



NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY *NEWSLETTER*

North Toronto Town Hall

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SUMMER 2017



Fireworks at Queen's Park, 1889 *TRL*

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Preparing to go fishing at Toronto Island, 1896 *AO*

Fall Programme



Mark your calendars...

Wednesday, 27 September, 7:30 p.m.

TORONTO'S MOVIE THEATRES OF YESTERYEAR

Relive the memories of Toronto's old movie theatres during the golden age of the silver screen in a nostalgic trip into the past with **Doug Taylor**, author of *Toronto Theatres and the Golden Age of the Silver Screen* and *Toronto's Local Movie Theatres of Yesteryear*. Doug Taylor's presentation will be illustrated with archival photos of the theatres—exteriors, auditoriums, marquees and neon signs—and will be accompanied by personal anecdotes.

Wednesday, 25 October, 7:30 p.m.

ARCHITECTS CUMBERLAND & STORM: LANDMARK MASTERS

Fred Cumberland and William Storm formed the most successful architecture firm in Victorian Toronto. Their works included University College, St. James Cathedral, and much of Osgoode Hall. Architectural historian Marta O'Brien will discuss this partnership through their iconic buildings.

Wednesday, 29 November, 7:30 p.m.

To be announced...

Fall Walk

A JOURNEY THROUGH PRE-CONFEDERATION NORTH TORONTO

Sunday, October 1st, 2:00-3.45 p.m. (rain or shine)

Meet NW corner Lytton Blvd. and Yonge St. (Snider Parkette).

Discover the rural past in a walking tour conducted by the North Toronto Historical Society. Learn about early farms and estates such as Glengrove and Kingsland and the families of the area including the McDougalls, Sniders and Lawrences.



John Lawrence Farm, NW corner Yonge & Lawrence, 1895. *TRL*

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.

The Moccasin Identifier Project

An initiative spear-headed by Carolyn King, the former elected Chief of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, stencils images of traditional footwear on sidewalks as reminders of the first people to walk upon the land. Initial projects have used "school paint," which soon washes away. The new Trillium Park at Ontario Place has a more permanent tribute: a huge Anishnaabe moccasin chiseled into granite.



CAROLYN KING talks about the Moccasin Identifier Project:
<http://tinyurl.com/y97flbhf>

Belated Heritage Victory in Eglinton

In July, Council passed a motion introduced by Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb for heritage designation of 2430 and 2434 Yonge Street. Located between Montgomery and Roselawn, the stores are currently Kinkos/Federal Express and Restoration Hardware.

2434 was designed by H. G. Duerr in 1890, and first used by the F. C. Burroughes Furniture Company. Its neighbour, 2430, was designed by architect N. A. Armstrong in 1938, and its first occupants were the Singer Sewing Centre.

The area is destined for redevelopment by Main and Main, the company which so hastily demolished the Beaux Arts Bank of Montreal at 2444 Yonge Street (corner of Roselawn) back in January. Their plans for the block include 27- and 25-storey towers fronting Roselawn, and two storeys of retail on the Yonge Street frontage.

Restoration of the Alexandra Boulevard Gates

The Lytton Park Residents' Organization is working to save the century-old gates at the entrance to Alexandra Boulevard at Yonge Street. Neglected for decades, they were badly repaired 25 years ago, which has compromised their heritage value according to City guidelines. The gates are now in desperate need of rehabilitation, and local residents are working to raise awareness and support for a restoration project.

The red brick pillars and wrought iron fence welcomed residents to their new homes on the property subdivided in 1910 by banker Edward B. Stockdale. The pillars were built of irregularly shaped clinker brick, in keeping with the Arts and Crafts style of many of the new houses.

The Alexandra Gates are a landmark in the neighbourhood. As she signed the petition, one supporter asked, "Without them, how would I know where to turn off Yonge Street?"



Above: Road work on Yonge Street: the house is on Alexandra Boulevard.

This photograph from 1922 shows damage to the bottom of the pillar on the left.

Right: The result of a century of neglect.



SAVING THE ALEXANDRA BOULEVARD GATES

Find out more: from the LPRO Newsletter:
<http://tinyurl.com/yd6h74fy>

To add your support, please email your name, address and phone number to:
alexandra.gates.2017@gmail.com.

News continues on page 3

News continued from page 2

Hopes for North Toronto Plaque for Lester B. Pearson

An eight-storey development is planned for the west side of Yonge north of Davisville. Among the buildings it will replace stands the childhood home of Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner Lester B. Pearson.

