

North Toronto, 1909 TPL



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## Fall Programme



*Mark your calendars...*

**Wednesday, 30 September, 7:30 p.m.**

### HISTORY OF THE PHONOGRAPH AND RECORDED SOUND

An entertaining presentation with illustrations and demonstrations of antique phonographs from the early 1900s to the 1950s. Learn about the early days of voice and music recording as Canadian Antique Phonographic Historical Society members **Mike Bryan** and **Keith Wright** bring to life the sounds of a bygone era.

**Wednesday, 28 October, 7:30 p.m.**

### HOW WE CHANGED TORONTO

Many people look back on the 1970s as Toronto's Golden Age. **David Crombie** and **John Sewell** were both on City Council in the 1970s, and they played different roles – sometimes complementary, sometimes in opposition. They will talk and debate together about what was important about the 1970s and what we all can learn from that decade. As well, John Sewell will have with him his newly published book: *How We Changed Toronto: The inside story of twelve creative, tumultuous years in civic life, 1969-1980.* (Lorimer, available Sept. 2015).

**Wednesday, 25 November, 7:30 p.m.**

### HOLIDAY TREATS OF NORTH TORONTO

An illustrated journey into memories of holidays past presented by culinary historians **Liz Driver**, **Fiona Lucas** and **Mary Williamson**. From the early 1900s to the late 1960s women in our area were proud producers of cookbooks in which they pooled treasured family recipes. Usually the cookbooks were distributed as fundraisers on behalf of local churches and synagogues. A souvenir booklet of recipes for North Toronto holiday treats will be given to all attendees.

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Picnic in High Park, 1907 TPL

The Society meets at the Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Boulevard (one block north of Eglinton, just west of Yonge) at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of each month from September to November & January to May. Programmes are free and are open to the public. Our co-sponsor is the Northern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

## Capitol Theatre block purchased

The Capitol Theatre and adjacent businesses (2490-2514 Yonge, 12 Castlefield) have been purchased by Madison Homes, a Toronto-based firm known for its high-rise developments.

The Capitol Theatre has been in the McClelland family since it opened in 1918, when it featured vaudeville shows and silent films. It closed as a movie theatre in 1998.

More about the Capitol Theatre:  
<http://tinyurl.com/qxrtu2f>



Capitol Theatre, Toronto, 1926

AO

## New Heritage Toronto Plaques

A new plaque commemorates the **Runnymede Theatre**, located at 2225 Bloor Street West near Runnymede Road. Designed by Alfred Chapman (architect of the Palais Royale and the Princes' Gates), the auditorium ceiling was painted to look like the night sky with light bulb stars.



## More New Heritage Toronto Plaques

A Legacy Plaque recognising jazz legend **Oscar Peterson** has been unveiled at 21 Park Road, near Bloor Street East and Church Street. This is where Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Ed Thigpen, Butch Watanabe and Phil Nimmons opened the Advanced School of Contemporary Music in 1960.



# ASCM

the advanced school of contemporary music limited commences its 1960/61 term on october 3rd 1960 with the faculty consisting of • oscar peterson, piano • ray brown, bass • edmund thigpen, percussion • erich traugott, trumpet • butch watanabe, trombone • phil nimmons, composition and arranging • mail requests for information and applications to 9 chrysler crescent in scarborough ontario • telephone the school at plymouth 5-2857

## announcing

This year is the 100th anniversary of the building of the **Ernescliffe Apartments** on Sherbourne Street. Designed by Redmond and Beggs Architects, the three buildings were completed between 1914 and 1916. They once formed one of the largest residential properties in the city. 2015 also celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Ernescliffe Non-Profit Housing Co-op.

History: [http://www.ernescliffe.ca/?page\\_id=15](http://www.ernescliffe.ca/?page_id=15)



## Fairlawn100 Stories

Fairlawn Avenue United Church is celebrating its centennial by running weekly online stories about its rich heritage. Many churches make up the current congregation. You can read about their history, and the memories of members of its active congregation: <https://fairlawn100.wordpress.com>



Bedford Park Methodist Church (a precursor of Fairlawn United) first met in the Bedford Park Hotel during prohibition.

