

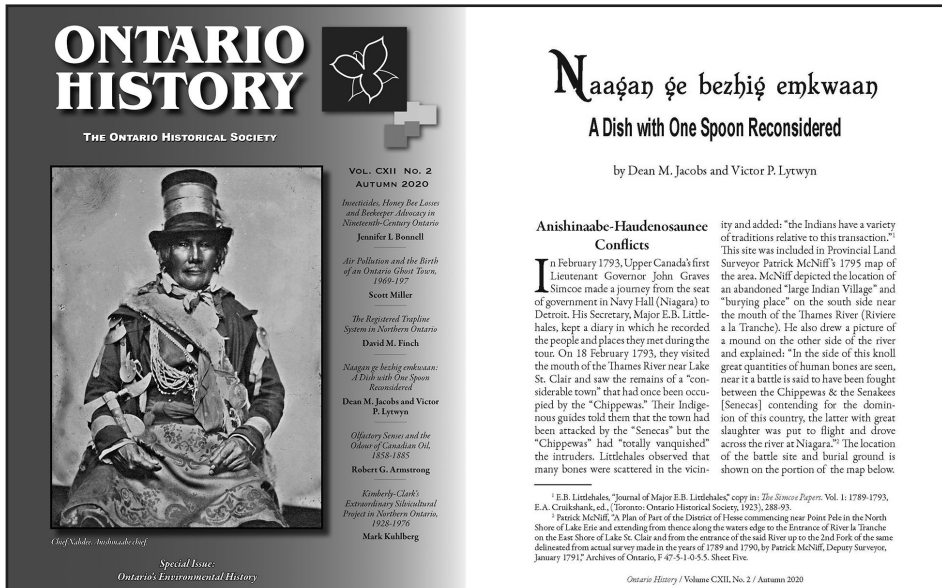
# OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 218

DECEMBER 2021

## ONTARIO HISTORY ARTICLE WINS CHA INDIGENOUS HISTORY PRIZE



**Sarah McCabe**, OHS Project Manager and Librarian  
smccabe@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

Congratulations to Dr. Victor P. Lytwyn and Dr. Dean M. Jacobs! Their article "Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan: A Dish with One Spoon Reconsidered" in *Ontario History's* Autumn 2020 issue has won the Canadian Historical Association's (CHA) 2021 Indigenous History Best Article Prize. Dr. Jacobs is a former OHS Board Director, and was the first Indigenous *Ontario History* Guest Editor, for the journal's Spring 2000 special issue, Continuity and the Unbroken Chain: Issues in the Aboriginal History of Ontario.

The CHA's award citation reads, "In 'Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan: A Dish with One Spoon Reconsidered' Victor P. Lytwyn and Dean M. Jacobs reveal how land acknowledgements premised on faulty historical understandings of Indigenous land relationships serve to undermine contemporary Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. Rigorously sourced and expansive in historical scope, this article contributes both to Anishinaabe political and diplomatic histories, as well as to vital contemporary questions around the potentially negative implications of land acknowledgements. The authors provide a thoroughly researched example of the importance of understanding the grounded specificities of Indigenous treaties as international agreements that regulate and enact sovereign decision-making over territory, both historically and in the present. In this way, the award-winning article affirms the historical importance and long-standing realities of Indigenous governance and ways of relating to the land as well as other nations."

This prize-winning *Ontario History* article, in the Special Issue: Ontario's Environmental History, is now available open access for all to read on the Érudit platform at: doi.org/10.7202/1072237ar. If you would like to purchase a printed copy of this Special Issue (\$25 plus 5% tax and postage), please contact the OHS office at ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca or call 416-226-9011.

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## OHS HONOURS AND AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED



The Craigleith Heritage Depot won the 2020-21 Dorothy Duncan Public History Award for their outstanding interactive film series, REEL History. You can check out all the films in this series for free on their YouTube Channel at youtube.com/c/TheBlueMountainsPublicLibrary.

**Daniel Dishaw**, Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

The 2020-21 OHS Award winners represent incredible achievements from across the province.

As always the OHS is delighted to be recognizing a diverse range of communities and topics with its annual Award Program. To submit a nomination for the 2021-22 OHS Honours and Awards Program, visit ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/honours-awards/. See page 8 for more information.

The winners for 2020-21 are as follows:

### AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

President's Award: **Ontario Black History Society**

Cemetery Preservation Award: **The Cemetery Guardians, Wilson's Hill Cemetery**

Dorothy Duncan Public History Award: **Craigleith Heritage Depot: REEL History**

Russell K. Cooper Public Programming Award:  
**Myseum of Toronto, "Derailed: The History of Black Railway Porters in Canada"**

Heritage Conservation Award: **Sedgwick Marshall Heritage Homes Ltd.**

Indigenous History Award (Two Winners):

**Dr. Janice Forsyth, Reclaiming Tom Longboat: Indigenous Self-Determination in Canadian Sport**

'AWARD WINNERS' CONTINUED ON PAGE 4...



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





PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Michel Beaulieu, President  
michel.beaulieu@lakeheadu.ca

Hello. Bonjour. Boozhoo.

As you will discover in this *Bulletin*, the Society has been very active since our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October. As reported at the AGM, we have been busy carrying out not only our regular activities, but also working with members and affiliates on a host of new challenges that have emerged due to the on-going pandemic. At the AGM, the OHS Board welcomed two new Directors, Mark Kuhlberg of Laurentian University, and Dave Mowat, Chief of the Alderville First Nation. I look forward to working with you both! I would like to thank our departing board members, Serge Ducharme and Nora Sawyer, for their outstanding service to the Society as Directors.

For those of you who were unable to join us, you can now watch Dr. Robin Nelson’s keynote “The Democratization of Culture” online through the Society’s website. You can also check out the Spring 2021 issue of *Ontario History* to read about Dr. Nelson’s research and findings.

