

# OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 219

APRIL 2022

**OHS NOW OFFERING DIGITAL DELIVERY  
OF THE *OHS BULLETIN***

**OHS JOINS  
CLIMATE HERITAGE NETWORK**



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

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

In March, 2022, the OHS notified all members with an email address on file that the Society is now offering two delivery options for the *OHS Bulletin*.

When a new edition of the *Bulletin* is released, all OHS members will receive an email containing a link to the digital version of the Society's latest newsletter.

If you do not currently have an email address linked to your OHS profile, please contact staff to help you get set up. Staff can be reached at [ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca), or 416-226-9011.

Those that wish to continue receiving the *Bulletin* in print may do so, but members are encouraged to consider the digital option for environmental reasons. Every year, thousands of newsletters are printed and mailed out by the OHS, amounting to a significant use of paper, energy, resources, and ink. As the Society looks to reduce its carbon footprint, we are thrilled to now be offering an alternative.

Opting out of the print delivery is simple and easy. The opt-out process takes less than a minute, and can be done on the [OHS website](https://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca) at any time.

Members are encouraged to add an email address to get access to the colourful, interactive digital copy as soon as it becomes available, even if they wish to continue receiving the newsletter in print.

For OHS members who are unfamiliar with the process of editing their online profile, please feel free to contact OHS staff at your convenience. Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

As part of a growing initiative at the OHS to become more active in the movement against climate change, OHS Project Manager and Librarian Sarah McCabe attended a webinar on December 8, 2021, hosted by the National Trust for Canada: "[Gathering of the Heritage Sector: COP26 and Climate Heritage Action](#)." During the webinar, peer organizations in attendance were encouraged to join the Climate Heritage Network and begin working towards a greater integration of climate change action in their day-to-day operations. The OHS is very pleased to announce that in March 2022, the Society was accepted as new a member of Climate Heritage Network.

The [Climate Heritage Network \(CHN\)](#) is a global network whose members are committed to mobilizing arts, culture, and heritage to address climate change and support communities in achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. CHN seeks to scale up culture-based climate action and to foreground the cultural dimensions of climate policy through coordination and cooperation among its members.

CHN members work with all types of culture including arts and creative industries; museums and libraries; landscapes, heritage sites, and archaeology; and intangible heritage, traditional knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Network members include: arts, culture, and heritage units of government at all levels; Indigenous Peoples' governments, representative bodies, and organizations; site management agencies; NGOs and other organizations; universities and research organizations; design firms, artists, and other businesses.

As the OHS aims to have more of an impact on climate change and work toward the reduction of its own carbon footprint, the Society is exploring any and all opportunities to connect with like-minded organizations and movements. In that same vein, we have recently announced a paperless delivery option for this newsletter, the *OHS Bulletin*, which you can read more about in the adjacent article. Staff are committed to effecting change in any way possible, and we will continue to work toward this goal.

## IN THIS ISSUE

OHS JOINS CLIMATE HERITAGE NETWORK	1
<i>OHS BULLETIN</i> NOW AVAILABLE DIGITALLY	1
PRESIDENT'S REPORT	2
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT	3
PLAQUE PROGRAM IN COBALT RECOGNIZES UNIQUE ART HISTORY	4
ONTARIO HISTORY SPRING 2022	4
MUSEUM MILESTONES	5
THE TORONTO RAILWAY MUSEUM IN ROUNDHOUSE PARK	5
BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO: WILMA MORRISON	6
FROM THE BOOKSHELF	7
CEMETERY NEWS	8

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



PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Michel Beaulieu, President  
michel.beaulieu@lakeheadu.ca

Hello. Bonjour. Boozhoo.

To borrow from a somewhat over-used phrase to describe Northern Ontario, our province is a “vast and magnificent land.” I was recently reminded of this as I made the familiar trek south from Thunder Bay to visit family and friends. As is always the case when I near Webbwood (the town, incidentally, that elected Canada's first female mayor, Barbara Hanley in 1936), I get nostalgic.

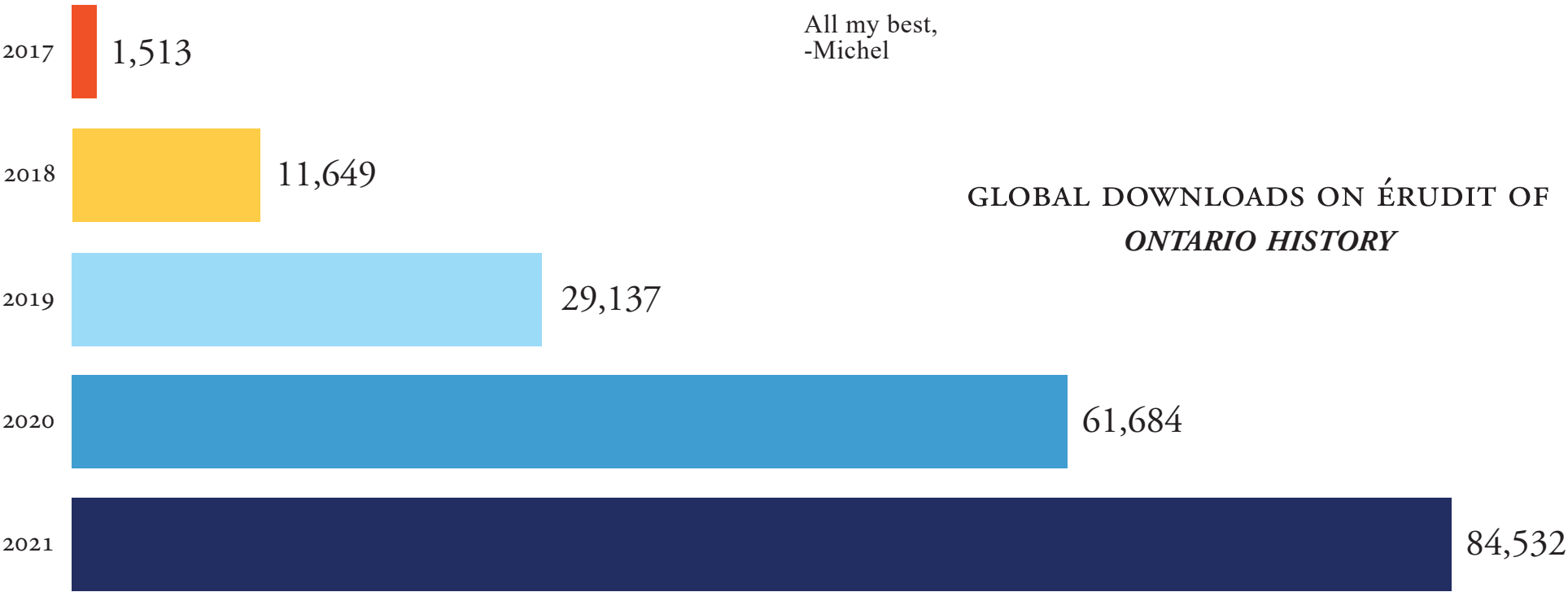
For a number of years, and more times than I can remember, I would board the evening Greyhound Bus in Thunder Bay and make the long trip to Toronto to visit family and to work. The twenty-plus hours on a Greyhound Bus in the depths of winter was the only real option for me in the mid-1990s. Passenger train service ended in the mid-1980s and passenger ship service even farther back. Driving required a car, and air travel was not even a consideration due to the expense.