Lester B. Pearson was born in Newtonbrook in 1897, but within the year his minister father had moved the family to the Yonge Street manse of the Davisville Methodist Church. The semi-detached house and its mate were built by the Davis family, and rented by the church until 1910, when a manse was built at 54 Millwood.

The Pearsons only lived in Davisville for three years, but in his memoirs, Lester described looking across Yonge Street and watching all the activity at the Davisville Pottery Works.

The old manse at 1984 Yonge Street has seen many alterations, including the removal of its companion semi. Although the house retains little of heritage merit, the location is of national significance, and a movement is afoot to ensure the commemoration of Lester B. Pearson here.



Above: Davisville Methodist Church. A glimpse of the manse can be seen on the left.

Below: 1894 Yonge Street, squished between more modern buildings, all destined for redevelopment.



Spring Lecture Series

APRIL: Leo Chan

A Culinary Tour of Chinatown

Master Chef Leo Chan came to Canada from Macau, (near Hong Kong) in 1966, and has worked in Toronto as a chef, and instructor at various colleges. The two most important principles of cooking he learned from his mother: it is more Art than Science; and cook for the people you love.

To simplify the different cuisines of the huge country that is China, Leo divided the country in four. In the North, Shandong Province was home to Confucius and an early centre of silk production. The area grows grains, leading to recipes like bread, noodles, dumpling and pancakes. The region's food has milder flavours, cooked by simmering and braising. The capital, Beijing, has a blend of culinary styles.

In the south is Guangdong (Canton), The earliest Chinese immigrants to Canada came from this region, so Cantonese food is familiar to Westerners.

In the east is Shanghai, "Land of fish and rice," which is reflected in its cuisine, seasoned with sweet and sour flavours. It is famous for Lion's Head Meatball. In the west are the provinces of Hunan (home to Mao Zedong), and Sichuan (home to Deng Xiaoping). The cuisine of this region tends to be spicy. A distinct cosmopolitan influence is evident in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The first Chinese came to North America in search of "Gold Mountain" during the 1850s Gold Rush; there was a major influx working on the transcontinental CPR railway in the 1880s. When it was completed, Chinese workers could find few jobs other than working in laundries and restaurants. Women were barred from entering Canada from China, so this was a bachelor society.

Chinatown continues on page 4

Chinatown continued from page 3

Inexpensive chop suey houses became a hang-out for lonely men, looking for company, and familiar voices, smells and flavours.



Toronto chop suey house, 1923

LAC

Many Chinese settled in St. John's Ward, north of Osgoode Hall, centred at Dundas and Elizabeth. Non-Chinese Torontonians Believed this was an area to be avoided because of rumours of opium, prostitutes and gambling. The building of Nathan Phillips Square and "new" City Hall would replace two-thirds of this original Chinatown.

The first Chinese restaurants were frequented only by the Chinese, and occasionally by the daring in search of an exotic experience. The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947 opened Canada to both men and women from China and reflected changing attitudes.

In Toronto, this was the start of a golden age of Chinese restaurants. The post-war "Big Four" were a far cry from the chop suey cafes of the 1930s. A "respectable" establishment with white table cloths, the *Nanking Restaurant* at 75-77 Elizabeth St. was opened in 1947 by the Lee family. It served simple foods like wonton soup. *Lichee Gardens* at 118 Elizabeth St. opened in 1948 and had a doorman. *Kwong Chow Chop Suey House*, owned by the Lumb family (Leo's in-laws), opened in 1949 at 126 Elizabeth. *Sai Woo* opened on Dundas Street in 1957. It was now considered safe to go to Chinatown.

Leo commented that "Food is a good ambassador." This was clearly illustrated when Prime Minister John Diefenbaker dined at *Kwong Chow* with other politicians. A higher profile dinner was the one



Prime Minister John Diefenbaker learns to use chopsticks at *Kwong Chow* in 1962. Also at the table are Roland Michener and Nathan Philips.

seen around the world when US President Nixon dined with Chairman Mao in 1972. Suddenly customers wanted to experience the nine-course "Nixon Dinner" - a demand met in Toronto by the *Sai Woo* restaurant.

In North Toronto, the *Moonglow* quickly became a fixture on Yonge Street, north of Lawrence, and its closing was lamented. *Sea Hi* was opened on Dundas, but moved to Bathurst St. near the 401 and became an immediate Jewish institution.



Today, there are several Chinatowns in and around Toronto, and restaurants to suit every taste from traditional to fusion to wildly creative. For Leo, the appeal of Chinese food is that it is "ordinary food made by ordinary people."