Like last year, the Society decoupled its annual awards ceremony from the Annual General Meeting. This provided an opportunity to both draw attention to the Society’s honours and awards winners over a longer period and better highlight each recipient. I’d like to thank the OHS Honours and Awards Committee and all those who served on the various juries. Congratulations to all this year’s award winners. Complete details about each can be found on the Society’s website under Honours and Awards – Past Recipients.

I am also excited to announce that nominations for the 2021-22 Honours and Awards Program are now open. Please help us continue this important tradition by nominating excellence in your community, or by sharing the details of our awards program with colleagues, friends, and family. Once again, nominations are being accepted digitally this year. You can submit a nomination by visiting our website at <https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/honours-awards/>. Thank you for supporting our Honours and Awards program and helping us recognize our heritage champions from across Ontario.

I would like to inform our members across the province of a new initiative launched by the Province of Ontario in October 2021.

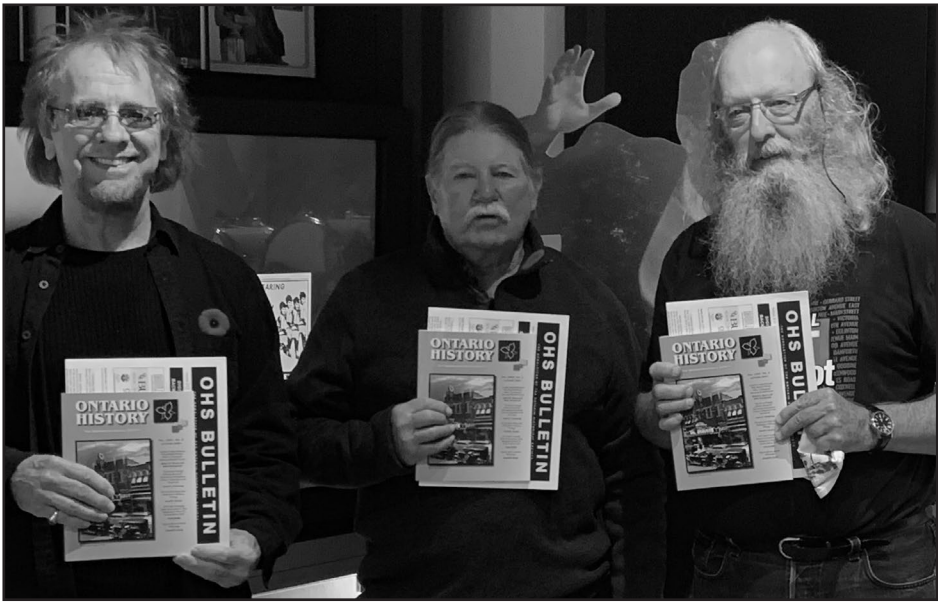


Photo - Sharon Bucny

On Tuesday November 16, Dr. John Carter attended the launch of Greig Stewart's new book *Hawkins, Hound Dog, Elvis & Red: How Rock and Roll Invaded Canada*, at the Friar's Music Museum in Toronto, located inside the building that was once home to the world famous Friar's music club. Shown here are Glen Ellis, publisher of Quick Red Fox Press, author Greig Stewart and OHS columnist John Carter, who recently reviewed *Hawkins, Hound Dog, Elvis & Red* for the Society's scholarly journal, *Ontario History* (Autumn 2021 edition).

As part of the new Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, the Province has launched an Ontario Business Registry. This new tool is intended to help not-for-profit organizations register, file their annual returns, and update their group's information online. All not-for-profit organizations must register their organization at [www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-business-registry](http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-business-registry) to keep their corporation status in good standing.

As we move into the new year, I encourage all of you to engage with your local societies and museums over the next few months, whether virtually or in person.

Finally, I want to thank all of our staff, volunteers, subscribers, and donors for your ongoing commitment to the Society. The OHS relies on your support to continue its important work preserving and promoting our rich and diverse history.

All my best,  
–Michel

ONTARIO HISTORY  
AUTUMN 2021

The 2021 Autumn issue features five new peer-reviewed articles and 13 book reviews

"A Canadian Distinction of Note: London, Ontario’s Labatt Memorial Park, Baseball History’s Oldest, Continuously-Operating Baseball Precinct"

by Robert K. Barney and Riley Nowokowski

"'The Eternal Triangle of Barrie Moviedom': Reproducing Metropolitan Cinema Competition in the Hinterland"

by Aaron E. Armstrong

"The Search for Major John Richardson’s Unknown Writings"

by David R. Beasley

"'Uncertain as to future fate': 1837 Upper Canadian Rebels Incarcerated in 'John Montgomery’s Room' in Toronto’s Jail in 1838"

by Chris Raible


"Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga, 1826 to 1856, an Appeal for Further Study"


by Donald B. Smith

Single copies are available for \$25 plus shipping. Please visit our website for subscriptions to the journal: [ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/ontario-history-journal/](http://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/ontario-history-journal/).

# ONTARIO HISTORY

THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY





Vol. CXIII No. 2  
AUTUMN 2021

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Robert K. Barney and Riley Nowokowski

"The Eternal Triangle of Barrie Moviedom': Reproducing Metropolitan Cinema Competition in the Hinterland"  
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1837 Upper Canadian Rebels Incarcerated in "John Montgomery's Room" in Toronto's Jail in 1838  
Chris Raible

Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga  
Donald B. Smith

Barrie's Roxy Theatre, 1942.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Over the years I have been asked, “What exactly do you do at the OHS?” Well, the short answer is I take the garbage or recycling out every Thursday night. Sometimes this will suffice, with no follow-up questions.

Regular readers of the *OHS Bulletin* will know that we are essentially a membership organization. In fact, the OHS was established 133 years ago by a group of local historical societies to represent them at the provincial and national level. We emerged from the grassroots and some of our founding organizations are still vibrant, active members of the Society today – like the York Pioneer & Historical Society and Lundy’s Lane Historical Society.

