



NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2017-January 2018

1960-2017 - 57th Year

From the President

Late August, 2016, we closed the storage unit and moved to the O'Connor Estate House. Then due to rain and high winds, mould was discovered; the building was closed. It was February before reopening. Now once again, due to water damage during the summer, the building is closed until around March!

The re-opening date for the North York Central Library is unknown at this time. Our December and February meetings will be held in the Gibson House Museum, and March will be in the Mitchell Field Community Centre on Church Avenue (see below).

Our Canada 150th programming was concentrated on the Hon. William McDougall, a Father of Confederation from our area. The heritage walk on October 1st, the display in the Locke Library and the lecture on October 19th were all presented in partnership with the North Toronto Historical Society, the Dictionary of Canadian Biography and the City of Toronto's MomentO.

Our 2017/18 Nominating Committee: Bill Aird (Past President), Edith Geduld (Director) and Dianne Gay (Member-at-Large) report that we have Board and Committee vacancies. We need your help – please get in touch.

Season's Greetings

Glenn Bonnetta

Sunday, December 10th, 2.00 p.m.

SEASONAL GATHERING at the Gibson House Museum (Members only)
in the Willowdale Room (lower gallery).

Wednesday, February 21st, 7.00 p.m. at the Gibson House Museum, Willowdale Room

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by

A ROYAL PRESENTATION: Curating the dress collection at Kensington Palace

Alexandra Kim, a curator with the City of Toronto, workings at the Gibson House Museum and Montgomery's Inn.

Wednesday, March 21st at 7.30 p.m. at Mitchell Field Community Centre, 89 Church Avenue

TRUTH, RECONCILIATION and ARCHAEOLOGY

Paul Racher, President, Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.

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

CONTENTS

Page 2: Dec-Feb Calendar Information

Page 2: Zion Schoolhouse

Page 3,4,5,6,8: Annual Reports

Page 5, 7

Page 2, 9

Page 8:

Page 9:

Hon. Wm. McDougall

Gibson House Museum

Proxy Form

Membership Form

DECEMBER-MARCH CALENDAR – more information

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

A ROYAL PRESENTATION: curating the dress collection at Kensington Palace.

In this presentation Alexandra Kim will talk about her experiences working with the *Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection*, enchanting a palace and preparing for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Alexandra Kim, a curator with the City of Toronto, works at Gibson House and Montgomery's Inn. Before moving to Canada, she worked for 11 years in UK museums as a curator of institutions including the Ashmolean Museum, Chertsey Museum, Buckinghamshire County Museum and Kensington Palace, home of the *Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection*. She is the co-author of *The Dress Detective, a practical guide to object-based research in fashion*. Other writing includes a chapter about North American markets for British designers in *London Couture 1923-1975*. She is co-editor of *Costume*, a journal of the UK Costume Society, and Secretary of the ICOM Costume Committee.

Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

TRUTH, RECONCILIATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Paul Racher, President of Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. Since starting there in 1986, he has directed the completion of several hundred archaeological cultural heritage contracts. He holds an Honours Bachelor Degree in Prehistoric Archaeology from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology from McMaster University. Outside of his duties at ARA, he has devoted much of his time to bridging the gap between archaeologists and Indigenous communities. He will be showing artifacts from his "digs".

GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM & HISTORIC ZIONSCHOOL HOUSE

continued from page 9

Tea and Tour Sundays 1 to 4:30 p.m.

There's a seat for you at the harvest table in the historic kitchen on Sunday afternoons throughout the year. Relax and have a chat over tea and homemade cookies. Enjoy a tour of the lovely, 1850s farmhouse. Included with regular admission.

HISTORIC ZION SCHOOLHOUSE 1091 Finch Ave. E.

Limited free accessible parking available behind the Schoolhouse; street parking also available.

Take Trudy Road south off Finch to Angus Drive.

Accessible by TTC via #39 Finch Avenue East bus from TTC Finch station.

zionschool@toronto.ca 416-395-7435

A Christmas Carol presented by John D. Huston

December 8, 7:30 p.m. and December 9, 1:00 p.m.

Written in 1843, *A Christmas Carol* may be the best loved fictional work in the English language. Few people know that Dickens wrote and performed a thrilling and hilarious solo theatrical version of this famous story for many years, playing all the characters and providing the narration. Now you can experience the laughter, tears and joy of the original with John D. Huston as Charles Dickens in this rare and enchanting holiday must see! Tickets can be purchased [online](#). \$20 per person plus tax.

