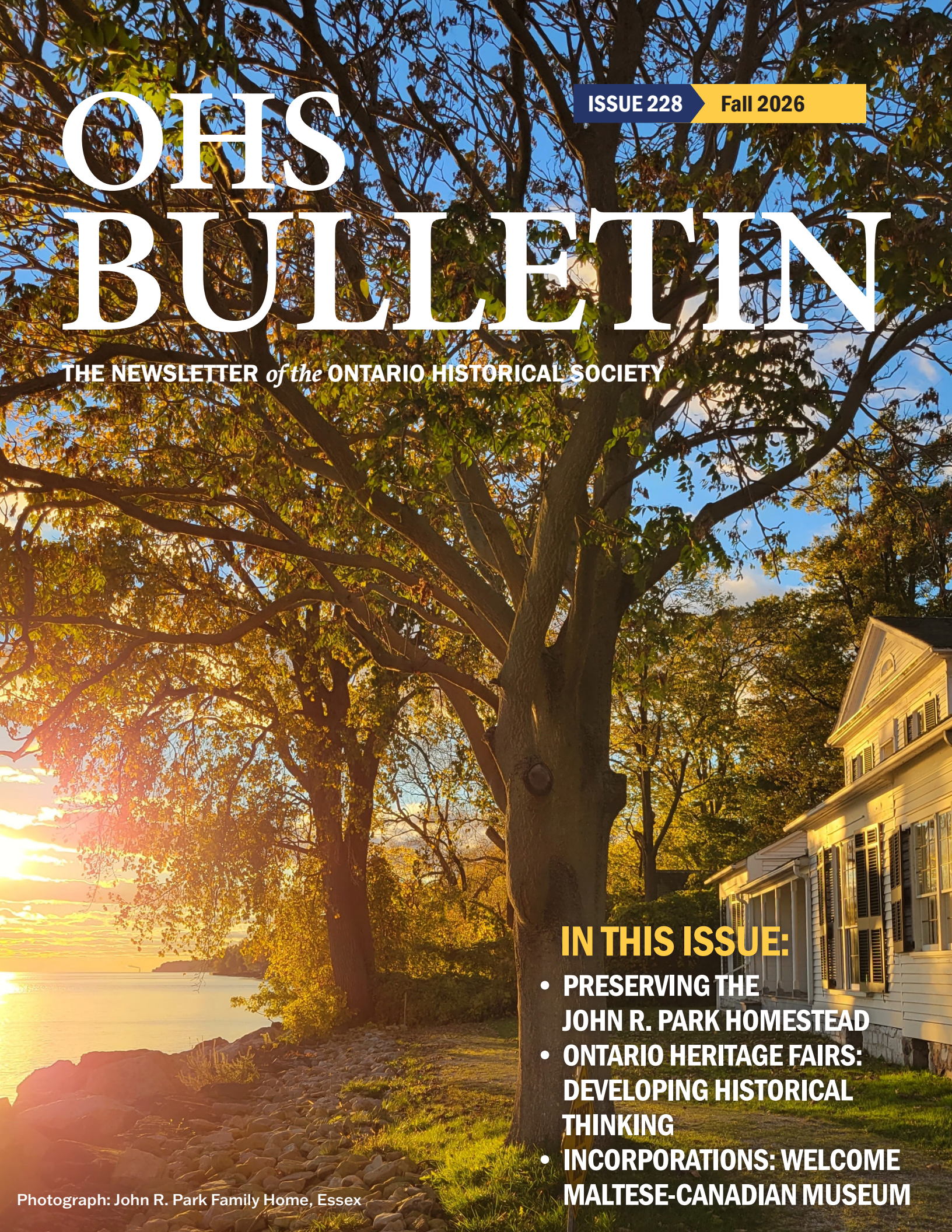

ISSUE 228 Fall 2026

OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER *of the* ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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- ONTARIO HERITAGE FAIRS: DEVELOPING HISTORICAL THINKING
- INCORPORATIONS: WELCOME MALTESE-CANADIAN MUSEUM

Photograph: John R. Park Family Home, Essex

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On the cover:
The south facade of the John R. Park Family Home, circa 1842, looking southwest over Lake Erie.

Photo: Kristin Ives, 2025

OHS BULLETIN

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

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ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY Since 1888

ED'S REPORT

DANIEL DISHAW
Executive Director
ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

Our members and stakeholders shared their vision for the future of the OHS during our strategic planning consultation process through 2024-25. As a result, our new strategic plan was shaped to meet your needs and serve your interests as we move forward together. I'm pleased to report that staff have been working diligently toward achieving many of the goals set out in that plan, starting with Pillar 1: Capacity Building for Members.

I want to first thank all of our members for participating in the first series of our Capacity Building and Resource Library Program. The Society was very pleased to partner with Benjamin Miller to deliver these sessions and expand our new Resource Library with templates and other resources for governance and succession planning practices. A survey for participants is forthcoming.

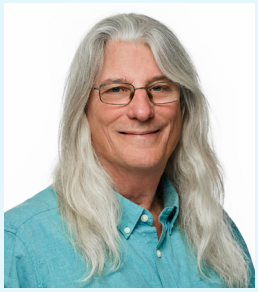
I am pleased to announce that our new website will be launching within weeks of my writing this. This new platform seeks to better reflect the impact of our organization and its provincial network of member organizations. One aspect of that mission is to better reflect our collective impact using new metrics. At the end of 2026, the OHS will be asking our member organizations to respond to a new annual reporting survey to share as much information about their programs and services as possible. As we work to advocate for better support and funding for our grassroots network, expanded tools to reflect our collective impact will be incredibly valuable. I want to thank you in advance for participating in this process.

The newest element of our adapted web platform will be the Resource Library. This was something that members identified as a significant need in all of our consultation meetings. The OHS will work with sector experts and skilled professionals to deliver educational sessions and add new resources every year. These resources will then be made available to members and affiliate organizations on our website. I'm excited to announce that our next Capacity Building series, "Digital Media & Storytelling for Not-for-Profit Heritage Groups" will launch early in 2027.