As arduous as these trips seemed at the time, they did expose me to many First Nations, cities, towns, and villages along highway 11/17. Each trip I found myself wondering about the people and history of these places as I passed through. In some respects, these trips spurred my interest in the history of Northern Ontario and, to the chagrin of many I know, have filled long summer evenings about why, for example, there is a 12-sided barn in Iron Bridge and why Port Coldwell is now abandoned (and often referred to as a “ghost town,” although I have yet to see one).

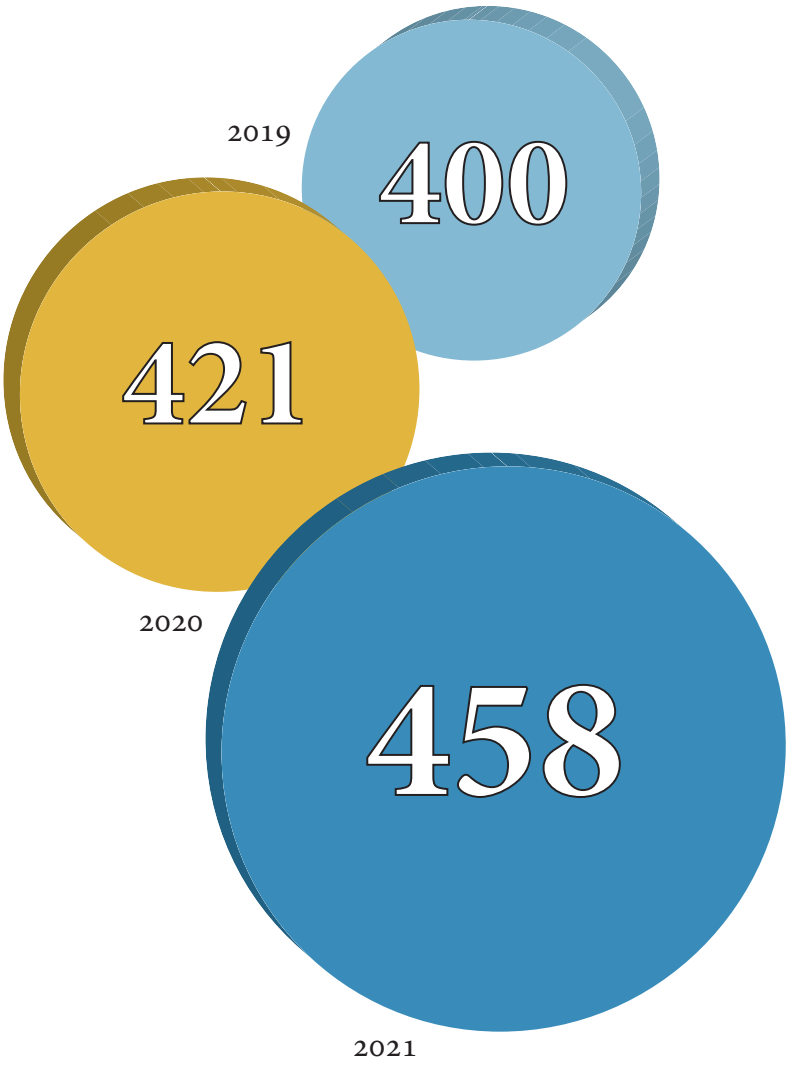
It is thanks to the dedication of many (mostly volunteers) that we can learn about the history and heritage of Ontario. I was reminded of this when the OHS Board of Directors met on February 10, 2022. Representing all corners of the province, I am continually struck by their knowledge, enthusiasm, and passion. As we discussed the many challenges facing the efforts to preserving, promoting, and protecting our shared history (aspects of which are covered elsewhere in this *Bulletin*), we were also updated on and shared information about our recent achievements and successes. One I’d like to share is how *Ontario History* journal has expanded exponentially its readership and reach.

As members will recall, in 2017 we signed an Agreement with [Érudit](#), a Canadian non-profit publishing platform, to host the digital version of *Ontario History* (now starting with the 2005 Autumn issue). Since then, the journal has seen annual increases in revenue, subscribers, and article/book review downloads. In 2021, over 84,000 articles and book reviews were downloaded (an average of 232 a day), a 700% increase over 2018! At the same time, *Ontario History* is now being read in over 55 countries. As a result, more and more people in Ontario and around the world have access to and are discovering more about Ontario’s history. If they are anything like me and the Society’s volunteers, they will no doubt be drawn to visit the places they read about to learn more.

I'm also pleased to report that *Ontario History* journal (which published 10 new peer-reviewed articles and 21 book reviews in 2021) saw a 9% increase in print subscribers in 2021 over 2020, including



PRINT SUBSCRIBERS TO  
ONTARIO HISTORY



61 new subscriptions. Furthermore, 2,269 *Ontario History* back issues (1899 to 2005 Spring) were downloaded through the [OHS website’s digital archive](#). This increased activity shows that interest in stories about Ontario's history and heritage remains strong. It is important to note that these downloads are not just coming from Ontario, but from all around the world. I am proud to say that our Society's journal is a leading force in promoting our province's history on a global scale.

As you will have read on page one, the Society recently announced that we will now be offering two delivery options for the *OHS Bulletin*: print and digital. With this issue of the *Bulletin*, all OHS members (with an email address on file) will have received an email containing a link to the digital version. While we still offer the print edition to any members that wish to continue receiving it, I am very pleased to know that we are doing our part to offer a more sustainable options. Moreover, I have to say that seeing the *Bulletin* in colour, and with embedded hyperlinks, is truly a major improvement in my eyes.

Finally, just as we are going to print, we learned that the Society has once again been approved by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for Institutional Eligibility. This approval means that the Society is eligible to administer SSHRC grants and awards, such as the Aid to Scholarly Journals Grant that assists in funding *Ontario History*.