The OHS is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-government organization and a registered charity that serves over 570 member organizations and hundreds more individual members located in all regions of Ontario. Simply put – we are here to serve our members and our fellow citizens.

I feel our work is often like watching an iceberg and that our readership only sees what is visible. But beneath the surface, day in day out, we are constantly doing important hidden work on behalf of our membership. “Off the record” conversations and relationships are very much the heart and soul of what we do. This is based on trust and respect developed over many decades. Our members want and need to talk freely to us in confidence about their challenges, and discuss strategies for overcoming obstacles to heritage preservation. It is our duty to always safeguard and protect that confidence and trust.

A lot of hard work and thought goes into preparing submissions, writing letters, and making phone calls to support our members. Recently, I felt it was time to share some of this work with you that is clearly on the public record and would not break any confidentiality. Therefore, new to the OHS website is a sample of recent advocacy letters and submissions, giving you a glimpse of our ongoing behind-the-scenes work on behalf of our members. Please visit [ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/advocacy/](http://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/advocacy/) to learn more.

Since January 2020, the OHS has officially recommended to the Government of Ontario “That all not-for-profit historical organizations incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society under its *Special Act, 1899*, be exempt from property taxes and that the exemption remain active as long as those member organizations continue to be In Good Standing with the Ontario Historical Society.”

Some members of the OHS that own or lease heritage properties do not pay property taxes and some do. Many of those that are levied property taxes are located in rural and northern communities. Provincially, this is not fair or equitable treatment.

I recently heard from the Thornhill Heritage Foundation (THF), which the OHS incorporated on April 19, 2008. THF owns and operates the historic Robert West Heritage House and paid almost \$9,000 in property taxes this year, over 40% of their total annual income.



Photo - Rob Leverty

On Monday, October 25, the OHS held its first official in-person public meeting at the historic John McKenzie House since the pandemic started in March 2020. Seen here in the front hallway are Edo Ten Broek and Lee, both residents of the City of Elliot Lake. They travelled to Willowdale to discuss the establishment and incorporation of the new Elliot Lake Historical Society through affiliation with the OHS. For more information please contact Edo Ten Broek or Marie Murphy at [elliottlakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:elliottlakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or 705-849-8106.

THF’s letter to me states, “This level of property tax has become an existential threat to the long-term survival of the Foundation and, of course, the preservation of the Robert West Heritage House. Representations to the City of Vaughan have not succeeded in getting any tax reduction [...] It is particularly galling to the THF volunteer Board of Directors who all put in much personal time, and their own money as donations (a necessity), to preserve and operate this heritage house as a local and provincial public asset, all at no cost to Vaughan or the Province of Ontario. Rather, it seems, we are a source of revenue for the City and Province.”

As the OHS begins to relaunch our efforts on this critical issue on behalf of our member organizations who either own or lease heritage properties, please do not hesitate to contact me (416-226-9011, [rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca)). Your letters of support are deeply appreciated.

A special welcome to the following historical organizations that the OHS incorporated this past year: Flamborough Museum, Friends of Springfield House Complex, Grey County Black Heritage Society, Heritage Colchester, Friends of Century Manor, Friends of the Old Stone Mill House, and Friends of the Mindemoya Old School.

Finally, I want to thank all our members, subscribers, and donors for your continued support of the OHS in 2021. Your determination, generosity, and unrelenting dedication to preserve and promote our history, continue to inspire us.

It remains a great honour and indeed a privilege to work on your behalf. My best wishes to all of you for good health and fine spirits in 2022.

# 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

[rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:rleverty@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*





# TOURING NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO'S MUSEUMS

**Scott Bradley**, Executive Director, Thunder Bay Museum  
director@thunderbaymuseum.com

In August of 2021, I embarked on a long-overdue road trip to know and understand the land, communities, and museums of the part of Northwestern Ontario to the west of Lake Superior. The pandemic had prevented such a trip from my start as Executive Director with the Thunder Bay Museum in January of 2020. Northwestern Ontario does not disappoint in the beauty of its varied landscapes, natural wonders, historically important communities, industries, and places. My only regret is that I condensed the 1600-kilometre trip into just five days, with little time to further explore the grounds of mines, lumber sites, and other significant places. I will certainly be exploring more of Northwestern Ontario in the future, including the North Shore of Lake Superior.

On the first day of the trip I visited the fantastic Atikokan Centennial Museum & Heritage Park, led by Curator Lois Fenton, and then went on to the Fort Frances Museum & Cultural Centre where I was given a tour by Curator Beverley Cochrane.



Scott Bradley with Atikokan Centennial Museum Curator, Lois Fenton.

The second day started with a spiritual experience at Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre near the Rainy River First Nation led by Administration Manager Kayleigh Speirs. The second day continued with a breathtaking drive north to Kenora amongst the hills and valleys, inlets, and so many beautiful lakes and rivers. I spent just over a day in Kenora learning about the great work happening at The Muse - Lake of the Woods Museum & Douglas Family Art Centre with Director Lori Nelson.

The third day was back on the road, far into the wilderness to the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre led by Director Trevor Osmond. I learned all about their vast institutional history and their impressive recovery from the roof failure disaster in 2019.

The fourth day of the trip I continued on to the Dryden & District Museum for a tour led by Museum and Heritage Coordinator Bethany Waite. From there I drove to Sioux Lookout, but unfortunately, the museum's collection was temporarily being held in storage. Nevertheless, the drive through such a picturesque community was enjoyable and educational in and of itself.

The museums I visited had wildly varied mandates, resources, and strategies. These museums are government entities with the support of internal government services for many operational requirements. Still, budget deliberations often become adversarial. There seems to be minimal regard for financially supporting professional museum standards and preservation requirements. There remains an ongoing need for the renewal of a national and subnational museum strategy that would restore core funding to these vital institutions. This has been a central concern in the museum sector for decades. It is imperative that we recognize that galleries, libraries, archives, and museums are some of the most valuable assets our various levels of government can invest in.

