



NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2012

1960-2012: 52nd Year

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From the President

A Notice of a Special Meeting to our members is enclosed with this newsletter. Meeting is on Wednesday, September 19th, 7.00 p.m before our general program meeting.

HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTRE: The sub-lease at the Miller Tavern was cost free for 5 years, after which real estate taxes and utilities became applicable. In 2011, occupancy cost was \$6,000 and in 2012 it's \$6,200. We cannot afford such expenses, and it is not our intention to become focused on fund raising in order to pay such costs. We have met with Councillors John Filion (Ward 23) and Jaye Robinson (Ward 25), and they are supportive and sympathetic but are unable, at this time, to offer any solutions.

I feel that the materials gathered by the NYHS, over the past 52 years, on the history of North York is not in the best location. It is not easily accessible to the public and storage area is not best suited for preservation purposes.

The Archives Committee, a sub-committee of the Board, has met regularly, is currently in discussion with the North York Central Library, Canadiana Dept, with a view to donating part of the Society's collection to the library. See their report on page 3. The enclosed letter to our members provides contact information. We look forward to hearing from you.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: What we are calling Phase 1 of this project is coming to an end. We invited all the interviewees and their guests to a gathering at the John McKenzie House on June 15th. CDs of their interviews were presented. (See page 4)

Our September-November meetings all look really interesting. We are planning something special for December. I look forward to meeting current and new members. We need your help: oral history project, newsletter, membership, visual records of North York, etc.

Bill Aird

Wednesday, September 19th, 7.30 p.m.

TORN APART: THE INTERNMENT DIARY OF MARY KOBAYASHI

Susan Aihoshi, author

Exploring a young Japanese Canadian girl's experience at an internment camp.

Wednesday, October 17th, 7.30 p.m.

CANADA CYCLE & MOTOR: THE CCM STORY

John McKentry, author (rescheduled from March due to Library strike).

The history of CCM is traced from its formation in 1899 until its demise in 1983.

Wednesday, November 21st, 7.30 p.m

FIRST IN, LAST OUT: ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE, WOMEN'S DIVISION AND NURSING SISTERS IN WORLD WAR II

Glad Bryce, author

Location: North York Central Library,

TTC: North York Central Station

Meeting Room #1, 2nd Floor, 5120 Yonge Street,
at Park Home Avenue. West side of atrium.
Use elevator outside library.

Parking: Enter from Park Home
Ave, follow "Library" signs to 2nd floor.

VISIT TO THE ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING QUEEN'S PARK

on Saturday afternoon, June 9th

This Summer's outing was to the Ontario Legislative Building, constructed in 1893. As part of our visit, we participated in a conducted tour. For many, it was not their first visit, however, our docent provided much added information about the history of the building, as well as the various pieces of artwork from the Ontario Art Collection.

We began our tour with a group photo on the Grand Staircase. The staircase leads from the main lobby to the Legislative Chamber, and has slate flooring and ornate ironwork detailing on the railings. We continued the tour in the Legislative Chamber, which included an outline of the various wood carvings located on the walls and the Speaker's Dias. The wall and ceiling murals were also described, and a history of previous restoration campaigns in the Chamber. This was indeed one of the main highlights of the tour.



There is an opening in the hardwood floor just east of the entrance to the Legislative Chamber that allows the public to view remnants of the 1909 fire in the West Wing. The reconstructed West Wing was completed in 1912, and incorporates the use of marble finishes rather than wood for fire protection. There is beautiful mosaic marble flooring in the West Wing, as well as marble railings and column covers. We also had an opportunity to view both lay lights in the East and West Wings. The East Wing lay light was restored in 2010 by a conservator specializing in glass, and now provides vibrant colors to the East Wing main corridor.

An afternoon enjoyed by all who attended, and highly recommended for those with an interest in government, politics, or architectural history.
Teresa den Boef
Director of Programs, NYHS (*\$edited*)

VOLUNTEER SERVICES AWARD

Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration
Congratulations to
Douglas & Reta Wardle - 30 year award

NORTH YORK CENTRAL LIBRARY 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, September 15th, 10.30am to noon.