All my best,  
-Michel

GLOBAL DOWNLOADS ON ÉRUDIT OF  
ONTARIO HISTORY



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

## 2021 Financial Statements

I am pleased to report that the Society's 2021 financial statements, independently audited by Akler Browning LLP, show a balance sheet that is sound and healthy with no outstanding debts or liabilities. Last year the OHS incurred a fiscal surplus and increased its total net assets.

Given that our annual provincial operating grant has been essentially frozen for the last 25 years and its current value has decreased in terms of real dollars by over 50% due to inflation, how has OHS accomplished such positive financial statements?

For 2021, it is mainly because of you. Thanks to all of you for renewing your membership, your subscription to *Ontario History*, your donated time and expertise in support of the Society's activities, and your increased charitable financial donations last year. Total donations were up 301% including, for example, the OHS Cemetery Defence Fund, which went from \$883 in 2020 to \$5,988 last year.

The Society has also had to rely more and more every year on the investment income from our restricted Trust Funds established through our Planned Giving Program. We are deeply grateful for legacy bequests from the Estates of Jean Burnet, Helen Marie Smibert, Eber Pollard, Mary C.J. Campanella, Ruth E. Day, and Helen Marguerite Barons. In 2021, the OHS saw investment income of \$45,748.72, which was critical in helping to fund the Society's operating expenses, including maintenance of the historic John McKenzie House and property.

We salute the excellent work of the Vikrant Group at ScotiaMcLeod who have been the account managers for the OHS financial portfolio, which includes the Society's Trust Funds and the *Ontario History* Endowment, since 2012.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding work of our bookkeeper, Jean Labrecque, who has ensured throughout the pandemic that every single dollar of income and expense is properly accounted for.

The OHS remains committed to its policies of fiscal discipline, strict spending controls, no debts, and prudent financial management.

Again, we could not have done it without your support and generosity. It is deeply appreciated. Thank you so much!

## Alison Prentice Award Trust Fund

In the *OHS Bulletin* last August, we announced the establishment of a new Alison Prentice Award Trust Fund. Every year, the OHS Alison Prentice Award recognizes the best book on Canadian women's history published in the last three years. I am very pleased to report that last year, \$17,675 was donated to this restricted Trust Fund. The annual income generated will be dedicated to a cash prize, given to the winner of the Alison Prentice Award. To grow this Trust Fund and increase its yearly income, charitable donations are being accepted. You may donate through our website, by mail, by phone, or by Interac e-Transfer to [payment@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:payment@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca).

## Property Taxes On Natural and Built Heritage

On January 31, I gave my fourth detailed submission in the last two years to the Provincial Government on our request ***"That the Government of Ontario take province-wide action and amend the Assessment Act so that 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 exemption remain active as long as those member organizations continue to be in Good Standing with The Ontario Historical Society."***

While property taxes might seem like more of a pre-pandemic issue, I argued that the pandemic has exacerbated the financial burden. Since March 2020, mostly rural and northern historical societies that own or lease heritage properties and must pay property taxes have been severely disadvantaged as they have been closed to the public and rely solely on volunteers and small community-based fundraising activities to pay for their ongoing maintenance expenses, insurance, and capital restoration costs. ***"Exemption from future property taxes by the Government of Ontario will be a crucial pandemic recovery initiative for remote and northern historical organizations incorporated by the OHS."***

I also noted that "the 2018 Ontario Fall Economic Statement announced that the Province would create a province-wide property tax exemption for



Photo – Rob Leverty

On Saturday, April 2, the OHS was thrilled to participate in its first major in-person public event since the start of the pandemic more than two years ago.

The Society attended a very successful community gathering at the Hanley Institute in Flesherton, Grey County, Ontario. The Hanley Institute is located at the historic St. John's United Church (1877).

This special production celebrated the centenary of Agnes Macphail becoming the first woman Member of Parliament with an adaptation at the Hanley Theatre Club of Diane Gordon's noted one-woman play, *Macphail*, which toured nationally in the 1980s.

Diane Gordon lived and worked in South Grey for a time and, together with writers Theresa Sears and David Switzer, she created a memorable retelling of the history of Southeast Grey's most prominent political figure.

The production is part of the activities surrounding a Heritage Canada Legacy Grant to The Flesherton Community Theatre for the Performing Arts project, for the restoration of the 145-year-old former church youth centre into a broader community cultural venue.

Pictured here (from left to right) are Jenny Hanley, Executive Director/Producer at the Hanley Institute; Elena Bateman, member of the Hanley Theatre Club, playing Agnes Macphail in the project's theatrical tribute; and Tim Reilly, Production Manager for the project.

Please visit their website for more information: [thehanleyinstitute.ca](http://thehanleyinstitute.ca). You can also contact the Hanley Insitutue at: [thehanleyinstitute@gmail.com](mailto:thehanleyinstitute@gmail.com), 519-378-4082.

properties occupied by Ontario branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, to take effect in 2019. The Assessment Act was amended in December 2018 through Bill 57, the Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018. This amendment added section 15.1 to the Assessment Act to create this new property tax exemption for Legion properties in Ontario. It took effect as of January 1, 2019."

As the Mayor of Latchford, George Lefebvre, states in support of the OHS property tax exemption request: "During 2019, the Province of Ontario exempted all Royal Canadian Legion Branches from municipal taxation which included Sgt. Aubrey Cosens V.C. Br 629 here in Latchford. Despite our limited assessment base, the loss of this taxation had absolutely no impact on all other taxpayers here."

Therefore, I submitted that ***"enacting our focused request for property tax exemption would not set a major precedent or have any distinguishable financial impact."***

If this heritage issue is not resolved before the upcoming June 2nd provincial election, I urge you to ask all the party candidates in your constituency that if they are elected, will they support our request in the next Legislative Assembly of Ontario?

Thank you and enjoy the spring!



# PLAQUE PROGRAM IN COBALT RECOGNIZES UNIQUE ART HISTORY

David C. Brydges  
mybrydges@yahoo.ca

In 2015, historian Vivian Hylands and I started envisioning plaques in the downtown area to highlight Cobalt's art history. Vivian's sudden passing in 2017 was a heartbreaking loss; her vision for the project had been a critical driving force.



Shown above are Vivian's daughter Valerie Hostetler and Project Coordinator David C. Brydges of the Vivian Hylands Art Tour standing in front of two heritage plaques in the Major Holland V.C Park in Cobalt.