## Spring Lecture Series

APRIL: **Marta O'Brien**

### *Toronto's Old City Hall: a Private Tour* by *Marta O'Brien*

At our April meeting, I enjoyed sharing my many photographs of the exterior and interior of our beloved Old City Hall, completed in 1899 after 11 years of construction. I began with its predecessors. When the Town of York became the City of Toronto in 1834, the councillors met upstairs in the 1830s market building at King and Jarvis. In 1845, Henry Bowyer Lane's design for a proper City Hall was chosen over those of seven other architects. Part of it still stands—it was engulfed by the St. Lawrence Market (south) in 1900. The council chamber is now the Market Gallery.

Our third, now Old, City Hall design was also the result of a competition won by Toronto-born Edward James (E.J.) Lennox. Like many late-nineteenth-century architects, he admired the intricate stone architecture of American architect H.H. Richardson. I showed some examples of Richardson's work. We could say the pupil surpassed the master at City Hall: although it resembles Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, E.J.'s asymmetrical building is a richer composition with more stone ornament than the Pittsburgh structure.

E.J.'s persistence, attention to detail, and sense of humour are all seen at City Hall. When the city council refused to allow a plaque naming him as architect, E.J. had the stone masons spell out his name in the corbel table. My photograph shows the letter E. Famously, his face is carved by the front entrance amongst the grotesques supposedly representing city councillors.

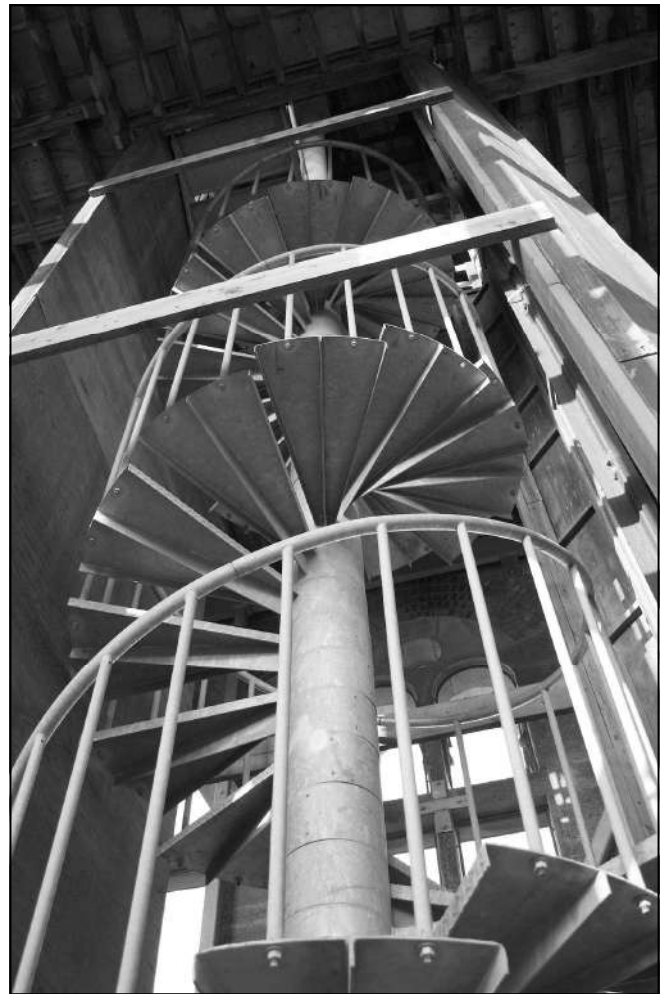


**Corbel letter E**

*Photo: Marta O'Brien*

Walking around outside Old City Hall, I am still amazed by the complex—yet harmonious—stonework. Animals, foliage, dates, geometrical shapes, and the city's Coat of Arms have all been carved in the dichromatic stone.

The stone walls are loadbearing, so they are exceptionally thick (7' 9" or 2.4m at the base of the clock tower). There were concerns about the weight of the roof, however: the original red clay tiles were replaced with lightweight copper in the 1920s.



**Inside clock tower**

*Photo: Marta O'Brien*

The iconic clock tower is asymmetrically positioned on the facade to close the Bay Street vista. It's more than a visual landmark: the 300' /103.6 m tall tower is an essential part of an advanced ventilating and heating system. The hour, half-hour, and quarter-hour bells are different sizes. E.J., then-Mayor John Shaw, and Queen Victoria's names are inscribed on the largest bell.