Join the Toronto Public Library, the North York Historical Society and the North York Community Preservation Panel, on a walking tour of the Willowdale neighbourhood. The tour will include both historic and modern sites in the vicinity of the library, with special emphasis on buildings and people that contributed to the development of public library service in North York. Tour begins and ends in the NYCL foyer. No registration required. For more information call 416-395-5623.

Tour leaders: Barbara Myrvold (NYCL), Mary Ann Cross (NYHS & NYCPP) & Geoff Kettel (NYCPP)

DONATIONS 2012

Heritage Resource Centre

Marion Kinch, Lillian Methven, Marcia Paty, Penny Potter, Tony Ricci

Plaquing Program

Andrew Gledhill, Marcia Paty, Penny Potter

Cummer Plaque

Neil Hepburn, Betty Lambert (in memory of Betty Crossley), Gunild Spiess

FORT YORK on Simcoe Day, August 6th, 10/5
Celebrate the legacy of Fort York as the birthplace of Toronto. Enjoy exhibits, demonstrations of musketry, cannon, Regency dance demonstrations and historic cooking.

And at 1 p.m. a unique walking tour "Simcoe to Skyscrapers"

Regular admission.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

The mission of the North York Historical Society (NYHS) has always been to preserve and disseminate historical information, and arouse interest in the past, of that part of the City of Toronto, that is generally referred to as North York.

From its beginning, the NYHS compiled an archive of the history of the area, which for many years was located in the Canadiana Department's stacks in the North York Central Library (NYCL). Other archival materials, as well as the NYHS business files, were stored in various members' homes.

In 1968, Patricia W. Hart's *Pioneering in North York; a history of the borough*, was published, for the NYHS in co-operation, with the Borough of North York. The author acknowledged the Society members' contributions.

In 1991, when the Jolly Miller restoration was under way, a staff report was presented to Toronto City Council recommending the chosen proponent (there were 4) should agree to provide space to the NYHS rent and cost free, for 5 years, following which real estate and utility costs would be charged proportional to the space used. During the summer of 2004, we moved in, and in 2011, the "occupancy charge" began (\$6,000) and this year it's \$6200.

Since then, under the supervision of Glenn Bonnetta (Vice President and Director of Archives), members of NYHS volunteered to assist in organizing the Scrapbooks, business files, etc. Additional archival materials were accepted and integrated into the collection.

Last year, the Archives Committee began to discuss the future of the Heritage Resource Centre (HRC), and soon realised there were a number of factors to address:

- (a) Current costs related to the sub-lease at the Miller premises.
- (b) The primary aim is to make the materials of the NYHS readily available to the public.
- (c) The collecting mandate of the Canadiana Department of NYCL to collect material on the history of North York.

- (d) The ability of the Library to provide public access to the materials and to store and care for them properly.

The Committee has investigated and considered several alternatives for housing and making accessible the HRC materials. These included discussions with Councillors, School Trustees and members of the Heritage community and more.

The only practical alternative, which emerged from these investigations, was to enter into discussions with the Canadiana Department of the North York Central Library. One of the mandates of the department is to conserve and make widely available materials related to North York History. We are currently in discussion with "the library" exploring the possibility of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties. Our meetings have been most cordial and helpful. When concluded this will result in the donation of a collection of the NYHS's archival materials to the NYCL (Canadiana Department).

Archives Committee:

Ruth Kingma (chair), Glenn Bonnetta, Edith Geduld, Geoff Geduld and John Laraway
Bill Aird *ex-officio*.

ARCHIVES/LIBRARIES/MUSEUMS

Archives: mostly unpublished information and documents.

Libraries: mostly published information.

Museums: objects.

How they get information:

Archives: people give documents

Libraries: libraries choose and buy books.