After Vivian's passing, I continued lobbying for support of the project. It was at this time that Ann-Marie Loranger, Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Temiskaming Shores, expressed an interest in getting involved. Ann-Marie spearheaded the installation of four plaques in the Town of Cobalt and Coleman Township. These four plaques recognized Cobalt's storied art history.

I then began fundraising in the summer of 2021 to support the installation of more plaques. The response was incredible! Individuals, businesses, art and culture groups, and foundations from the community all stepped up to support the project. Among them were the Temiskaming Foundation, Cobalt Legacy Fund, Silver Lodge Fund, and five municipalities.

Six plaques were installed in Cobalt in 2021. The first plaque honours the Cobalt Artist Colony, which began in 1958 and is one of the oldest in Canada. The other plaques recognize the artistic contributions made by Laura Landers, Sir Frederick Grant Banting, George Cassidy, Yvonne McKague Housser, and Marianne Vander Dussen.

Last year, the McMichael Canadian Art collection had two exhibitions on Cobalt art. The first, "Uninvited: Canadian Women Artists in the Modern Moment," showed six of Yvonne McKague Housser's works and one of Bess Housser's. The other, "A Like Vision: The Group of Seven at 100," had A.Y. Jackson's Cobalt paintings as well as Franklin Carmichael's famous painting, *A Northern Silver Mine*, 1930. That exhibition also featured a whole wall of streetscape sketches.

Catharine Mastin, Ph.D., is preparing an exhibition at McMichael on the modern artists who painted Cobalt's silver mining camp. Her work will add further revision to the story of how Group of Seven artists Franklin Carmichael, A.Y. Jackson, Sir Frederick Grant Banting, and their female contemporaries Yvonne McKague Housser, Isabel McLaughlin, Roddy Kenny Courtice, and Bess Housser artistically responded to Cobalt. The Cobalt story is a timeless testament to how history enjoined to art enriches us today.

# ONTARIO HISTORY SPRING 2022

The 2022 Spring issue features five new peer-reviewed articles and 13 book reviews

**"The Prince of Wales visits Guelph, 1919: The Debut of Prince Charming, Celebrity Ladies' Man"**

*by Cameron Shelley*

**"'In a Satisfactory, Organized, and Scientific Fashion:' Sex Education and Ontario's Ministry of Education, 1955–1979"**

*by Brent Brenyo*

**"'Mr. Stubbs the Entertainer' and His Travelling Motion Picture Show"**

*by Robert G. Clarke*

**"Toronto's Nineteenth-Century Exhibition Parks: '...free of admission to all peaceable persons...'"**

*by David Bain*

**"The Largest Stock of Guns in Canada: Charles Stark and Firearm Retailing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Toronto"**


*by R. Blake Brown*

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. CXIV NO. 1  
SPRING 2022

*The Prince of Wales visits Guelph, 1919: The Debut of Prince Charming, Celebrity Ladies' Man*  
Cameron Shelley

*Sex Education and Ontario's Ministry of Education, 1955–1979*  
Brent Brenyo

*"Mr. Stubbs the Entertainer" and His Travelling Motion Picture Show*  
Robert G. Clarke

*Toronto's Nineteenth-Century Exhibition Parks*  
David Bain

*The Largest Stock of Guns in Canada: Charles Stark and Firearm Retailing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Toronto*  
Blake Brown

Photo courtesy of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society.



## MUSEUM MILESTONES

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

It is heartening to learn that many museums, galleries, heritage centres, and archives are again opening to the public. There have been tough times for many cultural institutions throughout the pandemic. If you are intending to visit one of these institutions in your area, please make sure to contact each site for clarification about ongoing rules, protocols, hours of operation, and exhibits/programming. If you are in Toronto or plan to visit in the near future, one of the museums I would highly recommend is the Toronto Railway Museum. The lead article below, written by museum volunteer Brendan Read, offers some interesting information about this specialty museum.

In the province's north-west, the Thunder Bay Museum (TBM) is open, but maintains its masking policy and physical distancing measures. The TBM recently partnered with the Centre of Education and Research on Aging and Health to present "Stepping Into the Past." This innovative tour for people with dementia (and their care givers) enabled these visitors to enjoy the fine exhibits and wonderful collections at this site. Kudos!

The City of Waterloo Museum has also reopened. In addition, it has launched a brand new website of its own, which has evolved over the last two years. Check out [waterloo.ca/museum](http://waterloo.ca/museum) to find out what is happening there.

At the [Museum of Dufferin](http://Museum of Dufferin) (MOD), the Dufferin County Multicultural

Foundation and the museum are partnering to plan and develop a new exhibit called "Unity in Diversity." Artists, sculptors, and photographers are being asked to submit a piece of artwork that represents their heritage, culture, and the spirit of multiculturalism. Applications are due by April 23. For more information, please contact curator Sarah Robinson at [srobinson@dufferinmuseum.com](mailto:srobinson@dufferinmuseum.com).

The So Let's All Talk Education (SLATE) 2022 conference and workshop will be held on June 6 at the Wilson MacDonald Memorial Schoolhouse Museum in Selkirk, Ontario. Nice to see that this long-running initiative is up and running again after being on hold due to Covid-19. For additional information and registration, contact Christine Chapel at [christine.chapel@peelsb.com](mailto:christine.chapel@peelsb.com).

It was great to see a recent feature article in the [Toronto Star about the Canadian Clock Museum in Deep River](#). It provided wonderful coverage about one of north-eastern Ontario's gems. As many of you will remember, the Canadian Clock Museum won the [OHS President's Award in 2018](#). Call curator Alan Symons at 613-584-9687 or visit the museum online at [canclockmuseum.ca](http://canclockmuseum.ca) to find out the latest about Canada's only clock museum.

At Todmorden Mills Museum in East York, Lisa Randall recently won the competition for Administrator, replacing recently retired Ulana Baluk. Congratulations, Lisa.

I was sad to learn of the death of Dr. James (Jim) Cruise. This well-known botanist was appointed as the ninth Director (CEO) of the Royal Ontario Museum in 1975, a position he held for ten years. On his retirement, Dr. Jim moved back to Norfolk County, where he was actively involved with the Lighthouse Festival Theatre, the Norfolk Historical Society, the Dover Mills Heritage Association, and the Port Dover and Woodhouse Horticultural Society. A great loss to the Ontario museum community, and our condolences go out to his family.

## THE TORONTO RAILWAY MUSEUM IN ROUNDHOUSE PARK

**Brendan Read**, Toronto Railway Historical Association Volunteer  
Contact Manager & Curator Kelly Burwash for further information: [kburwash@trha.ca](mailto:kburwash@trha.ca)

The Toronto Railway Museum (TRM) tells the story of Toronto's railways, but the museum has its own story to tell.