I would like to celebrate some other great news and recognize two members of our team who may not be familiar to all of our readers.

Thanks to extensive negotiations with the underwriters, our broker has secured a rate reduction for members under the OHS Insurance Program. This amounts to a 10% reduction for General Liability policies, and a 5% reduction for Directors & Officers Liability policies. I want to thank John Thomas and Kathy Greer for all of their hard work in the process of negotiating these reductions. For members that don't know John and Kathy, I want to take a moment to recognize their work and introduce them to our membership at large.

Since 2008, John has consistently treated our members with genuine appreciation and concern. His dedication to our small policy group is repeatedly echoed by our members from across the province. He has been with Jones DesLauriers (soon to be Navacord) since 1987. In 2008, John and then OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty established the OHS Insurance Program. We currently have 212 groups insured through the program, each policy meeting the unique needs of that OHS member—including general liability, directors & officers liability, property, collections, marine, and restoration projects. Thanks to John's work on this program, our members typically receive Directors & Officers Liability insurance policies at rates roughly one third of comparable policies from other providers.



Kathy Greer has been with Jones DesLauriers since 2019 and has been assisting with the OHS Insurance Program since 2020. Kathy has been vital to the growth of the OHS program in the past six years. Thank you to John and Kathy for their ongoing dedication to this program and our members.

In closing, I want to draw our readers' attention to a tribute to Helen and Aarne Juhola on page 18 of this *Bulletin*. Earlier this year, the OHS learned of Helen's passing (predeceased by her husband Aarne in 2023). We also learned that she bequeathed $100,000 to the Ontario Historical Society. I am very pleased to announce that the OHS will be establishing the Helen and Aarne Juhola Fund, which will be held in trust with annual distributions going to support the Society's expanding programs and services. The OHS has developed a longstanding trust with our donors through our Planned Giving Program; our objective is to ensure the long-term impact of major gifts, preserving the legacy of our donors well into the future. Thank you, Helen and Aarne. I know you will be missed by OHS staff and members alike.

The John R. Park Homestead was reopened to the public in May 2025, following its massive restoration. Photo courtesy of the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

Preserving the Stories of the John R. Park Homestead

Once-in-a-Lifetime Restoration Effort Underway

By Danielle Stuebing
Lead Development Officer, Essex Region Conservation Foundation (ERCF)

A remarkable transformation is taking place at the John R. Park Homestead, located on the shore of Lake Erie in Essex, Ontario. The Homestead is an 1842 living history farm museum that welcomes more than 15,000 visitors annually. Over the past four years, more than $1.5 million has been invested in significant restoration to ensure its long-term preservation and sustainability.

"The John R. Park Homestead is more than just a museum. It's a living legacy," explains Kristin Ives, Curator/Education Coordinator for the Essex Region Conservation Authority, which has operated the site as a museum and conservation area since 1978. In 2021, a comprehensive architectural review of all the buildings that comprise the Homestead was undertaken by George Robb Architects to identify the scope of restoration work required to ensure long-term sustainability. The Government of Canada provided a generous grant through the Canadian Experiences Fund, and the Essex Region Conservation Foundation began raising the balance of the required funds. The historic home—the most important artifact in the Homestead's collection—was reopened to rave reviews in May 2025. A Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals Award

Homestead under construction. Photo courtesy of the Essex Region Conservation Foundation.

of merit was presented to the architects later that year.

That work was just the beginning of a massive restoration effort. The historic Horse Barn required more than $80,000 in structural repair work, which was completed over this past summer. The Conservation Foundation continues to raise funds to ensure the structural repairs required for the rest of the Homestead's eleven outbuildings can be completed in the coming years.

"We are forever grateful to the many generous donors who have enabled this work to take place," says Ives. Currently, the fundraising campaign is striving to raise $300,000 to complete the work required to the Grain, Hog, Calf, and Tobacco Barns.

"I have worked at the site for over 25 years," adds Ives. "The Homestead has a way of holding a person. The incredible landscape and stunning Lake Erie views are epic, but what truly makes the Homestead so special is that the historic barns and buildings are original to the site. It really helps create that deep sense of place—an authenticity to the experience—to know that the Park and Fox Families walked the same paths between the barns that we do today; that they shared stories, sang songs, and whispered secrets under these same rafters that we admire all these generations later. Every barn board holds a story, and every beam bears silent witness to generations of rural life: family chores, community gatherings, sweet celebrations, and the simple joys like barn swallows bathing in quiet morning light."

The John R. Park Homestead is a treasured destination in the region for educational field trips and making family memories. It hosts a number of annual seasonal events, including the incredibly popular Maple Syrup Festival each March.

Ives goes on to describe how the Homestead's heritage buildings are not simply places where history is displayed; they are places where it can be experienced. In the Sawmill, students get hands-on with the mechanics of woodworking, using spokeshaves, brace-and-bit drills, and cross-cut saws to create a wooden mallet and other small pieces. High school arts and trades students learn to "make the anvil sing" as they heat iron in the coal-fired forge, working through the challenges of transforming raw material into something with both beautiful form and practical function. In the historic Horse Barn, students discover the roots of many modern traditions and celebrations through corn husking and shelling bees, barn dances, and other seasonal activities. At the Calf Barn, visiting children and summer staff learn firsthand about livestock and animal husbandry, while the Homestead's heritage-breed sheep provide a living connection to agricultural practices of the past. "These experiences offer something increasingly valuable to modern students: the opportunity to learn with their hands, to understand where traditional skills come from, and to see how knowledge, craftsmanship, and community have been passed from one generation to the next. These heritage barns and buildings make this learning tangible and memorable," she says.

The Essex Region Conservation Foundation continues to raise funds to implement the restoration work needed, to ensure that the stories contained within these special places will endure for generations to come. To support this work, visit essexregionconservation.ca/savethehomestead.