Despite the challenges they face, it was enlightening to see these institutions excelling. It was a pleasure to meet their dedicated and knowledgeable staff in person. I am proud to say that I saw nothing but professionalism and passion for the importance of the work as I visited these wonderful institutions. These visits helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the regional history and the impressive local efforts to preserve it. I would like to thank the Ontario Historical Society for their support in planning and executing this expedition.



A view from the overlook of the former habitation site at Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung on the north shore of the Rainy River. One of the burial mounds is visible in the distance.

# NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY 1008



Photo - Phil Blancher

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 incorporated Friends of Grand Trunk Railway 1008 through affiliation with the OHS on March 11, 2020. The historic Aultsville locomotive and rolling stock were officially signed over to the Friends of Grand Trunk Railway 1008 in November 2021, paving the way for fundraising and hopefully hands-on restoration work in 2022. Shown here are: (from left to right) Gardner Sage, President; Kirsten Gardner; Ross Miller; Jim Brownell; Don Whiting; Craig Stevenson; Jim Becksted, Vice President; and Maggie Wheeler, Treasurer. Not pictured are Ewan McIntosh and Shaun Milligan, Secretary.

## ...‘AWARD WINNERS’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Indigenous History Award (Two Winners):

**The Harmony Collaboration & The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation: *FIRST***

Carnochan Lifetime Achievement Award: **Dave Lemkay**

Cruikshank Gold Medal: **Carolyn King**

### AWARDS FOR AUTHORS

Fred Landon Award: **Dr. Barry Boothman**  
*Corporate Cataclysm: Abitibi Power & Paper and the Collapse of the Newsprint Industry, 1912-1946*

Alison Prentice Award: **Karin Wells**  
*The Abortion Caravan: When Women Shut Down Government in the Battle for the Right to Choose*

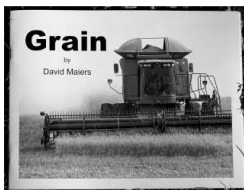
Joseph Brant Award: **Dr. Heidi Bohaker**  
*Doodem and Council Fire: Anishinaabe Governance Through Alliance*

J.J. Talman Award: **Dr. Scott Rutherford**  
*Canada's Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters during the Global Sixties*

Huguenot Society of Canada Award: **Natasha Bakht**  
*In Your Face: Law, Justice, and Niqab-wearing Women in Canada*

Riddell Award: **Dr. Owen Temby**  
*“Control and Suppression in Sarnia’s Chemical Valley during the 1960s,” Enterprise & Society.*

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## MUSEUM MILESTONES

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

I was kindly invited to participate in a recent Zoom call with the Sunset Country Museum Network (SCMN). This is a group of museums, galleries, and historic sites located in Northwestern Ontario. As a provincial Museum Advisor, I have worked with various members of this group for over 30 years. It was great to reconnect, see some familiar faces, and meet new staff. Over the years, some of the museum networks across the province have disbanded, so it is wonderful to see that the Sunset Country folks are still active and holding regular meetings. Keep up the good work! The lead article in this issue of Museum Milestones comes from the Thunder Bay Museum, one of the members of the SCMN.

Speaking of former colleagues, it was great to see an article about Arden Phair, in the October 23 issue of *The Toronto Star*. Arden was the former long-time curator at the St. Catharines Museum. Now a local historian, his recent research provides fascinating information about Canadian author Leslie McFarlane. Under the pen name of Franklin W. Dixon, McFarlane was the first ghost writer of the popular Hardy Boys book series. Between 1927 and 1947, 21 of his works were published. He received the "princely sum" of between \$85 to \$100 per title, though unfortunately no royalty arrangements were ever made. A nice piece of sleuthing by Arden raises the profile of a somewhat-unknown and forgotten Canadian literary giant. Jobs well done by both Arden and Leslie McFarlane.

In other news, Peter Whitehead has replaced Robert Tamtomo at the South Grey Museum in Flesherton. At the Owen Sound Waterfront Heritage Centre, Ashlie Taylor is now the manager, after the departure of Wendy Tomlinson.

Sadly there are a number of passings in the museum/heritage world to report. Jane Beecroft died on October 11. Jane was a well-known Toronto museums,

heritage, and First Nations history activist. She founded the Community Heritage Project in Yorkville, and was the driving force behind the saving and preservation of the Tollkeeper's Cottage. In 2021, she was the proud recipient of the Eagle Award from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for her work with that band on Indigenous rights.

David Boston, the Director of the Horniman Museum for 28 years (located in Forest Hill, south-east London, England), passed away on March 13, 2021. David had a great interest in north-west Canadian native art, and in the wisdom, skills, and importance of Indigenous peoples. In another Canadian connection, after his retirement from the Horniman Museum in 1993, he and his wife Catharine took on the voluntary positions of overseeing Quebec House in Westerham, Kent. This important property, now run by the National Trust, was the childhood home of General James Wolfe. David acted as the honorary curator, and Catharine organized the small army of volunteers at this historic site. Both David and Catharine were consummate hosts during my numerous visits to England while completing my Ph.D. thesis, and I thank them for that and their warm friendship.

William Gerrard, a colleague and friend of mine at the Ministry of Culture and Recreation (MCR), left us on August 11. William worked with museums on various heritage projects, and on government heritage and cultural matters/policies for many years, and will be fondly remembered by his clients and Ministry staff. He initially worked at the Ministry of Natural Resources before transferring to MCR. My condolences to his wife Jean.

Ken MacKeracher died peacefully in Toronto on October 5. As a well-known advocate of lifelong learning, Ken held positions at Humber College, Ryerson University (currently University X), B.C. Institute of Technology, Conestoga College, and the Royal Ontario Museum. For his innovative contributions to adult learning, he was awarded the Canadian Association for Adult Education's Roby Kidd Medal. Ken also served as a councillor for the Ontario Museum Association (OMA).