MAY: Jay Young
Family Ties: Ontario Turns 150

Dr. Jay Young presented the stories of the four families featured in *Family Ties*, the exhibit at the Archives of Ontario. The exhibit, and Jay's talk, looked at how their lives intersected with events in the province around the time of Confederation.

One of the forces pushing towards uniting the separate provinces of British North America was the unrest and disruption of 1837 and 1838. This led to an examination of the political structure of Upper and Lower Canada. In 1841, the two

Family Ties continues on page 5

Family Ties continued from page 4

provinces were redefined as one Canada, yet maintained separate identities under the names Canada West and Canada East. They had equal representation in the Legislative Assembly, although the French population was larger. Expansionist ambition soon increased the population of Canada West as people took up "empty" land. There were loud grumblings about "rep by pop."

Canadians were increasingly aware of events beyond the borders: Civil War in the United States; Irish unrest and Fenian agitation within and outside Canadian borders; and the fact that Britain was no longer giving trade preferences to its colonies, nor was it providing military protection.

George Brown is sometimes referred to as *the* Father of Confederation. He came to Canada in the 1840s and founded the *Globe* newspaper. He was a Reformer and a vocal advocate of "rep by pop." His papers at the Archives of Ontario document his political life, but also give a glimpse into his life as a family man. In February, 1864, in the throes of meetings about Confederation, George wrote from Quebec to his wife, Anne:

Twenty times a day I fancy myself by your side with our baby on your knee ... & then come thoughts of the country & public duty, & the newspaper and so I give a great grumph & turn away from the subject.

Nasa and Permelia McCurdy

were African Americans from Pennsylvania, who settled in Amherstburg, Essex County in the 1850s, fleeing the US Fugitive Slave Law. Nasa came with two brothers, and they helped others fleeing American bondage and persecution. Members of the McCurdy family have always agitated for social justice. In 1984, Howard McCurdy became Member of Parliament for Windsor, the first black NDP MP and the only black person in the House of Commons at the time. Another family member, Alvin D. McCurdy donated the collection to AO which forms the basis of this part of the exhibit.



Nasa McCurdy

The Wolverton Family lived in Oxford County. The correspondence of three siblings of the large family is featured in this exhibit.

Newton was only 15 and Alonzo was 20 when they signed on as teamsters for the Union Army during the US Civil War. Newton returned home, but Alonzo enlisted as a soldier in the Union Army. On the home front, Newton served with the Oxford Rifles against the threat of Fenian Raids.

Their sister Rose was a great correspondent. She kept up with current affairs, and let her brothers know what was going on in Canada. She followed the Confederation Conference, and told her brothers about names proposed for the new country. In a letter written to her brother Alonzo, 17 November, 1864, Rose wrote:

Various names have been proposed for the New Confederation. Arcadia, Acadia, Stadacona, New Britain, Britannica, Borelia, Tuponia, Quebec and Canada, are among those proposed.

The Families of Shingwauk are Anishinaabe from Garden River First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie. In 1832, Chief Shingwaukose (a veteran of the War of 1812) traveled to York to petition Sir John Colborne for a school for his people. The Chief had developed a practical strategy for indigenous and European people to live together, and learn each other's ways. He envisioned "Teaching Wigwams" throughout Anishinaabe lands for cross-cultural learning. Shingwaukose died in 1856 without seeing his dream fulfilled.



In 1873 the Shingwauk Industrial Home was opened under Rev. Edward Francis Wilson. He was

Family Ties continues on page 6

advised by Chief Augustin Shingwauk, still hoping to fulfill his father's vision. However, Rev. Wilson was replaced, and with the passing of the Indian Act in 1876 the brutal era of the Residential School began. The school closed in 1970.

Today, Chief Shingwauk's vision is finally being fulfilled, as Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig (teaching lodge) offers post-secondary education to Anishnaabe students, under the auspices of Algoma University.

