



NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2018-January 2019

1960-2019 - 59th Year

www.nyhs.ca
info@nyhs.ca

From the President

Last year I began by announcing that the Society had space in the newly restored O'Connor Estate House but as mould had been discovered the building was closed. Not long after it re-opened again water caused problems and the building was closed. Fortunately, repairs were completed during the summer and the Archives Committee meet there to continue their tasks.

Now that part of the North York Central Library is open again, we have been able to meet there since September. Our thanks to members and visitors who followed us to another library, community centres and the Gibson House Museum. We are all looking forward to the opening of the North York History Room – possibly some time in 2019.

A reminder to members: Constitution & By Laws 2019 (draft) was circulated recently. Adoption of these will be on the 2019 Annual General Meeting agenda on February. Please contact any board member asap if you have questions or comments.

We need your help – please consider joining the board or serving on a committee for 2019. Again, contact any member of the board. Chair of the Nominating Committee is Bill Aird.

Season's Greetings
Glenn Bonnetta

Sunday, December 9, 2018, 2.00 p.m.

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

Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (7.00 p.m.) followed at 7.30 p.m. by -
PORTIA WHITE: CANADA'S ORIGINAL SUPERSTAR
Sheila White, niece, communications consultant.

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

EAST YORK 1924-1997: TORONTO'S GARDEN OF EDEN
Alan Redway, author, retired lawyer, retired politician.

Meeting Location: North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge Street. Room number to be advised.

Meetings: February & March are co-sponsored by the North York Historical Society and the North York Central Library.

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 7	Proxy Form
Page 3,4,5,7	Annual Reports	Page 8	Gibson House Museum
Page 6	Guild Park & Gardens	Page 8	Membership Form

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

February 20, 2019 & March 20, 2019

at the North York Central Library

Wednesday, February 20, 2018

PORTIA WHITE: CANADA'S ORIGINAL SUPERSTAR

Sheila White, niece, communications consultant

Portia White (1911-1968) achieved international acclaim in the 1940s for her prowess as a classical concert singer from Nova Scotia, made all the more significant and remarkable by her status as a single, Black woman. Portia began her professional career relatively late, at age 30, after a breakthrough Toronto debut as a contralto. She toured half the world, playing to packed halls and adoring audiences as a Columbia Concerts artist. A government trust fund was established in 1944 to support her financially. Portia's niece, Sheila White, was curator of an exhibit in February 2018, to mark 50 years since Portia died in Toronto at age 56. The exhibit will head to Colchester Historeum in Truro, NS – her birthplace - in May 2019 for a four-month run. Sheila will share the fascinating story of her famous aunt, a nationally recognized person of historical significance, who is featured in museum and library collections. Canada Post put her image on a stamp in 2000.

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

EAST YORK 1924-1997: TORONTO'S GARDEN OF EDEN

Alan Redway, author, retired lawyer, retired politician

The book tells the story of East York from its incorporation as a separate municipality on January 1, 1924, made necessary as a direct result of the incorporation of North York in 1922, up to and including its amalgamation on December 31, 1997.

About The Author

Alan Redway is a retired lawyer, born in Toronto, with a degree in Commerce and Finance from the University of Toronto and a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School. He served for ten years on the council of the Borough of East York, six of those years as the Mayor of East York and a member of Metropolitan Toronto Council and Executive Committee. Later he was elected to the parliament of Canada where he served for almost ten years as a Progressive Conservative member of the House of Commons and as Minister of State (Housing). He has written for *Leaside Life* and the *East York Chronicle*. In 2014 he published his first book, *Governing Toronto: Bringing Back The City That Worked*.

Note: Meeting Room locations to be advised.

Above meetings are co-sponsored by the North York Historical Society
and the North York Central Library

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Below are events and meetings, etc., we attended, participated in, supported etc., which are not covered in other 2018 reports:

ATTENDED

Met with Stan Cho MPP, Willowdale.

Met with Gibson House' management to discuss the Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund.

Met with Assistant Head, Bayview Glenn School (independent) re: renaming school houses.

February & April presentations to NY Seniors Group at Blessed Trinity Catholic Church and residents of Canterbury Place Retirement Residence. Topic: Education in North York.

April 21st weekend: *Listening, Learning and Living into Reconciliation* (Indigenous history, culture, food and art) at Lansing United Church.

May 22nd St. Mary's Training School (Columbus Centre was built on this site; possible redevelopment site), photographed elements and followed up with Heritage Preservation Services.

May 27th volunteered at Ontario Historical Society at *Doors Open*.

June 17th Toronto Historical Association's AGM

June 23rd Ontario Historical Society's AGM at the Japanese Cultural Centre.

July 2nd West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association gathering in Dempsey Park.

July 16th Draft presentation of the North York & 1837 Rebellion of Upper Canada for Schools

October 30th Spanish 'flu exhibit at St. James Cathedral.

Markham Heritage Estates tour led by Scarborough Historical Society.