Museums: people give and curators buy.

How can people use the information:

Archives: people can see and read the documents but cannot take them home.

Libraries: people can usually take a book home for a while.

Museum: people can look.

Information at all three can either be old or modern.

There's an overlap between Archives and Libraries.

Extract from City of Toronto Archives presentation (edited)

WAR OF 1812 – in North York

Madame Marguerite Vallière's inn was on Old Yonge Street, in Hogg's Hollow. It may seem unusual, that a French Canadian woman was living in the York Mills area, at this time. In 1799, she and her husband moved to Upper Canada when he was hired by the Compté de Puisaye, to work on his settlement of French refugees at Windham. He died a few years later, leaving her destitute with eight children.

In the early 1800s, the York Mills area was sparsely populated. There were only about a hundred residents in the area, and they were widely scattered. There were several mills and also three distilleries. Millers often also ran the distilleries because it was a convenient way to use inferior grain.

In 1806, there were four taverns in the valley. Madame Vallière was undoubtedly a resourceful woman. Her tavern appears to have been the most popular. Apparently, she did a very brisk business during the War of 1812. The location of the inn was convenient - it was where Yonge Street crossed the Don River. Soldiers and farmers frequented the area during this period.

She remarried after the war, and in 1816, sold her inn and moved north with her new husband. She opened a canteen at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River. She had at least one more child and is reported to have lived to be over 100 years old.

Some of her children remained in North York, and several descendants are buried at St. John's Church York Mills.

One of her sons, Joseph Rémi Vallière de Sainte-Réal, born in 1787, who was her fourth child, became Chief Justice of Montreal in 1842. A grandson, William Cowan, who she raised, became a prominent fur trader.

North York Minute, May 16th presented by Linda Gargaro, Director; written by Glenn Bonnetta, Vice President. (edited)

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

gathering at the John McKenzie House
on Friday, June 15th for tea.

"Good Afternoon, my name is Linda Gargaro, I am on the Board of Directors and chair of the Oral History Project.

There will be many to be thanked today. First of all - the Oral History Project Committee, in alphabetical order: Bill Aird, Vall Alagirisamy, Glenn Bonnetta, Geoff & Edith Geduld, Anne McIlroy, Brian Simms and Doug Wardle. If it wasn't for them, and yourselves, of course, the OHP would not have done as well as it has. There were many dedicated volunteer hours involved.

Now let me tell you how all this happened. One of the first people I met during the meetings at the Willowdale United Church, was Doug Wardle. He said that he thought it was important that we capture the memories of our members and others in the community. I, too, thought it a good idea but didn't know where to start. After some searching found the Federal New Horizons program and we applied for a grant.

And now I come to you. If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't be here today either. I know many thought that "I have nothing to say", "nothing interesting happened to me", "my life was boring", and so on. But it's not true. All of us were amazed by your stories. I was often mesmerized and sometimes forgot I was doing an interview. It felt as if I was just talking to a new friend. One of the things I kept saying during my interviews was "wow"! You might hear that on some of your disks and that's because I was wowed. I could actually see what you described to me. You have now made history come alive and we now have a part of history to enjoy forever. It's important to hear and capture your stories for future generations to enjoy and learn. Thank you!"

Extract from Linda Gargaro's speech. (edited)

IN MEMORIAM Joyce Lewis; past North York Historical Society member and Gibson House Volunteer unexpectedly on April 29 2012. Our condolences to her family.

HISTORIC ZION SCHOOLHOUSE: Birthday Parties; choose from *But Miss, it's my birthday*. Pretend with the schoolmistress for the best inclass party OR *Wait for the Whistle*. Edwardian schoolyard games makes this recess extra special. Ages 6 years and up. Length 2 hours. Price \$200 (max. 30, min. 10 participants). zionshcoolhouse@toronto.ca orl 416-395-7432

North York Historical Society is an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society and a non-profit organization sponsored in part by the Ministry of Culture