Please contact me if you have an idea for a story about your site that could be published in future Museum Milestones columns.

## UPDATE FROM THE THUNDER BAY MUSEUM

**Scott Bradley**, Executive Director, Thunder Bay Museum  
director@thunderbaymuseum.com

The Thunder Bay Museum and its parent, the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, are pleased to share this update with the members of the Ontario Historical Society. Many of our fellow institutions have experienced hardship and overcome adversity during these last couple of years. Our institution has endured several tests of leadership and resolve to avoid calamity. Just for context, the Thunder Bay Museum is located in a 3,133 m<sup>2</sup> former police station and courthouse in what was once downtown Fort William. We have eight permanent employees and sometimes over a dozen seasonal and temporary employees at any given time.

The last couple of years have seen the departure of several long-time employees including Executive Director Dr. Thorold Tronrud, who retired in 2019 after 36 years, Exhibits Designer Margaret Hartviksen, who retired after over 30 years, Nick Sottile, the Museum's Chief Administrative Officer, and Breanne Olsen, the Museum's Registrar. We gladly welcomed their successors in due process, respectively, Scott Bradley as Executive Director, Sydney Belluz as Exhibits Curator, Marcus Agombar, as Chief Operations Officer, and Sarah Silvestri as Collections Curator.

To adapt to the new reality the pandemic has imposed on the museum and our society, we have initiated a number of new programs. We started offering webinars, developed capabilities for virtual lectures, tours, education programs, exhibits, and much more. Through the support of Northern Ontario Heritage Fund



The museum campus is located in a former police station at 425 Donald St. East in Thunder Bay.

Corporation (NOHFC), the Museum also entered into a partnership with the Friends of the Finnish Labour Temple and ShebaFilms to start the Reel Memories of the Lakehead Project. The project will digitize and catalogue newsreel footage donated by Dougall Media from 1956 through the mid-1970s.

The Museum has recently created a few temporary exhibits. The first was in commemoration of the 1970 amalgamation of the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur, and the townships of Neebing and McIntyre into the City of Thunder Bay. Another was a vignette on Conservation Officer and artist John Bouchard, immediately followed by an overview of justice system history in Thunder Bay. Finally, a larger exhibit, in partnership with Fort William Historical Park and the Champlain Society, that explores the 1821 merger of the HBC and the North West Company and its long lasting impacts.

The Museum hosted several travelling exhibits in 2020 and 2021 including the Fibre Art Network's Conversations and 20/20 Vision, and the 2021 Grand National Fibre Art Exhibition "Crossroads" and Science North's The Science of Guinness World Records™. We also hosted two exhibits by the Ontario Black History Society, funded in partnership with the Caribbean and African Multicultural Society of Thunder Bay, called the The Roots of Freedom, and Black Canadians in Sport.

The Wendell Beckwith Film Project, a collaboration between the museum staff and its Beckwith Seniors Committee and filmmakers Jim Hyder and Sarah Furlotte, was released early in 2021. Wendell Beckwith, an inventor, master wood worker, and free thinking scientist, ended up living "alone" on the tip of Best Island, north of Armstrong, Ontario, on the remote Whitewater Lake from 1961 to 1980. The project was funded by a generous grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program through the Department of Canadian Heritage. A complementary exhibit is planned for mid-2022.

The Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society also published two books in 2020. F. Brent Scollie's latest book, *Biographical Dictionary and History of Victorian Thunder Bay (1850-1901)*, is an encyclopaedic look at a formative era at the Lakehead and John Potestio's *Becoming Canadian, Memories of an Italian Immigrant*.

The 2020 Car Raffle fundraiser was another challenge, but through the grace of the City of Thunder Bay Lottery License office, we were able to extend the raffle draw to May 1, 2021, and avoid a financial disaster; we had only sold about 1,000 tickets out of 15,000 by the original draw date. The raffle sold out by the draw, and the prize of a 1969 Camaro went to Dan Zegers of Orono, Ontario.

We received two major grants in 2021. Through the Museum Assistance Program and the Ontario Job Creation Partnerships, we were able to replace the shelving in our archives and textile storage area with high-density mobile racks. In a separate project supported by the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, we were able to replace our four HVAC systems that protect our archive and artifact collections.

While the Thunder Bay Museum has seen its fair share of challenges and worry in the last couple of years, the future looks bright with new staff with fresh eyes and optimistic ideologies on how we can be cultural leaders in our community and beyond.



## BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

### FARLEY MOWAT: ADVENTURER, WRITER, CANADIAN SOLDIER

Barry Penhale

barry@naturalheritagebooks.com

Farley Mowat was all his public persona conveyed and quite a lot more. That he was one of the world's best storytellers is on record. Even a partial review of his remarkably prolific writing career reveals an exceptional body of work covering an astonishing number of topics. Farley's concern for and fascination with the Arctic and its people, his environmental activism, his concerns about the survival of whales, along with wide-ranging personal interests, all became the subjects of books that (thanks to countless translations) became available almost everywhere. In one of his award-winning works, written while living in Newfoundland, Farley begins by briefly mentioning his father, Angus Mowat, who, as a result of attending an auction, found himself with all the paraphernalia needed to become a beekeeper, though a very novice one at that. Some two years later his apiary would be put out of commission due to a disease labelled "foul brood." It was no loss to son Farley as it also put an end to a regime he had come to detest – an almost daily diet of honey and soda biscuits. Though not enamoured with honey bees, a youthful Farley Mowat already fancied, as his father did before him, a world of cruising adventures on boats big and small. It is of little wonder that he later became the owner/skipper with his publisher, the well-known Jack McClelland, of a small



Farley Mowat as Platoon Commander with the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment near Ortona, Italy, in 1943. Ortona was the battle that "cost the regiment a third of its fighting men, killed or wounded in body or in spirit."

two-masted schooner – a nasty-smelling rough boat painted a repulsive shade of green. The misadventures that lay ahead were hilariously and brilliantly captured in *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float*.

