud users.

Museums and art galleries can incorporate new and emerging technology, allowing blind and low-vision patrons to access the collections at their leisure.

While various options can help improve accessibility and engagement within museums, even the liveliest audio tours can seem hollow to blind patrons like me if there aren’t a number of items available to touch. There is simply no substitute to tactile access for blind visitors to any museum, art gallery, or historic site – none whatsoever!

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

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Types of membership in the Society are: Individual \$45, Institution/ Organization \$50, 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 \$31.50

per year; member organizations, institutions and non-member individuals for \$42.00; and to non-member organizations and institutions for \$52.50. Membership inquiries should be directed to Heather Anderson at handerson@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 www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

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With the support of Canadian Heritage’s Cultural Spaces program, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation’s Strategic Economic Infrastructure Program, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, half the funds for the project were in place. The other half came from the generosity of both current and former local and lake residents.

By early 2018, there was confidence to move ahead with construction of the 7,000-square-foot addition. Designed by Kenora architectural firm Nelson Architecture and constructed by local contracting firm, Solid Construction, the building began to take shape in the summer of that year. Adding on to a heritage building is no easy feat, but it was done with respect and skill, leaving exposed brick and stonework at the transition, providing a modern interpretation in the new building of the architectural features on the existing building.

The Douglas Family Art Centre, as it is so named, officially opened to the public in December 2019. Its opening marked the fulfillment of a dream of Nicki and Bryce Douglas and of the Lake of the Woods Museum: to create a dynamic art space, boasting two galleries, two lounges, a studio, and programming space. Operating under the umbrella of what is now known as The Muse, the Douglas Family Art Centre and the Lake of the Woods Museum will offer arts and heritage programming, a space for creation and interpretation, exhibition opportunities, and two inspired community spaces.

We welcomed the Canadian Buddhist Association to our area with a traditional Chinese dinner for 250 that was streamed worldwide. Our society offers conducted tours of hundreds every year to the largest Buddhist temple site outside China—the 530-acre Wutai Shan Gardens. This is also streamed worldwide. We also welcomed the Canadian Tibetan Organization with a traditional dinner.

With respect to publications, Grant Curtis wrote and published *Women of Manvers*, and Kathy Morton wrote and published *Reflections of Bethany* in 2019. Work has begun on a history book for Janetville, with a proposed designation of a settler cemetery across the Scugog River in Ops Township. This is the site of the first settlers in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The damming of this site created View Lake, part of the Janetville's history.

Our interactive Facebook page was launched in 2019 and a website is currently under construction. Our organization attracts 1,000 followers as well as a growing active membership interested in preserving our history and developing tourism initiatives.

THANK YOU DONORS!

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