MORE ABOUT FAMILY TIES: ONTARIO TURNS 150
Archives of Ontario www.archives.gov.on.ca/
Meet the Browns! And other online AO exhibits:
<http://tinyurl.com/y8sah9z5>

MORE ABOUT SHINGWAUK
The Shingwauk Project
<http://tinyurl.com/ybwc4b7>

The Monument for the Battle of Vimy Ridge

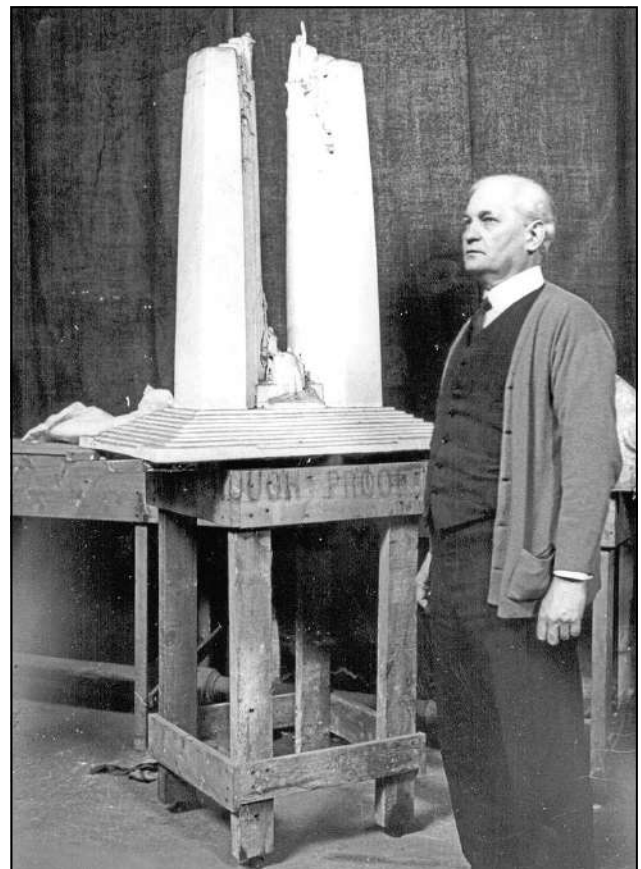
by Meredith Vaga

The one hundredth anniversary of the Battle for Vimy Ridge occurred this past April. This battle was seen as a pivotal moment for Canadian identity and sacrifice, separate from the nation's place in the British Empire. After the First World War, the Government of Canada was afforded eight key sites, including at Vimy, that reflected Canada's war efforts in France and Belgium, upon which to construct a series of war memorials. The government held a competition for the design of a general monument which could be propagated at each of these newly historic locations.

The winning proposal was submitted by Toronto sculptor Walter Seymour Allward. Allward was a local artist with roots in North Toronto: his early training included employment at the Don Valley Brick Works, where he crafted terra cotta architectural ornamentation for buildings around the city; examples of his later sculptural work include the statuary at Queen's Park. His war memorial proposal so impressed the judging committee that instead of building the same monument eight times throughout France and Belgium, the committee decided to construct Allward's memorial along the highest point of the

ridge at Vimy. France agreed, and gave Canada the expanded 250 acre Vimy site that exists today. A second, different, design was used at the remaining locations. The Vimy memorial then became the main symbol of Canadian identity and loss in that post-"world war" reality.

The Canadian National Vimy Memorial was unveiled on July 26, 1936, and was declared a National Historic Site in 1996. On the centennial of the battle which it commemorates, the image of Allward's monument has undeniably become firmly entrenched in the nation's identity. The physical place continues to resonate for people as well: it marks a departure from the more overtly heroic precedents erected prior to the First World War, as, while it commemorates the immense bravery and ultimate triumph of the Canadian Corps in 1917, the monument further reflects a deep sense of loss, both individually for a nation, and more generally in the face of war itself.



Artist Walter S. Allward with his model for the Vimy Monument

LAC

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1967, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



Centennial cheese
Canadian Cheddar cheese exported in the form of rindless blocks has a new dress. It is in the form of a wrapper printed with a special design featuring the red maple leaf and the words "Canada" and "Cheddar". The move was done in conjunction with Centennial Year and to give Canadian cheddar a form of identity abroad.


As in 2017, July 1, 1967, fell on a Saturday and Monday was declared a holiday. Motorists were warned of the "triple threat" of Canadian holiday traffic, American July 4 traffic and traffic going to Expo '67. The Hon. Irwin Haskett, Minister of Transport, reminded motorists "to reduce these hazards by exercising special care and courtesy."

On a Tuesday evening in Edwards Gardens, the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society of Toronto held a special "Centennial Night" where all ladies were urged to wear their Centennial gowns.

The TTC won a major tax exemption to assist it in the financing of the more expensive tunnelling option for the subway extension from Eglinton to Sheppard.

On June 24, the Borough of East York sponsored, as a Centennial event, a re-enactment of Canada's first Air Mail drop – a helicopter dropped a bag of mail at Thorncliffe Park. In 1918, a bag of mail was picked up in Montreal and delivered to the Leaside flying field. The flight took six hours and 43 minutes, including a stop for refuelling at Kingston.