*Old City Hall continues on page 4*

*Old City Hall continued from page 3*

I was thrilled to climb the 239 steps to the top of the clock tower and stand behind the clock faces—a trip usually reserved for those maintaining the bells and clock. The journey must be timed to avoid passing the huge bells as they're ringing. A regular staircase became spiral stairs, followed by a ladder up into the room with the clockworks. A glass cabinet holds the shining gears and springs controlling the four clocks. What a beautiful piece of Victorian machinery!

Even after the magnificent exterior, the interior does not disappoint. Just inside the main entrance are murals painted by important Ontario artist George Reid. He felt so strongly about them that he did not charge the city. The double-height entrance hall was designed as a grand public space which could serve as a ballroom, assembly, or exhibition hall. The floor is a beautiful mosaic of a vine-like design surrounding geometric frames, and E.J. combined Classical and medieval-inspired ornament on the ceiling. Once-lost wrought iron griffins flank the base of the grand staircase. An enormous McCausland stained glass window is above the landing. It includes 12 life-size figures, scenes of the waterfront, and the Second City Hall. The ground floor walls have marble panels, while the upper storeys feature wood. Those aren't real marble columns, however—the scagliola technique was used to achieve the effect of expensive stone.

E.J. was meticulous in his attention to detail. The intricate metal decoration along the grand staircase is beautiful. Elsewhere in the building, delicate wood ornament is just as lovely. E.J. designed almost every kind of furnishing for Old City Hall, including wardrobes, work tables, handrails, and elevator cages. There are doorknobs in City Hall with the city's pre-amalgamation Coat of Arms and motto ("Industry, Intelligence, Integrity").

The project began with a budget of \$600,000; council later approved \$1,650,000; and the final cost was approximately \$2.5 million. Taken with the delays, council refused E.J.'s request for a plaque and payment of his fee. He sued and eventually settled for much less than owed.

Old City Hall's medieval-looking architecture was considered old-fashioned soon after completion, and it was overcrowded by the 1920s. The Great



**Former Council Chamber**

*Photo: Marta O'Brien*

Depression and Second World War delayed plans for replacement until the 1950s. Since the 1965 opening of the current City Hall, the city has leased E.J.'s building to the province as court space. The Eaton Centre developers proposed demolition, but thankfully a group called Friends of Old City Hall pressured city councillors to save it. An exhibit cabinet in the entrance lobby tells their story.

The facade was cleaned and restored in 1974 and ten years later the building was declared a National Historic Site. A \$35 million restoration was completed in 2003. Credit Valley sandstone was no longer available, so stone was imported from England. This work created so much abrasive dust that clock specialists had to spend 2 months cleaning each gear with solvent, rinsing each piece with alcohol, then coating with light clock oil. The clock has always kept perfect time. It was one of the largest built by well-known British firm Gillett & Johnson, who also cast the bells.

The original stone gargoyles around the clock tower each weighed 14,000 lbs/6,350 kg. Each gargoyle was 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>.6m long, projecting 9' 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"/3m from the corners (the rest was anchored in the wall). The gargoyles were removed for safety reasons in the late 1930s after a section broke off. The 2003 restoration included replacing these gargoyles with lightweight bronze replicas.

In 2008, City Council told the province that its lease would not be renewed when it expires in 2016. The City has been exploring other uses that would make this treasure more accessible to the public. One option is to add a new building to the courtyard and house the long-discussed Toronto Museum. Wouldn't that be great?

**MAY: Barbara Myrvold**

## ***Find Your Way to North Toronto History***

The May meeting featured an informative talk by Barbara Myrvold, Senior Services Specialist – Local History at the Toronto Public Library (TPL). The subject was “Find Your Way to North Toronto History.” Barbara discussed the various resources and databases available on the TPL website, [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca).

TPL has had a longstanding interest in Canadian, and in particular, Toronto history. James Bain, the first chief librarian, and John Hallam, the first library board chair, were enthusiastic about collecting information on Canadiana. The gift of a large collection of photographs from John Ross Robertson in 1910 forms the basis of the current rich archive of pictures accessible through the website. Through the twentieth century, various gifts built this resource into the valuable research collection the library has today.

During the 1990s, the library website was initiated featuring the Virtual Reference Library.

*Historicity—Toronto Then and Now* was included on the website starting in 2001. That has been replaced by a digital archive, *Find Your Way*, which is located near the top of the TPL home page. If you click on the subdivision, “History and Genealogy,” the “Local History and Genealogy” page appears. At the top right corner of this screen is the Toronto Neighbourhood Map icon. This is a good source for information on particular neighbourhoods. You can browse by any of the 107 neighbourhood divisions.