Leaside's Canada Wire & Cable Company Houses, photographic exhibit at ArteMbassy Gallery.

Funerals/Celebration of Life:

Lavina Lanty: long time member

Peter Buckley: a past Director & Treasurer

Margaret Cameron: long time member

Juanita Sternbergh: a past Treasurer, President, Gibson House Volunteer

Visited: John Laraway, a past President in long term care.

OUTREACH

June 2nd Gibson House Museum's *What's Springing Up* (Garden Party)

September 22nd Gibson House Museum's *Fall Festival*

SUPPORTED

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport sought input from stakeholders on three key themes: strengthening leadership, building capacity and supporting diverse organizations. NYHS Board of Directors participated.

Old City Hall future plans for a City of Toronto Museum.

5800 Yonge Street, formerly Hydro Electric Commission supporting inclusion of current building in any future development.

APPLICATION/REPORTS

Canada Revenue Agency (charitable)

Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG)

Volunteer Service Awards

Glenn Bonnetta, President

IN MEMORIAM

Isobel Davey (1927-2018)

long time member of the North York Historical Society
and a Gibson House Volunteer
our condolences to her family.

DONATIONS 2018 (July-October)

General Operating Fund:

Jeanne Hopkins, Tony Ricci, Jacqueline Stuart

Plaquing Fund

Mary Ann Cross, Mike Mastromatteo

Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund

Tony Ricci

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS 2018

(Ontario Ministry of Citizenship)

Congratulations to:

Sheryl Adelkind – 20 years

Susan Goldenberg – 5 years

Edward Macdonell – 5 years

NORTH YORK MIRROR: HERITAGE COLUMN

Since July, 2018 membership director Susan Goldenberg has been writing a monthly column on North York's heritage - people, places and events – published simultaneously on the website www.toronto.com and the North York Mirror (both owned by the Toronto Star). The articles appear on the 4th Thursday of a month. They are also posted on the North York Historical Society's website www.nyhs.ca, which has had substantial "hits". The purpose is to increase awareness of North York's unique heritage and expand community outreach.

WEBMASTER REPORT

We hope you are enjoying the new NYHS website (<https://nyhs.ca>), which was launched in May 2018. We're pleased to report that in the first six months, the site had over 800 unique viewers, 80% from Canada, 15% USA, and 5% UK. New local history articles by NYHS director Susan Goldenberg have been added monthly and are proving very popular! The site's easy "contact us" form has led to improved communications with our members and the public.

Please visit regularly to check out our upcoming meetings and events calendar, recent news items, and North York local history resources. What else would you like to see? Please let us know what you think at info@nyhs.ca.

Sarah McCabe, Webmaster

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

As reported on page 1, now that the repairs are completed, the Society again has access to the offices at the O'Connor House.

The committee continued editing the transcripts of the NYHS oral history project. Hopefully we will complete this task in 2019. The earlier oral history interviews from the 1980s have been transferred to digital format as many of the audiotapes were in poor condition.

The Dorothy Milne papers, which are being temporarily stored at the office, have been sorted by subject. The next task is to put them into labeled file folders.

We have had a donation of interesting material by Colin Wilkinson, including some items from the Dempsey Store. There have also been a number of questions during the year including a letter received from a lady in Williston, North Dakota, asking for information about her aunt.

My thanks to the intrepid volunteers on the Archives Committee: Bill Aird and Sheryl Adelkind.

Glenn Bonnetta (Archives)

NORTH YORK COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PANEL

OMB reform came into effect on April 2nd. Developers have already submitted many appeals to the OMB in the period leading up to December 12, 2017 – so it will be around for some time!

900 York Mills Road (Prince Hotel) area major developments planned. Panel will monitor.

Wynates House (Col. Phillips Estate), 10 Buchan Court, owned by the NYGH. Property is listed. Long promised restoration/renovation under way.

Old City Hall and possible future plans, which might include the City of Toronto Museum.

Milne House, 1185 Lawrence Avenue East, ca.1865: increasing deterioration (TRCA owns house).

5800 Yonge Street (Toronto Hydro Building) redevelopment site. Identified in the Modernist book but still not listed on City's Inventory of Heritage Buildings.

Land & Property information, new web portal to delivery key statutory services relating to land and property ownership in Ontario.

Street Naming:

Lawrence Heights Revitalization: Toronto Community Housing staff enquired about street names and their history.

New east/west street between Rean Drive & Kenaston Gardens recommending name relating to Thomas Clark, 9 Barberry Place, built 1855, designated. Local councillor not supportive.

Edith Geduld, Past Chair, NYCPP

PLAQUING COMMITTEE REPORT

Newtonbrook commemorative plaque has been installed at Yonge & Drewry, just north of intersection.

Note: "Blue" 200 Years Yonge plaque to be removed from 5800 Yonge Street.

Golden Lion Hotel, O'Sullivan's Hotel and Dempsey Store commemorative plaques are now ready for unveiling/installation.