A visitor to the Calf Barn learns firsthand about livestock and animal husbandry. The Homestead's heritage-breed sheep provide a living connection to agricultural practices of the past.

FROM *the* BOOKSHELF

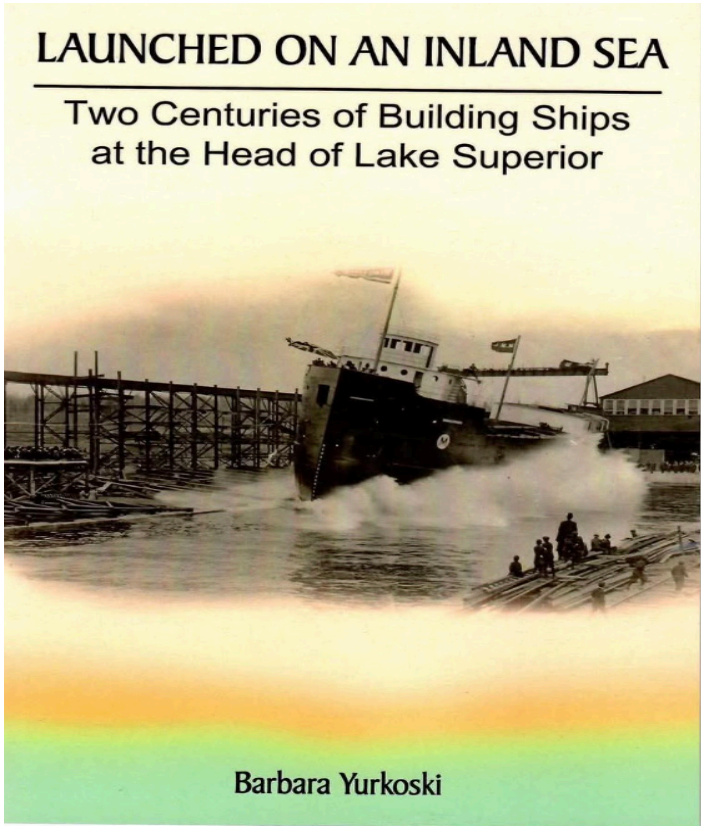
By Dr. Keith R. Fleming
kfleming@uwo.ca

In this edition of "From the Bookshelf," there is a coincidental overlapping of themes. One of the books examines the history of shipbuilding at Fort William and Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), while a second book discusses several historical lighthouses built to protect shipping and mariners traversing the often-treacherous waters of Lake Superior.

Launched on an Inland Sea: Two Centuries of Building Ships at the Head of Lake Superior

By Barbara Yurkoski

Published by the Lakehead Transportation Museum Society, 2025



In forty-four pages of text and illustrations, Barbara Yurkoski provides a succinct account of the shipbuilding industry at what is today Thunder Bay from approximately 1811, when a 90-ton schooler was constructed for the fur trading North West Company, until 1993, when a motorized barge was the last commercial vessel to be launched. It is a history marked by boom and bust. The principal impetus for shipbuilding at the Lakehead occurred in 1908 when a combination of Canadian government protective tariffs and subsidies prompted an American firm, the Western Drydock and Shipbuilding Company, to invest in a shipyard at Port Arthur to build scows, cargo ships, passenger vessels, tugs, sternwheelers, and bulk carriers. Wartime boosted demand for the Lakehead's vessels when the Imperial Munitions Board placed orders for steel trawlers needed by the Royal Navy during the First World War, and the Royal Canadian Navy purchased corvettes and minesweepers during the Second World War. Yurkoski adds interesting accounts of how some of those vessels fared in military action.

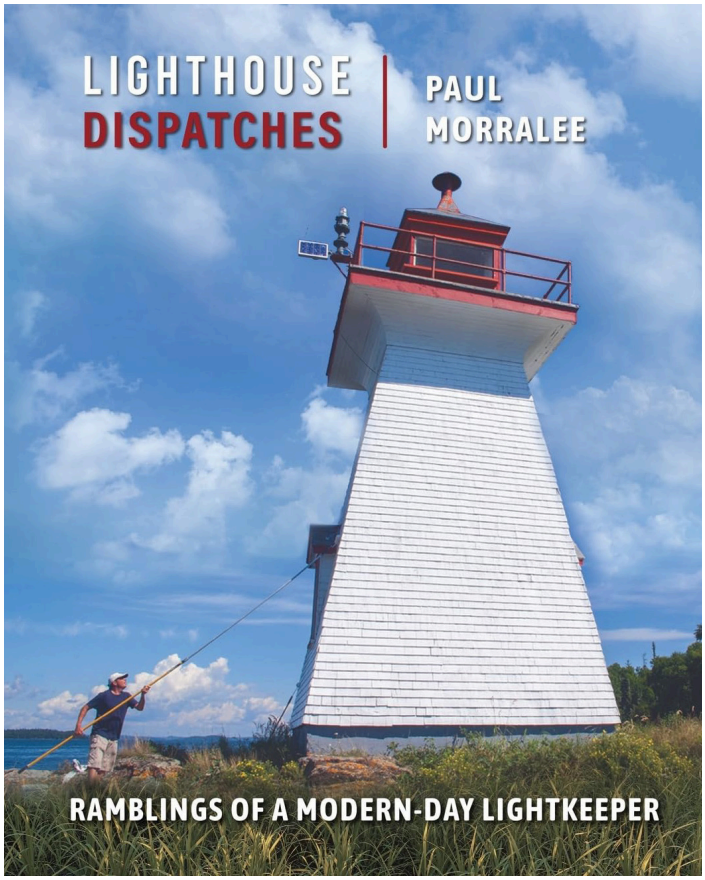
Between the world wars and after 1945, barges, dredges, scows, and coastal freighters continued to be built at the Lakehead, but overall demand declined sharply. Yurkoski attributes the downturn to a range of factors, including increased international competition and changing technology. A point of pride for the community, however, was construction of the icebreaker *Alexander Henry*. Launched in 1958, she became a cherished symbol of the city's maritime heritage and in retirement was named a National Historic Site and became the centrepiece of the Lakehead Transportation Museum.