On the left side of this page, (“Local History and Genealogy”), if you click on “Local History,” you are given a choice of “Ontario History” and “Toronto History”. Selecting “Toronto History” will give you access to the Digital Archive, an excellent source of old photographs. If you click on “Digital Archive,” halfway down the screen, you are given an option to “Sort” with a small box “Best Match” beside it. This provides a drop down menu which allows the choice of “Date.” Sorting by date makes your search much easier. Items retrieved are listed in reverse chronological order so that the most recent items are listed first. Searching on “North Toronto,” “Davisville” or “Bedford Park” will find images of our area.



**Snider house, 744 Duplex Ave., 1923**  
*Find Your Way* >History & Genealogy >Local History >Toronto History >Digital Archive

On the right hand side of the “Toronto History” page, there are links to the *Toronto Star* Historical Newspaper Archive and the *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive. These archives can be searched using your library card number and password. Newspaper databases are useful research tools for anyone interested in local history. Also, links to a wide range of Toronto city directories can be found on the “Local History and Genealogy” page. It's definitely worth searching these pages during the course of one's research.

Barbara Myrvold reminded us of the wonderful research materials held in hard copy at the Research and Reference Libraries. The Special Collections



**Dovercourt Land Building & Savings Company Ltd,**  
**1910**

*Find Your Way* >History & Genealogy >Local History >Toronto History >Geography & Maps

*Find Your Way continues on page 6*

### NORTH TORONTO

(Comprising the Villages of Bedford Park, Davisville and Eglinton)

Acey Arthur, lab A H St Germain  
Adams Henry, studt, h e s Yonge, Davisville  
Anderson Albert E, prtr, h n s Merton, Davisville  
Anderson Jane (wid Thomas W), h w s Yonge, Eglinton  
Anderson John M, farmer, h s s Glen Grove, Eglinton  
Armstrong Elijah, h s s Rowhampton av Eglinton  
Armstrong Samuel W, treas York Township, h 16 Dupont, city

#### Might's Toronto City Directory, 1897

Find Your Way >History & Genealogy >Local History >Toronto History >Toronto City Directories

Centre and the Genealogy and Maps collections are invaluable sources of information at the Toronto Reference Library. North York Central Library's Canadiana collection is excellent, too. Thirty branches throughout the Toronto Public Library system have local history collections, including, of course, the Northern District branch.

Lynda Moon, our historical society's president, and Barbara Myrvold, our speaker, have a long history of working together at TPL. They have produced a number of books and pamphlets on local history including *North Toronto in Pictures, 1889-1912* and *Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park*.

Elizabeth Warrenner

## THE SUBURBS.

### NORTH TORONTO.

The Rosedale Hotel  
Yonge Street

Business in North Toronto is improving considerably. There is a good demand for houses. One gentleman told me that new houses were rented before they could be finished, and that any one building good houses at reasonable prices would find no difficulty whatever.

The Evening Star, Toronto, Thurs. Oct. 18, 1894

The Star and the Globe are also available through the TPL website, using your library card number

## 50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1965, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.

North Toronto Alderman Paul Pickett, expressing concern about old age pensioners having difficulty meeting "the present rate of six tickets for one dollar," urged the TTC to consider special tickets "at the price of ten tickets for one dollar which can be used at any time during the day or night except rush-hour periods."

Mayor Philip Givens turned the sod for the North Toronto Memorial Gardens Arena in Eglinton Park. The cost of the arena was to be \$860,000.

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4½ GLORIOUS DAYS OF CRUISING  
... to such exotic places as the MADEIRA ISLANDS from only \$215.00 ... and mysterious MOROCCO from only \$222.00

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1 Eglinton Ave. E. HU 5-6537

The "Centennial Centre," a "scientific museum to be erected by the Provincial Government at a cost of \$5 million" was announced. This is now the Ontario Science Centre.

One-quarter of new homes on the market contained four bedrooms compared to one out of thirteen five years previously. Although bungalows were still the best selling type, two-storey houses had made a "tremendous comeback" to account for 7% of the market compared to just 1.5% five years previously.