Let's go back 36 years, to 1986. The array of rail yards belonging to the CPR and its archrival Canadian National Railways (CN) that once served businesses with freight trains and supported intercity passenger trains was disappearing as subsidized road and airline competition changed the transportation industry. The remaining freight facilities were moved to suburbs. The intercity passenger service was in decline and its facilities diminished in scope and size. When VIA Rail was established, they moved their limited passenger service and facilities away from the city core while still serving the public from Union Station.

In the place of rail facilities, new development began to spread across the downtown core, filling the vacant spaces. The resulting congestion—a result of the city's growth and redevelopment—led to the 1967 launch and expansion of the GO Transit regional rail system, which necessitated the construction of small, dedicated yards near Union Station.

As railways began to disappear, the importance of telling this history grew. The Toronto & York Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association (CRHA) opened a small museum of historic locomotives and railcars on the city's waterfront in 1975. Unfortunately, limited resources forced it to close just six years later in 1981.

In 1986, the CPR traded the John Street Roundhouse (which would become a railway museum) to the City of Toronto in exchange for regulatory concessions

on its other properties. With the facility in public ownership, proposals for a railway museum soon emerged. The most elaborate of these visions proposed building a dome over the entire roundhouse for a comprehensive transportation museum. With an estimated cost of \$50 million (in today's dollars), the project fell apart, as advocating organizations failed to secure adequate funding.

In the meantime, the tracks that linked the John Street Roundhouse with the rail network were removed, and all but the roundhouse, the coaling tower, and the water tower were demolished. The coaling tower was later moved from its original site at the east end of the property to its current location in order to accommodate expansion at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

In 1990, the roundhouse was declared a National Historic Site, citing it as "an architecturally and historically important surviving reminder of steam technology and the role of rail transportation in the City of Toronto." With this in mind, the City of Toronto gradually refined its museum plans. The City decided that the site and facility would be self-sustaining by leasing most of the roundhouse stalls to generate income to support the museum.

The Toronto Railway Historical Association (TRHA) was formed in 2001 and incorporated in 2005. It was established to advocate on behalf of a railway museum in Toronto. The TRHA began by developing a very productive working relationship with the City. Work began on the building restoration and site construction in 2007. The opening of the new museum took place in 2010.

With the building restoration complete, stalls 1 to 11 were rented to the Steam Whistle Brewery, while Leon's Furniture, later the Rec Room, occupied stalls 18 to 32. It soon became apparent that the TRM could only occupy three of the stalls. The City had planned to add the roundhouse's machine shop to the museum but later turned it over to Toronto Hydro for an electrical substation.

Faced with limited room, the TRM expanded outward, creating a historic railway village at the east end of the site. Most notably, the village includes the former CPR Don Station, built in 1896. When Don Station saw a decline in ridership in the late-1960s, it was moved to Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum. At the Toronto Railway Museum, the Don Station houses the museum's gift shop, which also serves as a station for a miniature railway.

Central to the TRM are its 16 locomotive and rolling stock exhibits. They occupy many of the tracks on site, including those surrounding the 120-foot turntable. The museum's signature exhibit is No. 6213, a CN 4-8-4 steam locomotive. The collection also includes Cape Race, a 1929 CPR solarium car,



The interior of the Toronto Railway Museum houses small artifacts related to Toronto's railway history.



CN 4803, one of the locomotives on display at the museum.

**'TORONTO RAILWAY MUSEUM' CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...**



## BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

### WILMA MORRISON (1929–2020) NIAGARA'S EXPERT ON BLACK HISTORY

Barry Penhale

barry@naturalheritagebooks.com

Though diminutive in stature, Wilma Morrison (1929–2020) was unquestionably a giant in the ways that really matter. One can easily picture Wilma in an earlier era as a fearless suffragette or as one of Harriet Tubman's courageous co-workers, guiding freedom seekers in search of "Caanan's Land." As it happens, Wilma worked miracles in her own time and, whatever the challenges, the now greatly missed trailblazer always put actions ahead of words, and with remarkable results. Speaking as a friend of Wilma's, I feel it necessary at once to put the spotlight on friendship, which I personally see as an important part of the legacy she left behind. She made friends easily and it didn't matter if you were white or black, young or old, all were equally cherished. Since her passing, I have spoken with many others who also mourn the immense loss of a treasured friend, and I have read testimonials reinforcing just how much she meant to countless individuals across both Canada and the US.



Wilma Morrison received the Order of Ontario in 2011

Be it in Georgia, Kingston, Collingwood, St. Catharines, or Niagara Falls (both sides), accolades were quick to arrive when word spread that the Niagara Region's undisputed authority on African Canadian history had left us on April 23, 2020, a Covid-19 casualty. Somehow, in spite of her 91 years, it seemed all too abrupt for those fortunate enough to be part of Wilma's sizeable network of friends and colleagues. To know her was to be convinced that this dynamo would carry on forever. Since her passing, I feel certain that, just as I have done, countless others will have shared with friends some memorable moments spent in the company of a great individual whose like comes along but rarely.

In her book, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway* (Natural Heritage Books, 2010), author Adrienne Shadd thoroughly chronicles the rich Black heritage of Hamilton and environs. It is here where we encounter a young Wilma Miller who, in the care of her mother and grandmother, is now a resident of the "Steel City." Wilma grew up at the time when many local places of employment refused to hire African Canadians. Not only steel factories but hotels, restaurants, and theatres were closed to them. In Shadd's book we encounter a mentor and hero of Wilma's, the Reverend John C. Holland, a truly remarkable man who

worked as a railway porter for over 30 years while at the same time serving as the beloved pastor of the non-denominational Stewart Memorial Church. Wilma found comfort and strength in Reverend Holland's church and was active throughout the 1940s in the Stewart Memorial youth movement and church choir. Like all other members of Holland's church and indeed the entire expanding Black population in Hamilton at the time, Wilma heard countless stories concerning her pastor's endless fight against racism, which included accompanying job seekers to Stelco and other factories, where racist hiring practices were solidly in place. The Reverend Holland by now was a well-known Hamiltonian, and enjoyed the respect of many of the city's most prominent and influential citizens, including elected officials. Undoubtedly, it was Holland's example as a courageous and caring father figure that encouraged Wilma to embark on what was to become her own exceptional life of community service.



Aileen Duncan, a longtime friend of Wilma Morrison, stands by her gravestone in Collingwood. Aileen, an administrator of the Hamilton Stewart Memorial Church in Hamilton, is currently working with Janie Cooper-Wilson of the OHS to save the Street Family Burial Ground in Haldimand County.