Seafaring is an inherently hopeful activity, so it is fitting that Yurkoski, while acknowledging that shipbuilding's future at the Lakehead looks bleak, hopes history will repeat itself and external circumstances once again revive the local industry.

Lighthouse Dispatches: Ramblings of a Modern-Day Lightkeeper

By Paul Morralee

Published by Ontario History Press, 2024



Ever since 1873, the Point Porphyry Lighthouse on Porphyry Island situated thirty kilometres by boat from the city of Thunder Bay has warned sailors on Lake Superior to steer clear of nearby reefs. Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior (CLLS), a non-profit charity under the Ontario Historical Society, has a lease from the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to maintain the Point Porphyry light station and the neighbouring Shaganash Lighthouse and Trowbridge Island Lighthouse. The CLLS, whose mission is to preserve lighthouses on the northern shore of Lake Superior and promote public access to them, received the Ontario Historical Society's Scadding Award in 2017 for its outstanding contribution to the field of history.

Paul Morralee, a self-described "modern-day lightkeeper," lived at Point Porphyry during the summer months between 2015 and 2024, overseeing maintenance of the lighthouse buildings and grounds and organizing the many volunteer helpers. *Lighthouse Dispatches* is a compilation of 138 columns he published in Thunder Bay's *Chronicle-Journal* newspaper over that ten-year period. Morralee's objective in writing the columns was to "share the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the lighthouse islands to entice people to visit." Much effort went into documenting and promoting the historical relevance of the three lighthouses. Student volunteers led guided history tours of the sites, a "mini-museum" was created, and interpretative panels were installed describing local shipwrecks, the islands' flora and fauna, stories of former lightkeepers, and First Nations' connections to the area.

Although the dispatches in the *Chronicle-Journal* focused mainly on the preceding week's round of busy activities at Point Prophyry, a recurring theme throughout this extensively illustrated book is the determination of Morralee and the CLLS to preserve and promote memories of the historic lighthouses. To that end, in addition to the dispatches, the book features twenty-two one-page vignettes that further contextualize the lighthouses' historical significance. Coincidentally, the retired Canadian Coast Guard ship *Alexander Henry* that Barbara Yurkoski highlights in her previously mentioned book on shipbuilding at the Lakehead is identified in *Lighthouse Dispatches* as an important historic site that formerly provided vital service to Point Prophyry and other Lake Superior lighthouses.

Pictured above are three members of the TDSB Indigenous Youth Council at the Toronto DSB Regional Heritage Fair.

Ontario Heritage Fairs: Developing Historical Thinking

By Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer
President, Ontario Heritage Fairs Program (OHFA)

Introduction

The Ontario Heritage Fairs Association (OHFA) is bilingual, not-for-profit educational organization that encourages students in Ontario to explore Canadian history and cultural heritage in an engaging and positive learning environment. Teachers, community educators, families, and students across the province use a variety of research methods to explore a topic of interest. The students choose a medium of choice to tell their stories—about the land where they live, their family history, or local, provincial, or national histories. Heritage Fairs are held in regions across the province and culminate in a provincial and national showcase. The student projects use more than history to explore their topics. They engage in a wide range of areas: archaeology, genealogy, social sciences, the arts, science, math, and technology, as well as literature. For example, a student might research their family history and consult family members, the Ontario or local archives, genealogists, libraries, and, depending on the family member, the war, sports, or nature museums, art galleries, or science & technology institutions. This is central to the Heritage Fairs Program, as it provides opportunities for students to do research through a wide range of venues and arenas.

Heritage Fairs give students a meaningful reason to practice literacy and research skills. Students seek out primary and secondary sources, artifacts, props, costumes, and art to complement their presentations. Visits to museums, historic sites, libraries, and archives become family affairs. Fairs are open to friends, family, educators, and businesses, and the community takes an active role in organizing, supporting, and presenting. First Nations communities share knowledge through presentations and activities. The Archives of Ontario

provides workshops in primary source analysis, and heritage practitioners and educators adjudicate student projects. Our partners, including the OHS, provide awards, and donors provide support for the Fairs Program.

How it Works

Each Regional Fair Site in Ontario can be a member of the OHFA to access support. Schools and teachers can reach out to join the Heritage Fairs Program. The sites meet once a year at an annual general meeting. The Association has volunteer coordinators who provide support to Regional Fair sites and stay connected with the OHFA Board of Directors. The OHFA has its own website you can access at ohfa.ca. On it, you'll find examples of projects, forms, documents, and lessons, as well as images and videos from the Fairs. As a registered charity, we welcome donations and in-kind support. The Fairs Program is divided into school or community Fairs between February and May. Provincial and National Fairs are scheduled in June. The program has been supporting the learning of history and cultural heritage since 1995 in Ontario. By 2000, the Fairs Program grew to include students in remote, rural, and urban communities. Canada's History (Canadian National History Society) currently coordinates the program at the national level. This year, 8,289 students participated at the school level, with the support of hundreds of volunteers who logged in over 3,000 hours at the Regional Fairs. Ontario Fairs celebrated 31 years in 2026 with 10 Regional Fairs across the province.

Links to the Study of History

Students in grades 4-10 can participant in the Heritage Fairs Program, which links to the Social Studies and History curriculum in Ontario. All students develop important thinking and research skills. School curriculums across Canada recognize the importance of critical thinking and the Fairs provide opportunities for critical analysis centred on the development of active citizenship. Students are encouraged to go beyond simply learning facts; thinking, processing, and reflecting on content with multiple perspectives. They learn how to apply the historical inquiry process, gathering, interpreting, and analyzing historical evidence and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources to investigate and make judgements about issues and events of historical importance. The Fairs support the curriculum focus to apply *concepts of disciplinary thinking*, which are inherent in the project work. Each topic within the Grade 4-10 social studies and Canadian and world studies curriculum, history, and geography has its own concepts. The interdisciplinary nature of social studies and history provides the foundation for the concepts of thinking that involve the study of diverse individuals, groups, governments, lands, and institutions, as well as significant events, developments, and issues in the past. For example, the study of an immigration story involves global, national, provincial, and local stories. This requires research in a variety of venues, and the ability for students to connect the stories into their project information and display, while being reflective of the challenges.