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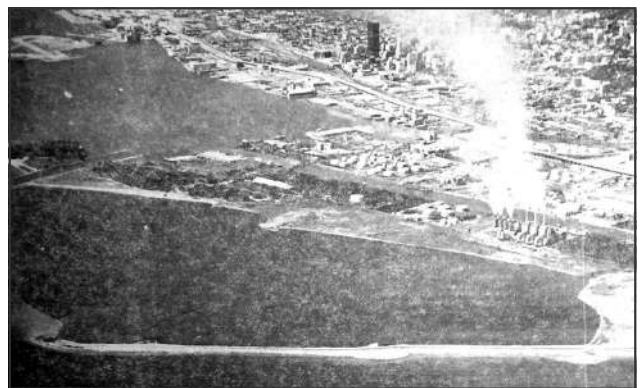
SUMMER SPECIALS

TENNIS RACQUETS	As Low as \$1.75
TENNIS BALLS	3 for \$1.29
FISHING OUTFITS	\$5.95 and \$7.95

BICYCLES . . . SALES and SERVICE
• LACROSSE STICKS • HUNTING LICENSES

Leon Kumove, NDP candidate and social planning and housing specialist, claimed that, in 1966, "there were about 70,000 families without a dwelling of their own" and that these were families "too poor to afford the housing available" in Metro.

The Leslie Spit "reached the half-way stage." It was reported that 1,000 trucks a day were unloading fill and that up to 50 new berths could be built on the shoreline when protected by the Spit. Fortunately for nature lovers, this commercial development never occurred!



To the left is the Eastern Channel and above is the Island Airport. Cherry Beach is to the right of the Eastern Channel. In the centre is Ontario Hydro's Hearn steam generating plant.

Do you remember 1967 Centennial celebrations? Did you have a family project? Did you visit Expo '67?



Contribute your stories to *North Toronto Memories*, an occasional series written by you, our members.



Please email your stories to dawsonbh@rogers.com, or mail to 283 Deloraine Ave. Toronto M5M 2B2.

Heritage Calendar

Walk the Six West: History on the Humber

Saturday, 5 August, 2017
Étienne Brûlé Park, Toronto



Mark Ontario's 150th anniversary with this FREE and unique outdoor theatrical experience. Meet poet **Pauline Johnson**, painter **Tom Thomson**, freedom seeker **Joshua Glover**, photographer **Geraldine Moodie**, father of Confederation **Sir William Pearce Howland**, and some colourful local characters.

Step into Canadian history along the banks of the Humber River as you encounter these extraordinary Ontarians from our diverse past.

INFO: 647-675-1792

<http://tinyurl.com/y96uu776>

Register for free tickets—choose place & time

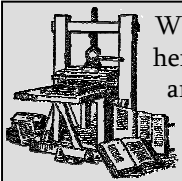
WHERE: Lambton House, 4066 Old Dundas St.

OR

Old Mill Subway Station

WHEN: 12 p.m. OR 2:30 p.m.

WHO: Heritage York, in collaboration with partner organizations Swansea Historical Society, West Toronto Junction Historical Society, Etobicoke Historical Society, York Pioneer and Historical Society, Sunnyside Historical Society, and MomenTO, with financial support provided by the Government of Ontario through its Ontario 150 Community Celebration Grant.



We welcome contributions from members: heritage events and achievements, brief articles and photographs of local history interest.

Submissions for the next Newsletter by 5 Sept to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.

Exhibits

John B. Aird Gallery, Macdonald Block, 900 Bay St

Family Focus: Early Portrait Photography at the Archives of Ontario

DATES: to 22 July, 2017

INFO: 416-537-6320

Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St. W

Free Black North

DATES: to 20 August, 2017

Every. Now. Then: Reframing Nationhood

DATES: 29 June to 10 December, 2017

INFO: 416-979-6648

Urbanspace Gallery, 401 Richmond Street West Ground Floor

From Canoe to Cable

DATES: 30 June to 16 September, 2017

INFO: 416-595-5900

info@urbanspacegallery.ca

Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park

Anishinaabeg: Art & Power

DATES: 17 June to 19 November, 2017

INFO: 416-586-8000

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

Maple Leaf Forever: Toronto's Take on a National Symbol

DATES: 22 July to 25 November, 2017

INFO: 416-392-7604

<http://tinyurl.com/yb7fncf>

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 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.

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www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

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

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