Farley Mowat, born in Belleville on May 12, 1921, the son of Angus McGill Mowat and Helen Elizabeth Mowat, spent the first nine years of his life in Hastings County, but grew up in Richmond Hill. Angus, after his unsuccessful experience as a beekeeper, entered the library world, serving four years as librarian of the Trenton Public Library, then at the Belleville Library, eventually becoming inspector of libraries for all of Ontario. Throughout his lifetime Farley retained fond memories of recreational hours with his parents on the Bay of Quinte. It has always seemed to this observer that Farley's upbringing by less than conventional parents, (especially his father) helped shape the man destined to become a truly great writer, a much-loved curmudgeon, and one of the best-known Canadians of his time.

In addition to having grown up in a "bookish" environment and acquiring his father's passion for sailing, Farley was also to experience the life of a soldier, as had his father before him. In 1940 he joined the reserve battalion of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment at Picton. Winter found him in Trenton developing ski-training techniques and holding the rank of Acting Second Lieutenant in the Second Battalion. Farley was eventually posted overseas, where he experienced more than his share of the horrors of war, including commanding a platoon in the invasion of Sicily on June 13, 1943. Among his many wartime experiences, Mowat was one of the Canadian soldiers who played a part in the surrender of German forces in the Netherlands and began work with the Dutch underground.

Demobilized in May 1946, a weary Captain Mowat must have uttered a sigh of relief for not having paid a dear price for his role as a key member of an impromptu "museum collecting" group operating without legal status – their combined efforts produced some 900 tons of German weapons, tanks, electronic equipment, rockets, and more. Farley was to disband the "buckshee" unit (often called Farley's Army). Though he brought the collection home on the Dutch ship Blommersdyke, whether he was "officially" approved to do so falls into the "maybe" category! By this time Mowat's reputation for bending rules was well established. His notorious capers and escapades leave little doubt that, once overseas, Farley quickly discovered what dedicated, imaginative "bulls--t" could accomplish. In a letter, Farley's widow, Claire informed me that the massive collection languished in storage for several years following its donation to the Canadian War Museum. It is Claire's understanding that, since being uncovered, some items are now on display at the museum in Ottawa. One of Farley's personal favourite collectibles – a one-man submarine – was gifted to the Royal Canadian Navy.

In 1955 Farley's magnificent account of a Canadian regiment was published to wide acclaim under the title *The Regiment*. Given the main focus of this article, I recently reread Farley's *My Father's Son*, declared to be "The best wartime memoir written by a Canadian" by the *Toronto Star*. This reading prompted treasured memories of having had the privilege of enjoying the friendship of Farley and Claire in years past. My visits to their downtown Port Hope home were always wonderful adventures. Both were among the most hospitable hosts imaginable and, as I discovered, a veritable "who's who" of noted writers, artists, and naturalists could be expected to grace their always-animated dinner table – and Farley's beloved Newfoundland water dogs were never far away. Fortunately, correspondence with Claire has resumed and I couldn't be more delighted. In her latest letter, she recalls trips to North Hastings that allowed Farley to socialize with his fellow veterans. It was the early '60s and she was impressed by the number of enlisted men who had served in Farley's regiment. One was his special friend, Cliff Broad, who had invited them during a particularly frigid February to overnight in his cabin on frozen Lake Weslemkoon. Two memories especially stand out for Claire – one was the welcoming party atmosphere at the cabin when joined by other veterans and their wives. But it was the terrifying trip to the cabin that left a truly lasting impression on her. Farley, at the wheel of a jeep, gleefully driving like a bat out of hell across the frozen lake's surface, all the while assuring Claire, "This is the North – the ice is good for two more months!"

It is a tall order to know how best to remember Farley Mowat in the year in which he would have been 100 years of age. The Rotary Club of Port Hope celebrated their iconic citizen's birthday anniversary with a variety of activities culminating in the creation of the Farley Mowat Park. For many, even today the mere mention of his name rekindles memories of such internationally known books as *Never Cry Wolf*, *People of the Deer*, *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be*, and *And No Birds Sang*, to name but a few. For me, though he is deservedly known for his writings, it is impossible to forget the man's well-known brand of humour. When I told a friend that I was writing about Farley Mowat, his immediate response was, "What a character!" That was how he recalled Farley, and I'm sure many others would agree. Perhaps this is when I should be exclaiming, "Will the real Farley Mowat please stand up?!" The larger-than-life adventurer/soldier/author presents any biographer with a dilemma – namely how to do justice to one who lived life so fully. Fortunately, while overseas, the aspiring writer corresponded regularly with his parents and surviving letters not only provide a window on the realities of war – they also reveal his own coming-of-age experiences. Such topics the veteran was to revisit in several celebrated books written after being back in a Canada he found greatly changed. The man he had become – perhaps in appearance just another war veteran – was one with a purpose and the determination to make his way as a fulltime writer. The rest, as they say, is history. So, how best to remember the man? Surely as a literary heavyweight and, yes, at times an outrageous character! But in this time of "Frontline Heroes," I have opted to remember Farley Mowat as feisty Captain Mowat, a proud member of the Hasty Ps. For at no time, no matter how famous he became as an author, did Farley Mowat's enormous pride in his regiment ever wane. That in itself is a legacy worth treasuring.



Captain Farley Mowat, the Second World War veteran back in Richmond Hill, Ontario, December 1945.