<https://zionschoolhouse.streamintickets.com/purchaseProductSP.aro?sum=A+Christmas+Carol>

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
February 15, 2017
Gibson House Museum at 7.00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER: The President, Glenn Bonnetta, called the meeting to order, and welcomed members to the North York Historical Society's 57th Annual General Meeting. He highlighted some of the achievements of the Society during 2016: the agreement reached with O'Connor House for the use of space for storing Society records and materials the society is sorting and cataloguing; the consultation with the North York Central Library on renovations with respect to the placing of the Golden Lion and the North York History Room; and the work done in support of the Toronto Cultural Hotspots project. He thanked the 2016 Board of Directors, Committees, Members, and our partners at the North York Central Library. He also thanked Gibson House for hosting our meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE 2016 AGM: from the December 2016-February 2017 Newsletter: Approved by the Membership (Bill Aird, Jean Hill).

3. REPORTS: included in the Newsletter are reports from the President, the North York Community Preservation Panel, and the following Committees: Archives, Plaquing and Programs. Approved by the membership (Dianne Gay, Linda Gargaro).

4. TREASURER'S REPORT: The Statement of Financial Position as at December 31, 2016 was presented to the membership by Edward Macdonell. The statement has not been reviewed by Wesley Lee but will be prior to submission to the Canadian Revenue Agency. Approved by the membership (Edward Macdonell, Geoff Geduld).

5. NOMINATING COMMITTEE and BOARD ELECTIONS: The President handed the Chair to Bill Aird, Past President and Chair of the Nominating committee. Other members are Edith Geduld (Board representative) and Geoff Geduld (Member at Large). The proposed slate of Officers and Directors for 2017 was listed on the Agenda: President - Glenn Bonnetta; Past President - Bill Aird; Vice President - Linda Gargaro; Treasurer - Edward Macdonell; Secretary - vacant; Directors (5) Edith Geduld, Susan Goldenberg, Sarah McCabe, 2 vacancies. There were no nominations from the floor. Nominations approved (Geoff Geduld, Dianne Gay). Bill Aird returned the Chair to Glenn Bonnetta.

6. PROGRAM: Glenn Bonnetta extended his thanks to Bill Aird, and this concluded the business portion of the meeting. Linda Gargaro introduced the evening's speakers: Paul Farelly and Tony Wagner who spoke about Frank O'Connor and the restoration of O'Connor House.

Adjournment

PLAQUING COMMITTEE REPORT

Lansing: installation completed at Sheppard West/Yonge Street.

Newtobrook: Right of Way approval not yet provided.

John Bales House: plaque has now been permanently installed. Ceremony 2018.

Golden Lion Hotel, O'Sullivan's Hotel and Dempsey Store commemorative plaques have all been approved by City of Toronto Council and are now in production.

York Mills 200 Years Yonge (blue) to be moved due to construction on subway site.

Edith Geduld

WEBMASTER REPORT

<http://www.nyhs.ca>

The website hasn't seen any growth in usage during the past year, but has generated a constant stream of requests for information from non-members and others who do not live in the North York area. Posting information about the Society and other heritage organizations events is an easy and straight forward task. However, it is probably time to redesign access to our website.

Bill Aird, Webmaster

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Below are some of the events and meetings, etc., we attended, participated in, supported etc., which are not covered in other 2017 annual reports:

ATTENDED

Funerals/Visitation: Barbara Kane April 2nd, Joan Lloyd Sep. 13th.
Downsview Park, Canada Lands Company's Canada 150 commemorative plans: improve trail and install heritage pedestals. NYHS will provide research assistance, May 11th. Plans for proposed trail previewed (completion 2018), Nov. 15th.
York Pioneers & Historical Society's AGM, Jan. 29th. William Howland Lecture. May 18th.
North York Central Library: to discuss amendment/update to MOU due to Canadiana Dept. closing and adding Golden Lion long term loan.
Novotel's 30th Anniversary: possible loan of the Golden Lion; cancelled due to insurance costs.
Historic Zion Schoolhouse: *Radio Play* performance, April 28th.
Toronto Historical Association, AGM, April 29th.
Jane's Walk May 6/7th: *Willowdale*, led by Gibson House staff focussed on memorable people.
Downsview, led by Rosaanna Iabonna, (NYCP panel member).
Doors Open at Ontario Historical Society, May 27/28th.
Met with Heritage Toronto's new Executive Director: Allison Bain, July.
Museum & Heritage Services (Economic Development & Culture Div.) consultation, Oct 10th.
The Tale of a Town - Willowdale performance at Gibson House Museum, Sep. 23rd
Alias Grace (based on Margaret Atwood's book): display of costumes at Gibson House Museum, with York Pioneers & Historical Society, Nov. 21st.