As part of Dominion Day celebration in North York, there was to be an assembly competition of two Model "T" Fords "which should be concluded in under seven minutes". Was Paul Dodington, our Society's "T" expert, involved in this event?

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HU 5-9191  
Open 9 a.m. till 9 p.m. - Except Saturday, 9 a.m. till 4 p.m.

In a report to the Ontario Government, Dr. H. Carl Goldenberg recommended the absorption of East York and Leaside into the City of Toronto. A defiant East York Reeve True Davidson commented that "this is the same old hash Fred Gardiner tried to stuff down our throats five years ago".

**Glenview Terrace**  
APARTMENT HOTEL  
2904 YONGE ST.

1-2 bedroom suites; hotel units by day or wk.; indoor swimming pool, parking, maid and linen service. TV available. Public transportation. HU. 8-1193.

Recommendations for "a \$1,000,000 addition and renovation of North Toronto Collegiate Institute" were approved. Graham Gore, director of education, told the property committee that "there is not one adequate science laboratory in the school".

## 78 Years on Yonge Street



Sam Bassin and Robert Speers are retiring from business. They combine 78 years of service on Yonge St.

Men's tailor, Sam Bassin, left, came to North Toronto in 1923. He is the area's oldest practicing merchant. At that time he located at 2509 Yonge St. Barber Robert Speers, right, located at 2465 Yonge St. 36 years ago. He had a tobacco, barbering and hairdressing business. Mr. Speers moved to 2409 Yonge in 1932.

Said Mr. Speers: "I don't know of anybody left in North Toronto that is still in business now who was in business when I first came here, except Sam." The North Toronto Herald building was the location of the village blacksmith shop in the early twenties..."way back when".

Sam Bassin's daughter has written a memoir about growing up in North Toronto:  
**Miriam Bassin Chinsky, *The Tailor's Daughter*. Toronto: Town Crier, 2004.**

Below, young Robert Speers outside his shop at 2465 Yonge, near Eglinton.



# Heritage Calendar

## Walks

### Heritage Toronto

416-338-1338

Information on HT's many walks:

<http://heritagetoronto.org/events/>

Note that some require registration.

There are also guided bus and bike tours.

Download the brochure:

<http://heritagetoronto.org/tours/2015-tours/>

### ROMwalks & ROMbus

416-586-8097

And for the more ambitious, ROMtravel.

Brochure here: [:http://tinyurl.com/pg62q4r](http://tinyurl.com/pg62q4r)

### Citywalks

with architectural historian Marta O'Brien

<http://www.citywalks.ca/index.html>

416 699-9838

### Lost Rivers

<http://www.lostrivers.ca/WalkSchd.htm>

#### Don Was Here

<http://www.donwashere.com/#>

Marked along the Lower Don Trail in locations where the original river route crosses the existing pathway, *Don Was Here* encourages pedestrians to stop, reflect and consider the historical significance of the Don.

**Tour led by John Wilson** begins in front of Todmorden Mills and ends at Riverdale Park.

Saturday, 22 August

11:30am - 1:00pm

Preregistration recommended:

[info@labspacestudio.com](mailto:info@labspacestudio.com)





## GOLF

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in 1965

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### Ford Model T – 100 Years Later

Is there anything you can't find on YouTube?

Original footage of Model T Ford production:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4KrIMZpwCY>



*Mark your calendars...*

### 41st Annual Heritage Toronto Awards

Tuesday 13 Oct, 2015

Koerner Hall, Royal Conservatory of Music

### Exhibit

#### Home Field Advantage: Toronto's Summer Sporting Sites

Market Gallery, 2nd floor South St. Lawrence Market,  
95 Front Street East

An exhibition of historic photographs and artifacts reflecting the history of summer sports in Toronto.

**DATES:** 16 May to 26 Sept. 2015

**INFO:** 416-392-7604

<http://tinyurl.com/ou7jzuy>

#### Receive the *NTHS UPDATER* by email!

Would you like us to remind you of upcoming meetings and heritage events with an electronic newsletter?

Email me at [alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca) and I will add you to the distribution list. *We will not give out your email address.*

**Alex. Grenzebach**

## North Toronto Historical Society

An affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society, and a non-profit charitable organization.

% 129 Blythwood Road, Toronto, Ontario M4N 1A5

[www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org)

*Annual Memberships:* Seniors & Students \$5, Adults \$7, Families \$10

### 2014 Executive (\*Directors)

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