Married in 1955 to George Morrison of Collingwood, she and her husband left Hamilton to settle in Niagara Falls, Ontario, following the passing of Wilma's mother. Like a torrent cascading over the falls of the much-publicized Honeymoon Capital, it was only a matter of time before Wilma hit her stride and the full force of decades of accomplishments left us with an unrivalled record of the Niagara Region's previously neglected Black heritage. A 2019 documentary film locally produced by Ayo Adewumi and simply entitled *Wilma* captures one of her greatest achievements, leading the charge to save the British Methodist Episcopal Church (circa 1836) — a unique historic Niagara Falls landmark where escaped slaves from the US once congregated. Aided by a dedicated group of volunteers, it was Wilma Morrison in particular who brought together historical materials that today can be found within the Norval F. Johnson Memorial Library (opened in 1991), an invaluable facility to researchers pursuing interests in Black history. Many visitors to the library and to the BME church (declared a Heritage Site in 2000), or the iconic Nathaniel Dett Memorial Chapel, that she saved from demolition, will not forget the warm welcomes received from Wilma, who thrived in her custodian role. Wherever she was to be found, Wilma wore each hat with both humility and pride. Mentioning hats enables me to report that the lady was always at her most stylish when sporting one of her many trademark peak caps. To my way of thinking, it was visual branding at its best. Little wonder that she was such a photographer's delight!

Hopefully there are other writers and researchers currently preparing to publish their own tributes to Wilma, including a much-needed biography. But for now, this old friend is delighted to close with word that Wilma Morrison is being posthumously honoured by the City of Niagara Falls with plans to name the now under construction Eastern Courtyard at the new Cultural Hub "The Wilma Morrison Courtyard." Also moving ahead are plans involving rotating artworks including a future public art panel to focus on Wilma and her work, and the naming of streets in the Drummond Historical District of Niagara Falls. Finally, it can be confirmed that the Black History permanent exhibit at the Niagara Falls History Museum has been dedicated to Wilma Morrison. Our compliments to the many dedicated individuals within Niagara Falls whose efforts through these and other initiatives will further honour Wilma Morrison and her legacy.



This dramatic study of Wilma Morrison by noted photographer Yuri Dojc figures prominently in the [North is Freedom](#) travelling exhibition and publication.



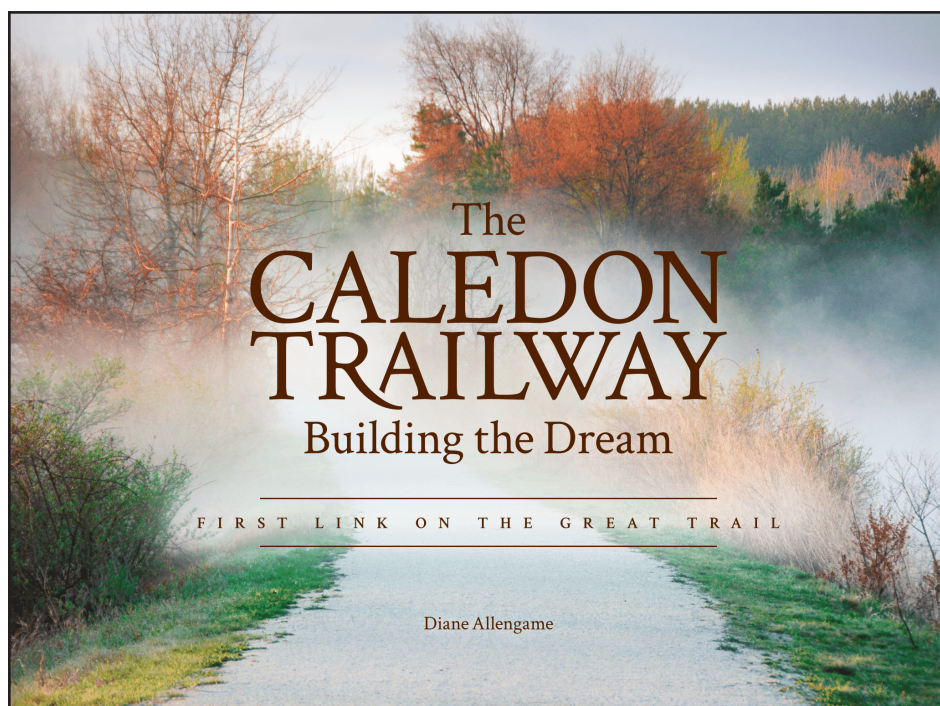
## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

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

It's hard to believe that, when I last set out to write this column, we were approaching the winter solstice. And here we are just having passed the vernal equinox. The former brought the promise of the light returning, a promise fulfilled with the arrival of spring, helped along some by the ritual clock-changing. Spring in Ontario is certainly special: it is now the third week of March and we have enjoyed days of 20-degree weather with clear skies and sunlight, days of minus 10 with winds of the kind that blow over spindly naked trees, a blizzard, a few near-blizzards, many showers that could have waited until April, and plenty of those “wait an hour and let's see what the weather does” days where freezing rain, regular rain, and snow alternate in one 24-hour cycle. That said, even the grey, the cold, and the “mixed precipitation” can't hold back the new life already unfurling in and on the earth.

The books I'm reviewing here are perfect reading for this time of year. One takes us outdoors into the natural environment, anticipating the arrival of those longed for days when we can enjoy being outside without the layers of down-filled attire and footwear that we can't do without for what seems like half the year. The other tells the story of a another sort of place that beckons as the days warm and lengthen and the flowers bloom and we can venture out once again: Drew House in the lovely and much-loved town of Elora. These books will serve as a tonic to clear away the residual winter nasties and enhance the sweet anticipation of spring and summer plans.

Let there be sunshine, health, and the camaraderie and getting together so missed during the past two years while we were under the Covid siege, and most of all, peace and freedom the world over. A happy spring to all our OHS members and friends!



**DIANE ALLENGAME**

Caledon Trailway Book Committee, 2019.  
Hardcover; 168 pp.  
[caledonrailwaybook.ca](http://caledonrailwaybook.ca)

*The Caledon Trailway: Building the Dream* is a beautiful book that supports a beautiful cause. This is a project that captures the dedication, commitment, and labour of a local group of volunteers who set about, in 2017, to document the trailway — a “linear park” — in all its natural splendour. In addition to that worthy motive, they also intended that their project would actively support, sustain, and enhance the trailway for its many visitors (approximately 90,000 annually) and would-be visitors. All proceeds from this book go directly to the city of Caledon for those purposes.