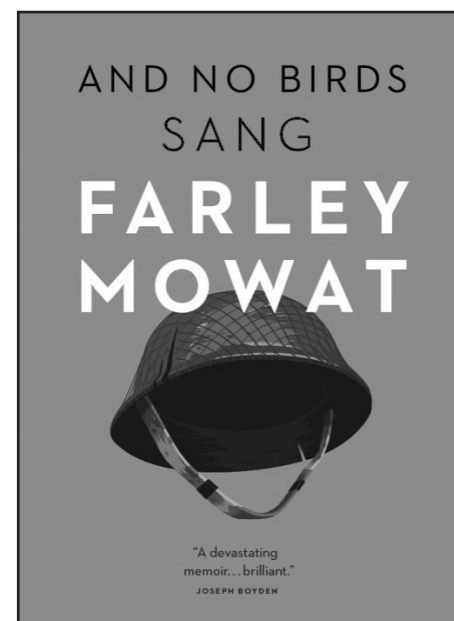


Photo – Courtesy of Farley Mowat Ltd.

Photo – And No Birds Sang (Douglas & McIntyre)



## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

**Dr. Cynthia Comacchio**  
ccomac5702@rogers.com

This time of year – late November, as I write – always brings to mind that memorable line from the equally memorable ballad by our national troubadour (if ever anyone could lay claim to that title in a country where nothing gets to be "national"). I'm thinking of "When the gales of November came early" from Gordon Lightfoot's poignant "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." Those words are not entirely appropriate, seeing as it is no longer early November and we have, in fact, had unseasonably warm temperatures during a month that is otherwise notably dark and dreary. Nonetheless, those gales are stirring up some seasonal snow squalls right now, and it's easy to forget that it was 20° C only last week. About the darkness, there is no debate. In southwestern Ontario, as across this vast province, dusk sets in at about 3:30.

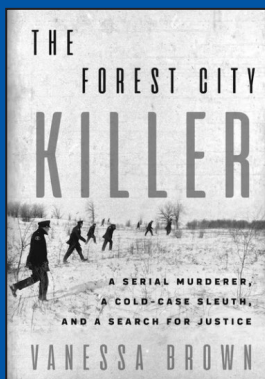
This is why we so look forward to the ancient event that is the winter solstice, thankfully coming up soon. And why people of all faiths, and none, have timed important annual rituals near that very date. Each of these, religious and secular, has to do with light. So we hold on, year after year, and look towards the return of the light. Especially after the year we have endured!

Light a fire, real or artificial, turn on the lamps, and cozy up for some historical reading. And all best wishes for the solstice and any holiday you choose to celebrate as this year ends, plus many, many wondrous and light-bringing things for the year to come!

not conclusive, Brown's own detective work – pursued through the case files of the police officer in charge, Denis Alsop, as well as local newspapers, interviews with police and local people (including Alsop's son), legal files, forensic reports, and photographs – presents a convincing case. A London resident, local historian/antiquarian, and bookstore owner, Brown is ideally situated to understand the local impact of these crimes and the nature of the response. Ultimately, what comes through in *The Forest City Killer* is her desire to see this cold case brought to its best possible conclusion, with justice for the victims and their families after some fifty years of dead ends.

In *The Man with the Black Valise* (the valise is a vital piece of evidence), veteran Toronto journalist and city historian John Goddard takes a unique approach to the true-crime story by presenting it in two connected but separate parts. The book's first part focuses on the murder and the pursuit of the killer by Detective John Wilson Murray, reputedly the model for the renowned Detective William Murdoch of Murdoch Mysteries fame. The perpetrator's own life history is certainly not an uncommon one for the times; many unmarried men of all ages "tramped" to survive in a society that had little room and less heart for those without families, homes, and "honest work". A victim and outcast with little to lose, he killed a child much loved by her family and community. Her father's words are engraved on her tombstone: "She is missed every day." The book's second part is an imaginative "mapping" of the streets, locations, landmarks, and buildings, quite simply the landscape, of the Keith murder. As I noted, like Brown, this social geography permits a sense of how such a thing could happen in a small and relatively tight-knit rural town, and how that local context shaped both the police approach and the local response.

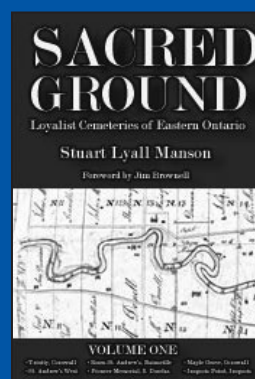
Brown and Goddard have produced vivid accounts of awful events that are certainly readable, though not in the manner of the "cozy historical mystery" of the Detective Murdoch kind. As history goes, these stories reveal much to counter any twenty-first century nostalgia about the safety, harmony, and low crime rates of years gone by.



*The Forest City Killer:  
A Serial Murderer, A Cold-Case Sleuth,  
and the Search for Justice*

**VANESSA BROWN**

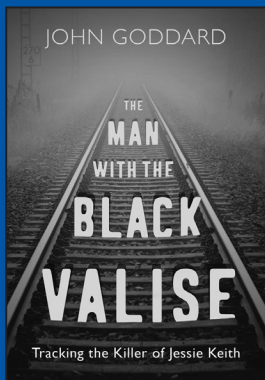
Toronto: ECW Press, 2019.  
Paperback; 347 pp.  
ecwpress.com



*Sacred Ground, Loyalist Cemeteries of  
Eastern Ontario, Volume One*

**STUART LYALL MANSON**

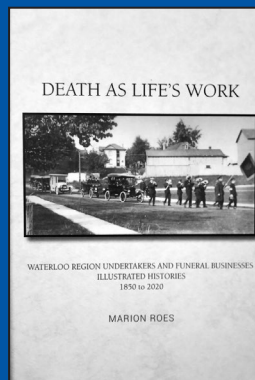
Global Heritage Press, 2021  
Paperback; 215 pp.  
globalgenealogy.com



*The Man with the Black Valise:  
Tracking the Killer of Jessie Keith*

**JOHN GODDARD**

Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2019.  
Paperback; 240 pp.  
dundurn.com



*Death as Life's Work: Waterloo Region  
Undertakers and Funeral Businesses,  
Illustrated Histories, 1850 to 2020*

**MARION ROES**

St. Jacobs: St. Jacobs Printery, 2021.  
Paperback; 534 pp.  
mlroes@sympatico.ca