OUTREACH

St. Edward's Church: *North York Tales* presented by Bill Aird, Feb. 8th
Gibson House Museum: Annual Anniversary Garden Party plus opening of the *1867: Rebellion and Confederation* (travelling exhibit from Canadian Museum of History) June 3rd.
Preserves Memory jars participation. *Rebel Afternoons* and *Rebellious Women* Tea and Matinee: GH initially provided members with complimentary tickets. Other members also attended July/Aug). *Fall Festival*, Sep. 23rd.
Willowdale's MPP: Community BBQ at Mitchell Field Community Centre, Aug. 13th.
North York Seniors Centre's *Active Living Fair*, Sep. 28th.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Additional interview: Phil Brown, member of the family which owned Brown's Store, which was sold to the Dempseys.

SUPPORTED (North York Community Preservation Panel)

90 Burndale Ave (Joseph Shepard House), objection as owner made alterations without permission.
1299 Don Mills Rd (George Gray House) supported preservation and restoration.
Federal, Private Member's Bill C-323, tax credit for repair/restoration on designated heritage properties listed on Canada's Historic Places Register.
Hudson's Bay (previously Simpson's) and Gerald Gladstone's *Universal Man* at Yorkdale, supported NYCPP's concerns due to future development plans.

APPLICATIONS/REPORTS

Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) Canada Revenue Agency (Charitable), Volunteer Service Awards.

CANADA 150: In partnership with the North Toronto Historical Society, Dictionary of Canadian Biography and City of Toronto's MomentO: Hon. Wm. McDougall, a Father of Confederation with Heritage Walk, Oct. 1st, Display in Locke Library, Lecture by Christopher Moore, author, Oct. 19th.

Glenn Bonnetta

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

Archives Committee returned to O'Connor House mid-winter, though unfortunately the building was closed again in September due to water damage. Our thanks to Bill Aird for arranging for us to meet at Canterbury Place.

Dorothy Milne Collection: Bill Aird and I visited Susan Milne's home in the spring to assess her mother's collection. We moved a large amount of material to the O'Connor House for sorting.

Gibson House Museum details about the site's change from a rooming house to a museum and also retail prices circa 1850 for a display.

Toronto Star freelance reporter sought information on a Confederation era building in North York area. The Stong House, on the York University campus, was suggested; background material and a historic picture were provided. The article was published in the December 31, 2016 edition.

Descendants of various families asked for information about the families, properties and for pictures. They all expressed their gratitude for the assistance we were able to provide: Sheppard family, who owned the Golden Lion Hotel, Van Nostrand, Goulding and Fisher. The daughter of a nurse who worked at Bethesda Hospital (on Sheppard Avenue West) sought pictures and information.

Last spring we interviewed Phil Brown, a descendant of Benjamin R. Brown, who owned the store before the Dempsey family. Mr. Brown provided us with some interesting information and allowed us to scan documents related to the ownership of the store. He also prepared a hand drawn map with the locations of various businesses and homes on Yonge Street in the 1930s and 1940s.

A request for information on Coolidge's, a business on Yonge Street in the 1950s, puzzled us. Fortunately, Mr. Brown remembered this business, so we put him in touch with the person who contacted us.

My thanks to volunteers: Bill Aird, Sheryl Adelkind and Ann McIlroy and to the Ontario Historical Society for their continued support and assistance.

Glenn Bonnetta (Archives)



William McDougall & his wife Amelia Easton (see page 7)

NORTH YORK COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PANEL

Below are some items that the NYCPP dealt with this past year:

George Gray House, 1299 Don Mills Road: rezoning and development concerns.

2017 Toronto Heritage Grant Program addressed only “designated” places of worship this year; in North York, the **Downsview United Church** received an award.

Midtown in Focus Planning Study identified 258 properties in the Yonge Street/Eglinton Avenue East & West/Mount Pleasant Road area.

Joseph Shepard House, 90 Burndale Avenue, is one of the oldest houses in North York, possibly the oldest; given information from Shepard family descendants that puts the building date at 1812, rather than 1835. The house is linked to the Rebellion of 1837, and to the Shepards, a notable early settler family of Willowdale.