While this is the kind of book that any coffee table would be proud to display, it is more than that. The lush colour photography by Rosemary Hasner, Nathan Hiller, and Pete Paterson will delight readers: it is, put simply, a spectacular trailway in all seasons, and their artistic skill shows this to be indisputable. In addition, local historian and author Diane Allengame traces its evolution from its original Victorian railway days, through its restoration from abandoned and forgotten rail bed to a beloved site to enjoy the natural environment and the mental and physical health benefits of walking. No doubt the recent long stretches of enforced “isolation” and “lock-downs” have seen unprecedented activity on the trailway, as local trails have provided much-needed respite for community members, whether individuals, families, or friends, and frequently their dogs. Archival images and maps, along with the

details of the work involved to build the trail from its old foundations, both in planning and actual construction, make for an exciting behind-the-scenes look at just what was required. It was a project that drew on multiple levels of participation: from the various governments—municipal, provincial, and federal—to the contractors, the builders, and the amazing team of undaunted volunteers, all of whom strove to put it together successfully and sustainably. The trailway's links to other local trails, and its connection to the national trail network known as the Great Trail, are also discussed for the benefit of serious hikers. And a lovely trail diary by environmental activist Nicola Ross is an added treat. This book is a perfect gift for nature lovers, trail lovers, hikers of all kinds, those who enjoy nature photography, historians of the environment, and, for that matter, all and any who are concerned about the environment and how to give something back to preserve it.

## A Grand and Storied Home The Drew House of Elora, Ontario



by Elysia DeLaurentis

**ELYSIA DELAURENTIS**

Fergus: printFactor Media, 2022  
Paperback; 147 pp.  
[drewhouse.com](http://drewhouse.com)

*A Grand and Storied Home: The Drew House of Elora, Ontario* is fittingly titled, as deeply “storied” as it is structurally grand. Currently a highly rated bed-and-breakfast in the town of Elora, one of Ontario's most popular travel destinations, Drew House is an architectural gem of the early Victorian years in what was then Upper Canada. Designed and built in 1855-56 for the family of lawyer, judge, and later Member of Parliament George Alexander Drew, the stately stone mansion has withstood the many changes and world-historic events that have touched it in three different centuries, from pre-industrial to post-industrial times. Although the house, like the province, has necessarily changed with the times, it has never lost a sense of the genteel but aspiring small town Victorian elite whose tastes it reflects.

The story of a house like this one is fascinating in itself, especially for those interested in Victorian architecture, its Ontario adaptations, and our built heritage in general. But, as author Elysia DeLaurentis makes clear, the story is compelling for more than the house's structural details. It is also meaningful for what it reveals about what is hardest to find out: the stories of the people who inhabited it, beginning with the illustrious Drew family. Doubtless a frequent visitor to his grandparents' estate was the namesake grandson of the original owner, the lawyer, Great War hero, one-time Guelph mayor, and Progressive Conservative Premier of Ontario (1943-48). The initials GD, still discernible, were scratched on the windowpane by the lively young Drew, as DeLaurentis notes. Although it did not remain in the Drew family, the house has not changed possession often in the nearly 200 years of its history. Excluding the present owners, Roger Dufau and Kathleen Stanley, and the original Drews, the house was occupied by only four different families, each of which made it their own while retaining the characteristics that signify a heritage home. This is where the Drew House story becomes about much more than the house. DeLaurentis, a local historian and professional researcher/writer, capably and effectively searched out the personal stories of those who once inhabited it. By means of indefatigable sifting through local and provincial archives and historic publications, by talking to former residents and their descendants, by examining stores of family photographs and documents, she has deftly woven all the bits and pieces into a narrative that shines much light on domestic arrangements and family relations, on class and gender, on social aspirations and conventions. There is even a bittersweet coming-of-age tale by John Denholm, whose family lived there in the 1950s, in which he recalls what it meant to be a teenage boy in small-town Ontario in those years. Beautifully written and illustrated with many never-before-seen photographs from private collections, this book will convince any who still need convincing that an Elora excursion should be at the top of every what-to-do-post-Covid travel list.



along with a Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway caboose and a vinegar car that were part of the ill-fated CRHA waterfront museum, and an original 1967 GO Transit railcar.

Museum staff conduct tours of the site during the summer months, and the museum now offers a self-guided digital audio tour available through their website. TRHA volunteers also built a half-kilometre-long miniature railway, that visitors can ride through the park. The museum maximizes its limited indoor space with display cabinets and an interactive train simulator.

The TRM is funded by admissions, gift shop revenue, miniature railway ticket sales, and donations. From 2010 to 2019, the museum welcomed approximately 60,000 visitors each year. As was the case with so many museums across Ontario, the pandemic forced the museum to limit visitorship, and revenues plummeted as a result. In response, the museum expanded its use of digital mediums, developing a webinar series on the storied history of Toronto's railways. The museum will debut two new exhibits this year, one about Toronto's railway workers (in partnership with University of Toronto's Museum Studies Program) and another about artist George Paginton.

Thanks to the TRM's dedicated volunteers and staff, visitors to the museum are able to learn about the history of Toronto's railways in a variety of ways. To learn more about the museum and its upcoming programs and exhibits, visit their website at [torontorailwaymuseum.com/](http://torontorailwaymuseum.com/).