Edith Geduld

GUILD PARK and GARDENS

Guild Park and Gardens www.guildpark.ca was visited by an enthusiastic group of members of the NYHS Sunday, June 10, 2018 for the members-only outing.



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Guild Park's history includes being the site of innovative Guild of All Arts,

artists' community founded in 1932 by noted philanthropists Rosa and Spencer Clark. The couple later converted their home into the renowned Guild Inn, a destination for artists, royalty and tourists; located on the Scarborough Bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario. In the 1960s, the Clarks architectural features from heritage buildings – all demolished before protective laws existed. They later added outdoor sculptures to the grounds.



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Today, visitors can view works by renowned Canadian artists, including E. B. Cox, Sorel Etrog, Emanuel Hahn, Frances Loring and Florence Wyle. The Clarks sold the property in 1978. The park and its treasures are now being revitalized as public assets. 88 acres of woods, waterfront and formal gardens, operated by the City of Toronto Conservation Authority.

The park treasures include many pieces that will not last forever their current outdoor settings. leader of the walk pointed out damage being done to these wonderful sculptures by Loring Wyle.



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With thanks to the Friends of Guild Park, especially John P. Mason, President, who was our guide. Do check them out at <http://facebook.com/GuildPark>.

PROGRAM REPORT: February-December 2018

- February 21, 2018 **Annual General Meeting & A ROYAL PRESENTATION: Curating the dress collection at Kensington Palace**, Alexandra Kim, Curator of Montgomery's Inn.
- March 21, 2018 **TRUTH, RECONCILIATION and ARCHAEOLOGY**, Paul Racher, President, Archaeological Research Association Ltd.
- April 18, 2018 **EDWARD MARION CHADWICK (1840-1921), LAWYER, GENEALOGIST AND HERALDIST**, Ian Kyer, historian, author, lawyer.
- May 16, 2018 **AN AURORA ABC WITH NORTH YORK FOOTNOTES**, Jacqueline Stuart, author, Curator of Aurora Museum (1981-2006).
- June 10, 2018 **GUILD PARK and GARDENS**, Scarborough; an outing. (members only)
- September 19, 2018 **CALL ME FISHER – A MADCAP ROMP THROUGH CITY HALL**, Howard Moscoe, author, retired City Councillor & TTC Chair.
- October 17, 2018 **GENERAL STORES OF CANADA: MERCHANTS AND MEMORIES**, R. B. Fleming, author.
- November 21, 2018 **PHOTOGRAPHS AND LETTERS FROM CANADIANS AT VIMY**, Michael Wilcox, Program Assistant, Historica Canada.
- December 9, 2018 **SEASONAL GATHERING** at the Gibson House Museum. (members only)

September-November Meetings were co-sponsored by the North York Historical Society and the North York Central Library.

Linda Gargaro, Vice President, Programs

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY – PROXY

Solicited by the Board of Directors of the Society for February 20, 2019

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 20, 2019 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 2019.
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

Hygge for the Holidays - Thursdays in December, 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Play games in our candle-lit parlour, browse a book by the warmth of our hearth fire, strike up a conversation, try out a simple sewing craft, or simply enjoy a cup of warm apple cider on Thursday nights in December.

Embrace *hygge*, the Danish concept of cosiness and enjoying the little moments by soaking up the atmosphere of our historic Victorian home, decorated for the holidays. You are welcome to bring your friends, some knitting, or even a book to read- drop in when you can and stay as long or as short as you please. Admission by donation/pay-what-you-wish.

A Gibson House Hogmanay Dinner

Saturday, December 29th and Sunday, December 30th, 6.00-9:30 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 a 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 the 2018 season, and bring luck and best wishes to Gibson House Museum for 2019. \$60.00 plus tax.

Advance tickets required: <http://gibsonhousemuseum.streamintickets.com>

Tea and Tour Weekends - NEW

1.00-4:30 p.m. January 20th to August 25th and September 22nd to December 22nd.

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

By Popular Demand: Hearth Cooking Workshop

Saturday, February 2, 2019: 10.00 a.m.-12.00 p.m.

Back by popular demand...favourite recipes of staff and visitors will be featured to create a delicious meal. This hands-on workshop is led by an experienced historic cook. Children must be 12 years of age or older. \$35.00 plus tax. Advance tickets required.

<https://gibsonhousemuseum.streamlinetickets.com>

Sweetheart Tea

Saturday, February 9th - two sittings: 12.00 and 2:30 p.m.

Treat someone special to a Victorian-inspired tea, including finger sandwiches, scones and sweets. Costumed interpreters serve afternoon tea in the mid-19th century parlour and dining room and then guests may tour the museum at their leisure. Recommended for children 6 and older. \$25 plus tax. Advance tickets required: <https://gibsonhousemuseum.streamintickets.com>

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Membership 2019

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

Address.....

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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 \$.....

Please make cheque payable to the North York Historical Society, 5576 Yonge Street, P.O.B 10042, Willowdale, ON M2N 5S0