Joseph Shepard first settled in the Willowdale area in 1798, and operated a saw mill. He and his sons, Joseph II, Jacob, Thomas, and Michael were supporters of William Lyon Mackenzie. Although Joseph Senior died before the 1837 Rebellion, participants met at his family home *en route* to Montgomery’s Tavern. After the battle at Montgomery’s Tavern, Colonel Van Egmond was hidden in the house by Joseph’s wife, Catherine, but was captured by government troops.



By permission of Paul Litt

The current owners went ahead and made renovations without applying for heritage or building permission. Of all the renovations made, the construction of the three new “eyebrow” dormers on the roof above the east (front) façade are most out of place on this designated property. This type of dormer is not typical of the Georgian style (with Loyalist elements) of the house, and the NYCPP felt they should be removed. There are no “eyebrow” dormers, or indeed dormers of any kind, mentioned or shown in house records.

1904 Photo of 90 Burndale Ave by Edna Johnson Milne – Shepard Homestead Built 1812

Had permission been sought prior to renovations, the panel would have requested that the window pane in the window in the north wall of the dining room, with the initials JS 1862 scratched in it, be saved either for descendants of the Shepard family or for the City of Toronto archives.

Note: Above is extracted from the NYCPP’s letter to the Toronto Preservation Board, January 25, 2017. Chair: Geoff Kettel recognized and thanked Panel member, Mary Ann Cross, for her role in researching and monitoring the property over a number of years. She is also a long time member of the NYHS and a past board member.

Edith Geduld, Past Chair, NYCPP

HON. WILLIAM MCDUGALL **FATHER OF CONFEDERATION**

- William McDougall was born to Daniel McDougall and Hannah Matthews on January 25, 1822
- He was raised on his grandfather John McDougall's farm, lot 4, con.1 west of Yonge which his father acquired in 1826. (The property ran from Yonge to Bathurst and comprised the present-day streets of Glenview, Glengrove and Glencairn.)
- Among the events which the young McDougall witnessed was the burning of Montgomery's Tavern during the Rebellion of 1837.
- Following his studies at Upper Canada Academy in Cobourg, he returned to Toronto to study law in the firm of James Hervey Price, reformer and owner of the nearby Castlefield estate.
- In 1845 McDougall married his first cousin Amelia Caroline Easton. Later, they moved to the Easton family farm north of Lawrence on the east side of Yonge. (Amelia had been adopted by her aunt and uncle, Samantha and Joseph Easton, who were childless, after the death of her mother.)
The property, lot 7, ran from Yonge to Bayview and from present-day Bowood to Snowdon avenues.
- By 1851 McDougall had built a sawmill on the property near today's Rosedale Golf Club. By this time he was also involved in the Clear Grit political movement and in the publications *Canadian Agriculturalist* and *The North American*.
- Between 1846 and 1864 Amelia and William had eleven children, many of whom were born on the farm known as "Millbank".
- William McDougall appears as owner of the farm on the York County maps of 1860 and 1878.
- In 1862 he abandoned the Clear Grit movement and joined the ministry of Premier John Sandfield Macdonald.
- While serving in cabinet McDougall along with his wife were present in 1863 for the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln.
- McDougall is considered a Father of Confederation as he attended the three Confederation conferences in Charlottetown, Quebec and London England and participated in the formulation of terms of agreement leading to Confederation on July 1, 1867.
- For his services to Confederation he was awarded the Companion of the Order of Bath by Queen Victoria.
- He became Minister of Ministry of Public Works in the cabinet of Sir John A. Macdonald
- His wife Amelia died in January 1869 before McDougall's appointment as Lieutenant-governor of Rupert's Land and the North-west Territory. She is buried in the McDougall family plot in Toronto's Necropolis Cemetery.
- McDougall remarried in 1872 (Mary Adelaide Beatty) and they had three sons. He died on 29 May 1905 in Ottawa and is buried in the Beechwood Cemetery.
Lynda Moon, President, North Toronto Historical Society