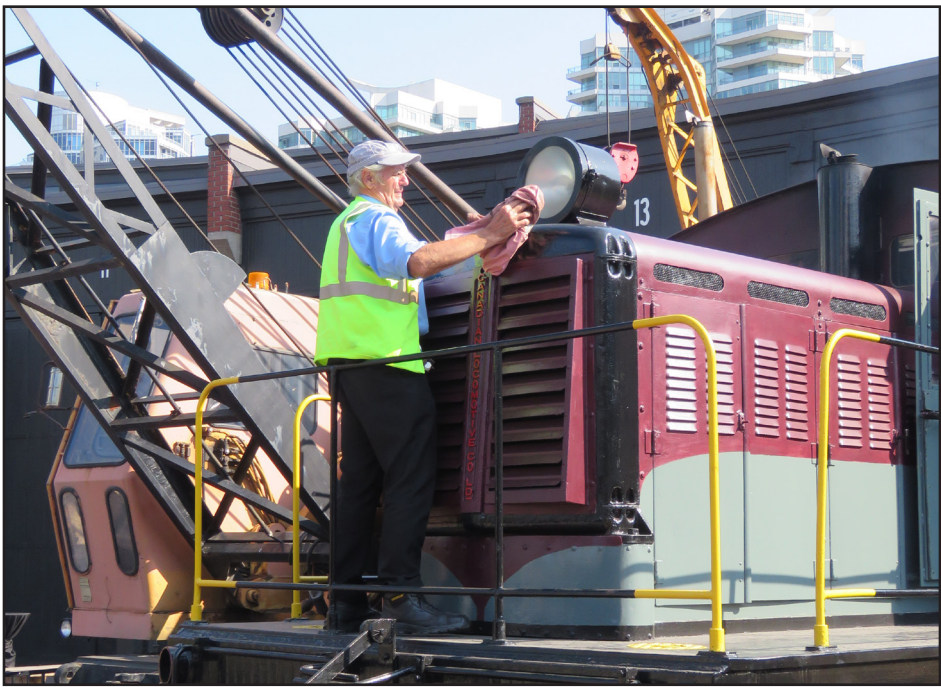


Photo – Courtesy of Mike Bedford

Our strong volunteer crew is responsible for restoring our artifacts and making them look their best.

## CEMETERY NEWS

**Laura Suchan**  
[lsuchan@sympatico.ca](mailto:lsuchan@sympatico.ca)

Winter weather forced the City of Guelph to put archaeological investigations at the Baker District redevelopment site on hold until April. The current location of the Baker Street municipal parking lot was at one time a cemetery, in use from 1837 until 1853 when a Guelph by-law prohibited burials within town limits. In 1879, Guelph purchased the cemetery property for use as a public park. By then, many of the burials had been moved to Woodlawn Memorial Park. Unfortunately, many unmarked burials remained. According to information on Guelph's website, the former parking lot property is part of the Baker Street redevelopment project, which will transform the downtown space into a civic hub featuring a new library, outdoor urban spaces, and residential and commercial spaces. The archaeological investigation of the property is required by the Province of Ontario to document and remove any human remains and artifacts before construction can begin. To date, 65% of the site has been excavated, unearthing 83 grave shafts, as well as 37 discoveries of human remains. It is expected that archaeological work will resume some time in April and be completed by June. All human remains will be reinterred at Woodlawn Memorial Park.

Many readers of this column will recall that in March 2021, the OHS Board of Directors opposed the closure of the Johnson Cemetery in Pefferlaw, Ontario. At that time, the OHS submitted a letter to Dr. Crystal Forrest, (Acting) Registrar, Burial Sites, opposing the closure of the Johnson Cemetery and arguing that closure was not in the public interest and the applicant had not expressed any compelling reason to close the cemetery.

Over the past year, I have continued to stay current of any developments in the Johnson Cemetery issue. Last year, Georgina Town Council directed staff and its solicitor to proceed with discussions regarding the donation of the cemetery and the remnant land between the cemetery and fire hall lot line. Any further discussions were held in closed sessions. On December 8, 2021, Council was given a verbal update by its solicitor in a closed session on the Johnson Cemetery. I sought more information from Mayor Margaret Quirk, who put me in touch with Shawn Nastke, Director, Strategic Initiatives, for the Town of Georgina. Shawn told me in an email that the Johnson Cemetery remains a priority with the Town, however, there was no publicly available information at this time. He promised to follow up in a month's time with a status update. I will be sure to update OHS members of any further developments.

In early March 2022, the OHS submitted the next installment of documentation to the Province of Ontario regarding unregistered cemeteries. This latest submission documents unregistered cemeteries in the counties of Simcoe, Stormont, Sudbury, Temiskaming, Waterloo, and Wellington. In the Society's letter to Dr. Crystal Forrest and Carey Smith, Registrar, Bereavement Authority of Ontario, OHS President Michel Beaulieu stressed the ongoing commitment of the OHS to provide additional information in order to positively identify the locations of all unregistered cemeteries in the province. It is important that these cemeteries are identified and registered to ensure they receive the same level of legal protection given to registered cemeteries. Since the beginning of the Unregistered Cemeteries Project, a joint committee of the OHS and the Ontario Genealogical Society has submitted information concerning hundreds of unregistered cemeteries in Ontario. With this latest submission, the committee has made every effort to provide the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services with as much information as possible for identifying unregistered cemeteries in these particular counties. It has now been ten years since the first list of unregistered cemeteries was submitted to the Province and the OHS has requested that an update of any actions that have taken place or are otherwise planned with regards to unregistered cemeteries be provided.

### THANK YOU DONORS!

Since  
Dec. 2021

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Robert Biggs  
Elizabeth Bliss  
Glenn Bonnetta  
George Carere  
Sidney Down  
Susan Houston  
Dorothy Johnstone  
Helen & Aarne Juhola  
Paul R. King  
Tom Levery  
Richard Lucas  
Adrian & Suanne Miedema  
Barry & Jane Penhale  
Ian Radforth  
Donald Smith  
Suzanne Stickley  
Marjorie Stuart  
Thorold Tronrud  
Samuel Whyte  
Gerald Weinberg  
*In memory of Lore Weinberg*  
Alpema Foundation  
Laidlaw Foundation

Eugene Berezovsky  
Joanne Bidini  
Stephen Boyle  
John Burger  
Beverly Campbell  
Charles Collins  
Alan Ducret  
Merle Duncan  
Frances Dupont  
Peter Fitzpatrick  
David Galbraith  
Eric Galowitsch  
Angela Gunn  
David Harrison  
Michael A G Haykin  
Eleanor Heard  
Geoffrey Hudson  
Brittany McBride  
Heather McTavish Taylor  
Bruce Miller  
Sharon Nisbet  
Julia Roberts  
Steven Sawell  
Jennifer Schinkel  
Anne Shore  
Chiara Williamson  
Friends of St. Alban's Adolphustown  
Lady Hamilton Club  
Oakenwood Research Services

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

Next issue copy deadline:  
**Friday, June 10, 2022.**

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

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

Types of membership in the Society are: Individual \$50, Institution/ Organization \$55, 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 \$36.75

per year; member organizations, institutions and non-member individuals for \$47.25; and to non-member organizations and institutions for \$57.75. Membership inquiries should be directed to Heather Anderson at [handerson@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto: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](mailto:ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca) [www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca)

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

**Executive:** Michel Beaulieu, President  
Kris Ives, First Vice President  
Laura Suchan, Second Vice President  
Caroline Di Cocco, Past President  
Mark Plishewsky, Treasurer  
Allan Macdonell, Secretary  
**Directors:** Gabriella Colussi Arthur, Janie Cooper-Wilson, Michael Dove, Jan Haskings-Winner, Mark Kuhlberg, Dave Mowat, and Eric Payseur.

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