The Heritage Fairs are held in schools, museums, historic houses, public history spaces, and institutions, where everyone can gather to learn and celebrate Canadian history and heritage. The spaces

The Seven Years War project won the OHS Reading and Remembrance Award at the Durham DSB Regional Fair.

are filled with student project displays, and include workshops, field studies, and events. By participating in the Fairs Program, students learn through their own project work and from the projects of other students. The study of history enables students to know Canadian heritage and identity, the diversity and complexity of Canadian society, and the challenges and responsibilities associated with Canada's global position. It helps prepare students to be informed and responsible citizens.

National Connections

Finally, there are important connections to our national heritage program. All students attending a Regional Fair in Ontario are eligible to take part in Canada's History Heritage Fair National Showcase, a celebration of projects guided by student inquiry, creativity, and the understanding of Canada's history, heritage, and culture. This year's participants—selected from over 60 regional Heritage Fairs across the country—provide a window into the work of our future historians and community leaders. The program encourages young people to investigate historical topics that matter to them, connect with a wide range of scholars, professionals, practitioners and community members, share their findings, and connect their learning to their own lives, family, and community. To build our program for the future, please consider joining and supporting the OHFA.

Hafiz Printer, Senior Coordinator of Educational Programming and Exhibits at the Archives of Ontario conducts a workshop on Analyzing Primary Sources for the Toronto DSB Regional Fair.

MUSEUM MILESTONES

By Dr. John Carter
drjohncarter@bell.net

I was recently encouraged to learn that a new museum has opened in Carlisle, Ontario. Read curator Ian Mason's featured article to learn more about the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre. Please do all you can to support and maintain your local museums!

Staffing news: Brian Wood, who has worked at the Bell Homestead Historic Site in Brantford for 37 years (30 of these as curator), has retired. Thank you, Brian, for your many years of dedicated service. Brian is succeeded by Robert Stanczyk. Congratulations to both. Sherri Gropp is now curator at Castle Kilbride in New Hamburg, moving up to replace Tracy Loch. It is also a busy time for the museums in the Municipality of St. Clair Township. At the Moore Museum, curator Fiona Doherty is on maternity leave, and her duties are being assumed by Kari Boone. Former curators Glenda Young and Shelley Lucier are returning to the Sombra Museum on a temporary basis. At the Niagara Falls Museum, Amy Klassen is the new director, and Shawna Jarman is now curator.

I was saddened to learn that Maurice D. Smith passed away in April at the age of 87. He was a prominent Canadian maritime historian and scholar, and director and curator at the Marine Museum of Kingston. He kindly provided the foreword to my book about the steamer *Ploughboy*, and assisted many others with their marine research and writing. He was also president of the Ontario Museum Association. Lorraine O'Byrne, long-time assistant curator at Black Creek Pioneer Village, and a big supporter of the Ontario Historical Society, died in June. Both Maurice and Lorraine contributed significantly to the Ontario Museum community. Sincere condolences to both families.

Host site of the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre, Carlisle United Church, 19 Falkirk St., Carlisle, ON (North Middlesex). The congregation meets in the lower level.

Introducing the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre in North Middlesex

By Ian Mason
Curator, Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre
pcheritagecentre@gmail.com

Nestled in the cemetery in the hamlet of Carlisle, 6 km east of Ailsa Craig (northwest of London), is the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre (PCHC). It contains the national collection of artifacts from various congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) from coast to coast. We are the only historic mainline denomination in Canada that preserves a collection of its artifacts. There are a few church museums throughout Canada, but they pertain to a specific church or site, rather than its denomination.

The collection of the National Presbyterian Museum began in the early 1990s, led by the Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston (1927–2008), retired minister of MacNab Street Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ontario. Dr. Johnston envisioned a time in the not-too-distant future when The Presbyterian Church in Canada, would be "people poor and property rich." Dr. Johnston desired to build a collection of artifacts that documented the existence of what had been the largest Protestant denomination in Canada in the first two decades of the 20th century prior to Church Union, which amalgamated four denominations into the United Church of Canada on June 10, 1925. Only one third of the membership of The Presbyterian Church in Canada remained with the Church after the union.

The National Presbyterian Museum was dedicated and opened in the basement of St. John's Presbyterian Church at the corner of Broadview Avenue and Simpson Avenue in the Riverdale neighbourhood of Toronto on September 29, 2002.

The year following Dr. Johnston's death in 2008, Ian Mason, former Manager of the Wallaceburg and

An oil painting of the Last Supper by London-ON artist, Edward R. Glen (1940), an otherwise exclusively impressionistic painter.

District Museum, and his wife, Laurie Fournie Mason, Curator of the Moore Museum in Mooretown, Ontario, were asked by the Advisory Committee of the National Presbyterian Museum to assess the collection.The Advisory Committee wondered whether the collection should be retained.

As a result of the assessment by Ian and Laurie Mason, their answer to the question by members of the Advisory Committee as to whether the collection of Presbyterian artifacts should be preserved was a resounding and passionate "Yes, this is a remarkable collection!"

The Advisory Committee then asked Ian if he would be willing to serve as the volunteer Acting Curator for a 3-month period beginning in July 2009 until a volunteer Curator could be found. The search for a successor has not gone well. This is Ian's 17th year as Curator.

In 2018, the National Presbyterian Museum in St. John's Presbyterian Church closed. The Museum was obliged to leave what had been our host church since 2002 when the church was sold to a developer that will eventually convert it into condominiums, providing a small area for the congregation to continue to meet.

