

# OHS Russell K. Cooper Public Programming Award Winner: The Potter's Field Project

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ontario Historical Society is pleased to present the 2025 Russell K. Cooper Award to the Potter's Field Project, Ingersoll Rural Cemetery Board and Community Partners. The Cooper Award recognizes an outstanding programming initiative that has brought greater public awareness to an aspect of Ontario's history in the past three years.

The Potter's Field Project represents an exceptional example of public history, collaborative research, and community remembrance. Led by Western University Assistant Professor of History and Indigenous Studies, Dr. Cody Groat, in partnership with the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery Board, the Town of Ingersoll, the Township of Zorra, and the Oxford County Library, this initiative has transformed a long-neglected section of the cemetery into a powerful site of education, commemoration, and community connection. Through student research, volunteer contributions, and meaningful engagement with descendants and local residents, the project has restored dignity to those who had largely been forgotten.

This project has illuminated the experiences of marginalized residents who faced discrimination, and created new pathways for understanding the structural roots of poverty and exclusion in Ontario's past. With its creativity, leadership, and profound community impact, the Potter's Field Project exemplifies the spirit and purpose of the Russell K. Cooper Award. The Awards Committee congratulates the Potter's Field Project team for their extraordinary achievement. The Committee recognizes the contributions of everyone involved in this project, including: Dr. Cody Groat, Debbie Johnston, Rebecca Small, Emily Kirk, Isaac Bender, Edward Eastaugh, Carolyn French, Cathy Mott, Brian Petrie, Rick Eus, Kevin Stewart, Randy Porchak, and Vicki Brenner.



*The OHS Russell K. Cooper Public Programming Award was presented at the 2025 OHS Awards Ceremony on December 6, 2025 at the Historic John McKenzie House in Willowdale, Toronto. Left to right: Co-Chair of the OHS Awards Committee Hans Bathija, and attending members of the award-winning project team: Dr. Cody Groat, Debbie Johnston, and Isaac Bender.*

Founded in 1888, the Ontario Historical Society is a non-profit corporation and registered charity dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Ontario's history for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. To learn more about the OHS Awards Program, or to submit a nomination, please visit [ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/awards/](https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/awards/) or contact the Society's offices by telephone or e-mail.

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