PROGRAM REPORT: February-December 2017

- February 15, 2017 **Annual General Meeting & THE FRANK O'CONNOR HOUSE (MARYVALE FARM):** Paul Farrelly, Heritage Advocate & OCH Researcher and Tony Wagner, former OCH Org. Board Chair
- March 15, 2017 **THE GREAT WAR: A HANDS ON INQUIRY:** Bruce Beaton, Facilitator, City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services
- April 19, 2017 **EATON HALL: PRIDE OF KING TOWNSHIP:** Kelly Matthews, author
- May 17, 2017 **DROP DEAD: A HORRIBLE HISTORY OF HANGING IN CANADA:** Lorna Poplak, author
- June 11, 2017 **PICKERING MUSEM VILLAGE:** outing
- September 20, 2017 **THE EARLY AIRFIELDS OF TORONTO: From de Lesseps to de Havilland and Beyond:** Dr. Robert Galway, author.
- October 19, 2017 **WILLIAM McDOUGALL: DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS OF A CONFEDERATIION-ERA POLIITICIAN:** Christopher Moore, award winning author.
- November 15, 2017 **DEADLOCK IN KOREA: CANADIANS AT WAR 1950-1953:** Ted Barris, award winning author.
- December 11, 2017 **SEASONAL GATHERING** at the Gibson House Museum.

March-September & November meetings were co-sponsored by the North York Historical Society and the North York Central Library. October 19th was a partnership between the North York Historical Society, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, North Toronto Historical Society and City of Toronto's MomenTO.

Linda Gargaro, Programs

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY – PROXY

Solicited by the Board of Directors of the Society for February 21, 2018

The undersigned paid up member of the North York Historical Society hereby appoints Marla Weingarten, Secretary, as proxy holder, with full power of substitution to attend, vote and act on behalf of the undersigned at the Annual General Meeting of members of the Society to be held on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

The proxy holder is here instructed:

1. The election of persons nominated as Officers and Directors of the Society for the year 2018.
2. The appointment of a financial reviewer named by the Board of Directors or Nominating Committee.

And hereby revoke any proxy given previously.

Name.....Date.....

...

Signature.....

AT THE GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM

5172 Yonge Street (entrance off Park Home Avenue, west of Yonge)
Toronto.ca/gibsonhouse 416-395-7432 gibsonhouse@toronto.ca

Limited free parking on site; nearby paid underground and street level parking.

Hours: Wednesday to Sunday: 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday: 1 to 8 p.m.

Festive Admission: Adults \$7.08, Seniors/Youth \$4.42, Children \$3.76 (plus tax)

Scottish Holiday Traditions - until December 31st

Enjoy the simple and elegant traditions of the Scottish holiday season. Learn how the Gibson family celebrated the season in the 19th century and sample some tasty treats by the open hearth. See the Victorian-era home decorated in natural greenery and take a guided tour with our knowledgeable staff.

Gingerbread Cookie Decorating Saturday, December 9, 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Start your adventure by decorating gingerbread cookies baked by museum staff with holiday sweets. Then, take a tour of the museum with our costumed interpreters and learn how the Gibson's would have baked gingerbread over the hearth. Finish your visit by enjoying your gingerbread cookie! Regular admission applies. Cookie decorating is \$1 per cookie.

A Gibson House Hogmanay Dinner Thurs., Dec. 28 & Fri. Dec. 29, at 6 p.m.

Gather at the historic Gibson House for a special evening inspired by the Scottish traditions of Hogmanay. Share a scrumptious dinner with familiar and new friends. Be lulled by the fire and moved by the music. Take an imagined journey through story and drama to a New Year of another time. As the evening closes, come together with staff to welcome our First Footer, celebrate our 2017 season, Canada's Confederation and bring luck and best wishes to Gibson House Museum for 2018. Pre-registration and pre-payment required. \$65 plus tax per person.

[Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

Pay-What-You-Wish Thursday Night Socials Thursdays, 5 to 8 p.m.

Visit Gibson House Museum on Thursday nights and take a self-guided tour through the historic house. Relax in the historic kitchen and learn about the Gibson family and the history of North York. Interested in improving your sewing skills? Join the **Community Quilt Group** from 6 to 8 p.m. where you will explore historic and contemporary quilting techniques in a comfortable, social setting. Work on a group project, or pay a small fee for materials and make your own piece. The last Thursday of each month is **Board Games Night** – all ages welcome to challenge us to a game! Keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) for the featured games of the month.

.....continued on page 2

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership 2018

Name(print).....Phone.....

Address.....

...

Email: Newsletter by email: Yes... No...

Family: \$25.00.....Individual \$15.00.....Senior \$10.00.....Student \$5.00.....Institutional \$20.00.....

Donation: General \$.....Plaquing Program \$.....Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund \$.....

Email: nyhs@bell.net

Please make cheque payable to the North York Historical Society, Post Office Box 45045, 5845 Yonge Street, Willowdale, ON M2M 4C3