Curator Ian Mason began a five-year search for a church that would be willing to host the collection of artifacts.

He made a cold call to Carlisle United Church, asking the congregation if they would be interested in hosting a collection of artifacts. And he added, "if you are interested in hosting this collection, you would have to give up your sanctuary and move to the basement." He had his answer in three seconds, "Yes, we would be willing to do that."

It took another two years to work out the details between the head offices of the United Church of Canada and the PCC.

By 2021, at the height of the COVID pandemic, the collection and display furniture were moved in one full transport truck load from Toronto to Carlisle. The remaining part of the collection was later shipped from Toronto in a ¾ transport truck load.

Renovations to transform the main floor from a worship sanctuary to an exhibit hall continued for the next four years.

Retrofitting a church built in 1879 proved to be a challenge and an effective means to wipe out our savings fund, which we had anticipated would be sufficient to upgrade the former sanctuary. However, the load-bearing capacity of the exhibit hall floor, which looked otherwise sturdy on initial inspection, needed to be substantially improved. It was a costly endeavour to tear out the ceiling of the lower hall and replace any of the upper floor beams that had deteriorated or had been compromised by a decades-long succession of holes drilled for electrical and HVAC needs.

The Heritage Centre exhibit hall is environmentally controlled. A steam humidifier was installed this year in order to counter low humidity when the furnace is operating.

Finally, after a seven-year hiatus, the Advisory Committee of the PCHC was ready to exhibit the collection once again. On Saturday, September 20, 2025, the PCHC was dedicated with a worship service and officially opened. The Bible used in the dedication service was the one first used in the opening of the first Presbyterian Church in Carlisle in 1858.

The main feature of the Heritage Centre is a replica 1850s Canadian Presbyterian chapel. Don Scott of George Robb Architect and the Curator collaborated with the design of a typical 1850s Free Church Presbyterian chapel. Of the ten distinct denominations that amalgamated throughout the 19th century and culminated in the formation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875, the Free Church represented 75% of the Presbyterians in Canada.

The chapel is furnished with artifacts from closed historic Presbyterian Churches, including: the precentor's chair (ca. 1792-1810) from St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church, the first Presbyterian Church in the city of Montreal; the precentor's desk (1805) from Shelburne, NS; the pulpit and crocketed pulpit arch (1861) from the former Knox Church in Merrickville, ON.

Precentor's chair (ca. 1792–1810) from St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church, the first Presbyterian Church established in the city of Montreal. It is the oldest item of furniture in the PCHC. The precentor was the man who led Psalm singing in Presbyterian Churches before instruments, hymns, and choirs were permitted after the formation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875.

This 96-year-old pipe organ was rescued from the former Dorchester Presbyterian Church in Jan. 2025, restored over the course of 9 months, installed in Nov., and fully functional by Dec. 2025, thanks to the efforts of retired organbuilder Donald Pole of Chatham and Ron Dossenbach of Windsor.

Closing churches and individuals who possess Presbyterian heirlooms often contact the PCHC in the hope that we can provide a home for them. These items help to tell the stories of those who worshipped within and served the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

All are welcome to tour the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre. It is open by appointment. Please contact Ian Mason, Curator:
pcheritagecentre@gmail.com, 647-494-4559

Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre
in Carlisle United Church
19 Falkirk St.
Carlisle, ON (the Carlisle of North Middlesex)
N0M 1P0

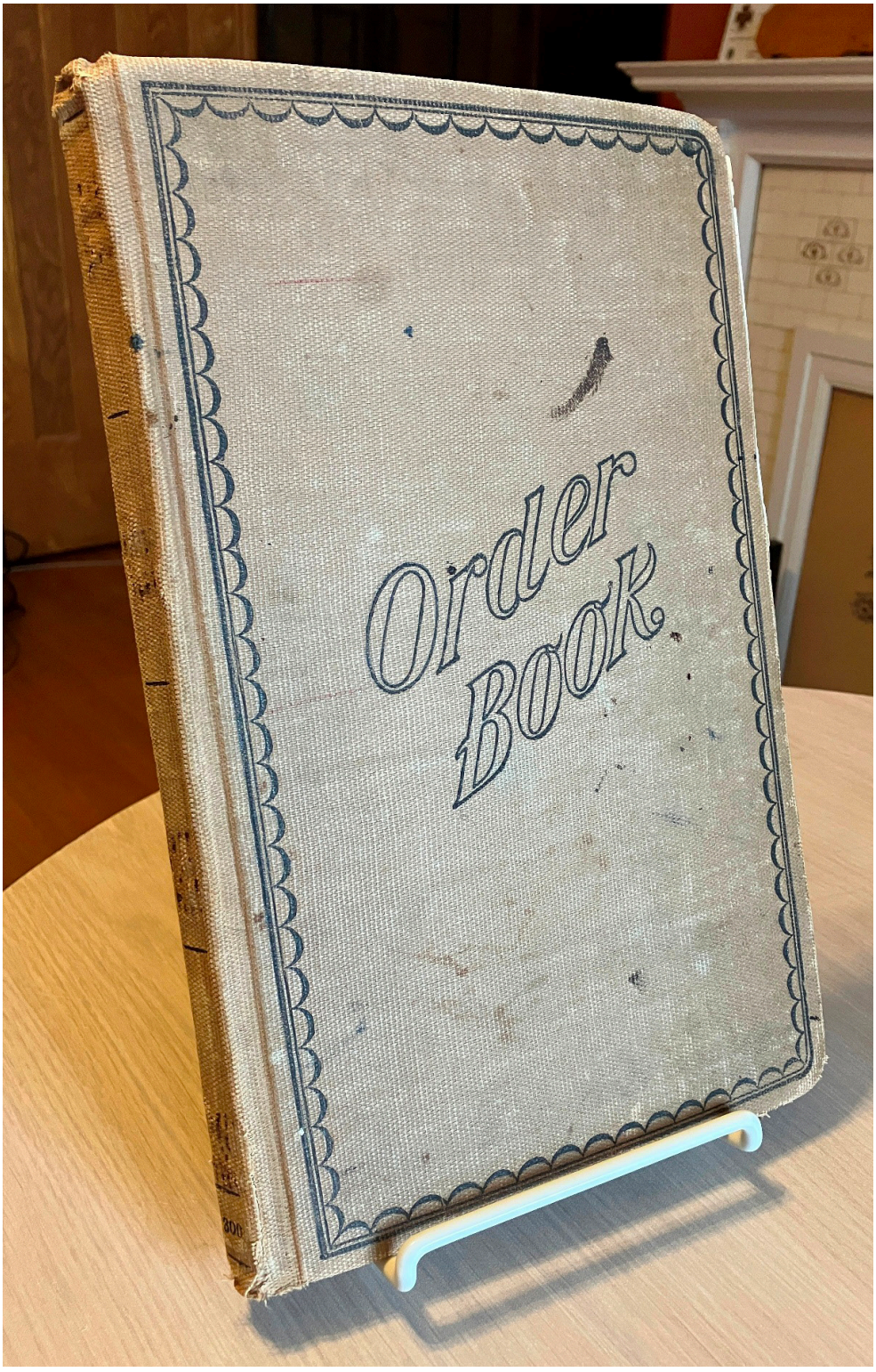
For more information, visit pcheritagecentre.ca