Vanessa Brown and John Goddard have written fascinating books in the "true crime" genre. Both are supported with meticulous research, pay due attention to the social and historical contexts of the crimes discussed, and show an impressive sensitivity to the community responses of the time. These books are about more than some hideous true crimes that happened years ago, in Goddard's case more than a century: they are social histories. The authors focus on a particular crime, or series of crimes, not incidentally perpetrated against women. Brown discusses a cold case in *The Forest City Killer*, a series of brutal murders that took place in London fifty years ago and remain unsolved. Also at issue is whether these crimes were the work of one person, which would make the perpetrator the worst serial killer in Canadian history. Her story, therefore, has no resolution. Goddard takes up the rape and murder of thirteen-year-old Jessie Keith in rural Listowel in 1894. The incident so shocked the community that some feared Jack the Ripper, or an imitator, was behind it. Unlike Brown, Goddard can tell us from the start that the perpetrator was a middle-aged drifter from Quebec who was tramping his way through Ontario in search of work. Both authors transcend the true crime category because, while the crime[s] are their subject matter, the stories as they tell them reveal much about prevailing gender and class constructions, whether in the so-called swinging 'sixties, Brown's "stage", or the late Victorian setting of Goddard's story.

As her title suggests, Brown's story takes place in London, the Forest City, at a time when it was a fair-sized city in close enough proximity to Toronto to be within that greater metropolitan orbit, but far enough away to retain a small-town sensibility. It was perhaps that sense of security and "everybody knows their neighbours" viewpoint, Brown surmises, that did not connect the crimes, and inadvertently allowed the killing spree to continue and to remain unresolved. Not all the attacks happened in London, several took place in its satellite rural towns. And while the evidence that these crimes were, in fact, the work of one person is

Both seasoned independent local historians with a number of published works to their credit, Stuart Manson and Marion Roes are working on a three-part series Manson opening his and Roes concluding hers. Manson's *Sacred Ground* constitutes the first volume in a planned trilogy exploring the subject of Loyalist cemeteries. Here, he focuses on the Loyalist settlements of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry Counties. Useful as it is for identifying some of the "sacred grounds" with significant Loyalist burials in Eastern Ontario, this addition to the extant literature also enlarges the cataloguing process that is fundamental to cemetery research. The author carefully fills in the context and traces the development of each site in six chapters. But he also takes his story beyond the structural and into the biographical, with fascinating accounts of the lives of some of the Loyalists interred in each one. Military history enthusiasts will find much to entice them in his discussion of the Loyalist regiments in Canada both during the American Revolutionary War and in their veterans' associations and services. Genealogists will be excited to see how he explores the interactions and interrelations of the settlers generationally through marriages and births as well as deaths, and the nominal index will be a boon to personal family research. There is also "background" discussion of how such technological marvels as the early canals and the St. Lawrence Seaway, while received as "progress" and undoubtedly furthering the region's industrialization, nonetheless disrupted everyday lives. The appendix provides the locations of each cemetery, a sample genealogy of two Loyalist families, and two remarkable primary sources pertaining to individuals whose stories are especially interesting. The first-rate analysis is complemented by a breezy narrative style that makes for easy reader immersion. Manson's efforts, in this initial work and undoubtedly in subsequent volumes, are required reading for our many OHS members who are interested in and working for the preservation of historic cemeteries in this province.

**'FROM THE BOOKSHELF' CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...**

# 2021-22 HONOURS AND AWARDS NOMINATIONS

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Recognizing an outstanding public history project completed in the award year.

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## INDIGENOUS HISTORY AWARD

Recognizing significant contributions toward the promotion or preservation of Indigenous history or heritage in Ontario.

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Awarded to an individual or a not-for-profit heritage organization for having demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the preservation and protection of cemeteries in Ontario.

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Honouring the best book on Ontario’s social, economic, political, or cultural history published in the past three years.

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Honouring the best scholarly article on Ontario’s history published in 2021.

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Honouring the best book of biography or autobiography highlighting life in Ontario, past or present, published in the past three years.

## HUGUENOT SOCIETY OF CANADA AWARD

Honouring the best book or substantial article published in Ontario in the past three years which has brought public awareness to the principles of freedom of conscience and freedom of thought.

### ...‘FROM THE BOOKSHELF’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

While Stuart Manson commences his trilogy on cemeteries and grave-markers, Marion Roes is concluding hers on Waterloo Region funerals with this final volume, sharp on the heels of 2019’s *Mennonite Funerals and Burial Traditions* [reviewed in an earlier column]. With more than 500 pages, the closing volume was supported by a generous publication grant from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation, without whose support many independent regional historians would not be able to carry out their vital work. With many illustrations to support and enhance the oral histories, biographical sketches, and enticing details that the historian has woven together, what emerges is a reverent but spirited glimpse into the mourning rituals and practices of a community that is both integrated into regional/provincial society but also a self-defined and cohesive community of its own. As such, it is often very protective of its members’ privacy; while we know about internal political and religious institutions, then, it is understandably more challenging to “see” past the threshold

of private homes. While that is not the author’s primary purpose, funeral rituals and practices are paradoxically—for all social groups—at once public events but intensely personal, private, and subjective experiences. Marion Roes has once again managed to provide an excellent basis for both the business side of death and mourning, with her discussion of funeral services, and also the personal side, brought to the reader through individual memories, largely focused on food preparation and sharing, the gathering of family, friends and community mourners, and related mourning practices both private and public. As such, she takes us into the social and cultural history of one ethnoreligious and largely agrarian community through a century and a half of the province’s history. As always, the book’s many vignettes and interviews, photographs and illustrations, make for compelling reading, and perhaps a clearer grasp of how death, until recently, was always a community event as much as birth and marriage. That seems especially relevant in these days of Covid, an event that has so disrupted even our minimalist contemporary practices. There is much to learn here.

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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)

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