FROM *the* ARCHIVES

By OHS Staff

OHS Digitizes Local History Treasure

John McKenzie's Order Book



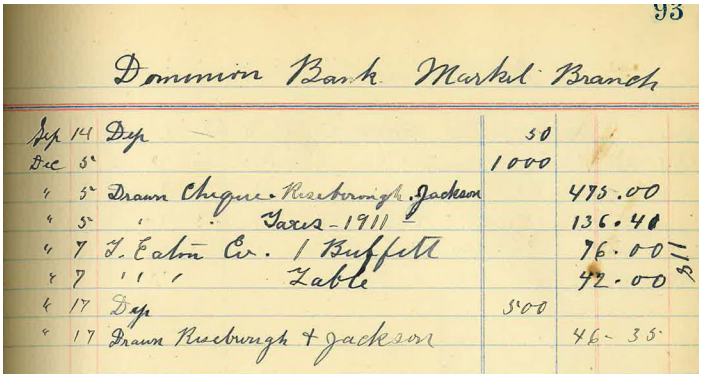
In the early 1990s, when the OHS moved into historic John McKenzie House in North York, the McKenzie family donated John McKenzie's hand-written order book, a rare artifact remaining from the original farm operation. Filled with details of Mr. McKenzie's financial transactions from 1899 to 1920, the book sheds light on what life was like in Willowdale at the turn of the 20th century.

The OHS is pleased to announce that the order book has been digitized (scanned to PDF) and is now available in the OHS website's elibrary, along with 140+ other publications, for OHS members to access and enjoy.

An order book is a type of accounting ledger, used by a business owner to keep track of buying and selling. John McKenzie (1868-1941) seems to have used his order book to record all kinds of expenses and revenues, including animals bought and sold (Holstein cattle, horses, pigs), wages paid to farm labourers and domestic help (threshing, ploughing, cutting hay), and building costs (brick, lumber, cement).

In addition to livestock, various items purchased include coal, maize, twine, castor oil, fence wire, horse blankets, and rubber boots.

Several payments are listed to major Canadian retailer T. Eaton Company, including rugs, blinds, a buffet, and, in 1911, a table ($41). The table is a special object of note as it was left in the OHS's care, and is one of a very few surviving pieces of furniture belonging to the McKenzie family at John McKenzie House.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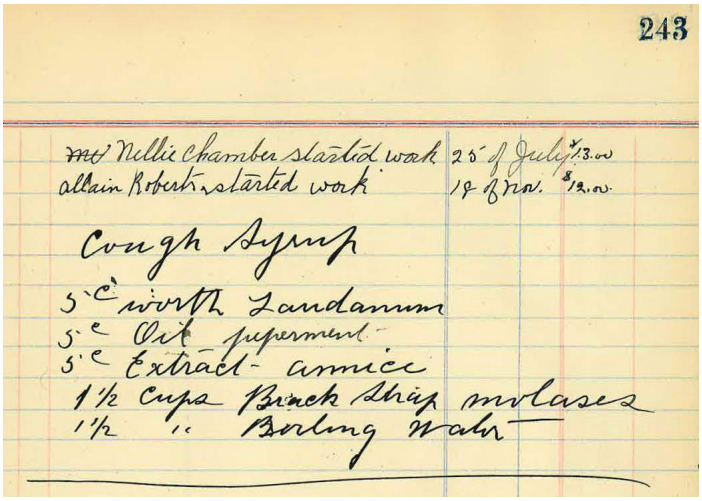
Dominion Bank Markel Branch

Sep 14	Dep		50	
Dec 8			1000	
" 5	Drawn Cheque Roseburgh Jackson			475.00
" 5	" " Taxes-1911			136.40
" 7	T. Eaton Co. 1 Buffett			76.00
" 7	" " Table			42.00
" 17	Dep		500	
" 17	Drawn Roseburgh & Jackson			46-35

Expenses are included from both the old farmhouse on Yonge Street, bought from the Cummer family by John's father Philip in 1884, with its barn, milk house (1907), and silo, and later the 1913 "new house" at 34 Parkview Avenue, including its stable (1915) and coach house (1918).

John McKenzie also used the book to record local news items, like weddings and deaths, and to keep track of helpful information, like instructions for preserving pork, and home remedies, such as a cough syrup recipe containing laudanum (which is a 10% opium solution in alcohol).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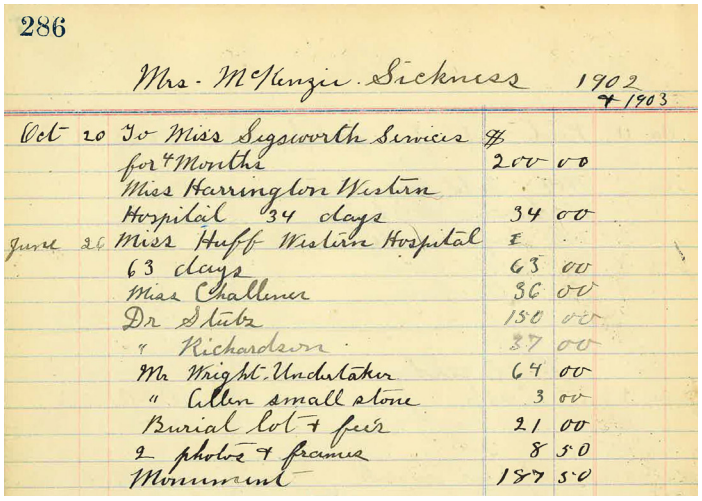
~~Mr~~ Nellie Chamber started work 25 of July $3.00
allain Roberts started work 1st of Nov. $12.00

Cough Syrup
5 c worth Laudanum
5 c Oil peperment
5 c Extract- arnica
1½ Cups Black Strap molases
1½ " Boiling Water

A page labelled "Mrs. McKenzie Sickness 1902 & 1903" sadly details the expenses associated with the death of John's first wife Allie Carson, including the services of Mr. Wright, Undertaker ($64), and the purchase of a burial lot at St. John's York Mills Anglican Church Cemetery ($21) (p. 286). (John went on to marry Eva May Hill in 1904.)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Mrs. McKenzie Sickness 1902 & 1903

Oct 20	To Miss Sigsworth Services & for 4 Months	200	00
	Miss Harrington Western Hospital 34 days	34	00
June 26	Miss Huff Western Hospital 63 days	63	00
	Miss Challener	36	00
	Dr Stubbs	150	00
	" Richardson	37	00
	Mr Wright Undertaker	64	00
	" Allen small stone	3	00
	Burial lot & fees	21	00
	2 photos & frames	8	50
	Monument	187	50

Please visit the OHS website's elibrary to view John McKenzie's order book and explore this interesting document for yourself. For more of John McKenzie's story, please see "The Farm, The Families, and The Future" in the *OHS Bulletin*, November 2013, p. 3 (available on the OHS website).

John McKenzie works the horse-drawn plough on the McKenzie family farm.

OHS INCORPORATIONS

The Maltese-Canadian Museum

Niġel Klemenčič-Puglisevich, Chair
info@maltesecanadianmuseum.ca.

The Maltese-Canadian Museum is dedicated to preserving, researching, and sharing the history, culture, and material heritage of the Maltese in Canada. Based in Toronto, the Museum grew from longstanding community and church collections and is now entering an exciting new phase as an incorporated organization through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society.

Our collections include artifacts, photographs, archival records, books, oral histories, and other materials documenting both Malta's cultural heritage and the experiences of Maltese migrants and their descendants in Canada. We are currently in the process of revamping our permanent exhibit and including a new temporary exhibit space.

Collaboration is central to our vision. We hope to build strong relationships with museums, archives, libraries, historical societies, universities, cultural organizations, community associations, Indigenous communities, and

other ethnic and diasporic communities, both in Canada and internationally. Rather than working in isolation, we see the Museum as part of a wider network of organizations and individuals interested in preserving community histories and sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources.

Maltese Canadian Society of Toronto display at Humberside Collegiate Institute in 1975.

A major focus of this work is community digitization. Through our longstanding partnership with Malta-based grassroots archival foundation Magna Żmien, and through investment in a growing suite of digitization equipment capable of accommodating a wide variety of photographic, audiovisual, documentary, and other media, we are working toward establishing the Maltese-Canadian Museum as a hub for community digitization and digital preservation. We want to help organizations, families, and individuals preserve collections that may otherwise remain inaccessible or vulnerable, whether they are held in formal public repositories, private organizational archives, or boxes, albums, tapes, and photographs kept at home.

A digitized archival photo from MCM's collections, depicting Fr. A. Cauchi, O.S.A., Maltese pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Toronto and a First Holy Communion class in the 1930s.

Visitors tour the collections and exhibitions on display at the Maltese-Canadian Museum in Toronto.

As we begin this new chapter, we are very grateful to the OHS for supporting our incorporation, as well as our past, future, and current volunteers, our new board, and our curator, Richard Cumbo. We look forward to developing new partnerships and collaborations across Ontario, Canada, Malta, and beyond.

A TRIBUTE TO HELEN & AARNE JUHOLA

The Ontario Historical Society remembers long-time OHS member, donor, and provincial heritage advocate, Helen Ann Juhola (1936–2025).

For decades, Helen and her husband Aarne (1935–2023) acted as tireless and dedicated volunteers, donating their time and expertise to the preservation and promotion of Ontario's history. Helen relished a good fight, generously sharing her insights, wit, and wisdom with the OHS in countless struggles for Ontario's built and natural heritage. Helen's passion was advocating for our natural environment, which is why she was a supporter of the OHS and its Cemetery Defence Program. She understood that Ontario's cemeteries were vitally important ecological assets as well as heritage sites. In August 2022, Helen donated her unique collection of natural heritage books to the OHS Library, including some books she co-authored for the Toronto Field Naturalists. Thank you so much Helen, for your decades of work to increase the public knowledge and appreciation of our green spaces and our heritage assets. The OHS also thanks you and Aarne for your incredibly generous bequest. Your legacy as environmental and heritage preservation advocates will live on through this gift and the many other bequests made by your estate.

CELEBRATING *our* COMMUNITY

Every member and donor strengthens the Ontario Historical Society's mission to preserve and share Ontario's rich history.

Thank you for being part of our growing community!

THANK YOU DONORS!

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Board Members of the OHS's newest affiliated society, the Maltese-Canadian Museum.

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