



Race, North Toronto, 1909 *TRL*

Fall Programme



Mark your calendars...

Wednesday, 26 September, 7:30 p.m.

EXPLORING THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

The Arts and Crafts Movement in Great Britain had a profound impact on architecture, design, and social thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In an illustrated lecture, **Carl Benn** will introduce the ideas that inspired the movement in the UK through exploring its origins, values, and concerns as it sought to promote good design, nurturing homes, and social reform. Carl will also discuss its impact on architecture and design in Toronto.

Wednesday, 31 October, 7:30 p.m.

and

Wednesday, 28 November, 7:30 p.m.

To be announced...

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Sunnyside, 1922 *TRL*

Fall Walk

DAVISVILLE VILLAGE

Sunday, 30th September, 2:00-3.45 p.m. (rain or shine)

Meet NW corner Davisville and Mount Pleasant.
(June Rowlands Park)

Explore the village of Davisville with NTHS and SERRA (South Eglinton Ratepayers and Residents Association). Discover its people, farms, homes, industries, churches and schools.



Mount Pleasant & Merton,
2 March 1922

CTA

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.

Spring Lecture Series

APRIL: **Marta O'Brien**

***King Street West:
The Story Through Architecture
by Marta O'Brien***

While nearly every Toronto street has changed since the mid-1800s, King Street West illustrates transformations the city has gone through as a whole. Today Toronto is a financial and cultural centre, but for most of its history it was a manufacturing centre. My talk in April showed evidence of these changing roles along the portion of King between Yonge and Bathurst streets.

Before the banks and office buildings were built, the intersection of King and Yonge was a retail destination. The upscale Fulton, Michie & Co. grocery store was the Pusateri's of its day: its products included exotic fruits, spirits, and spices not available in local shops. The 1835 Georgian shop was replaced by an ornate 4-storey brick and stone building in 1893, and the store operated for another 50 years plus. After a long stint as the Nag's Head Tavern, it was demolished and replaced by the skinny One King West condo tower in 2006. That 51-storey tower has 10 water tanks in the roof to steady it on windy days!

There are many former factories and warehouses on King West. These are mainly west of John Street, although a few buildings remain east of there. One is the former Anderson Caps building – clad in lovely white glazed terra cotta – next to the Princess of Wales Theatre. At Peter St., the former Westinghouse building (1927 & 1934) has been reduced to two facades framing the base of a condo.

Amazingly, there were two foundries on King just west of Spadina. The Gurney brothers produced cast iron stoves, boilers, and radiators here beginning in 1872. The King Street portion of their enormous and very successful factory still stands and its many windows and fine proportions have enabled its repurposing as retail and office space. Across the street the American Watch Case Co. processed silver and gold, and produced beautiful watch cases from 1893 until 1939. Lately this building has accommodated media and design-oriented tenants.

There's a reason this part of King Street has seen so much activity in former warehouses and factories. By the 1990s most manufacturing had left Toronto, and city zoning laws prevented industrial buildings from being used in other ways. Under Mayor Barbara Hall in 1996, the city all but eliminated density and use restrictions to allow renovations and new uses for industrial buildings and lands. This project was called "The Kings" because it covered areas surrounding the King & Spadina and King & Parliament intersections. This innovative plan – developed in consultation with Jane Jacobs and urban designer planner Ken Greenberg, among others – has been a huge success. Former manufacturing structures have been repurposed as restaurants, office, studios, shops, and residences, and new buildings have been built (often replacing parking lots).

There are some great examples of heritage restoration on this part of King St. The 1882 Silver Plate building had lost its distinctive cupola and had an insensitive brick addition obscuring its main facade until it was restored as part of the Fashion House condo in 2010. The old building now accommodates a restaurant. At Spadina, the Richardson House hotel has been a landmark for nearly 150 years. With additions it comprised a 2-storey building with mansard roof at the corner and a 3-storey plus mansard connected to the north. Many remember it as the Spadina Hotel or the colourfully-painted Global Backpackers Hostel. In



Canadian Westinghouse Building

Photo: Marta O'Brien

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2015-16 its paint was stripped to reveal the dichromatic brickwork of the larger building, and a coffee shop and offices now occupy the spaces.

In the late 1800s, King St. near Yonge became a financial district as banks, offices, and insurance companies moved west from their original Old Town locations. The Dominion Bank had two consecutive head office buildings on the southwest corner: one completed in 1878 (in the fashionable Second Empire style with its mansard roof) and the next in 1914. The latter white Beaux Arts Classicism building still stands and has been converted into a hotel. The ill-fated Home Bank head office was on the north side of King, in a classical temple-like stone building. That bank's 1923 failure was a factor in the development of Canada's heavily-regulated banking system.

An unusual building was demolished in the early 1960s for the white marble Royal Bank head office halfway between Yonge and Bay streets. It was the Manning Arcade, an ornate 1885 office building designed by E. J. Lennox. Alexander Manning was a real estate magnate and two-time mayor of Toronto. His namesake building was occupied by brokers, lawyers, life insurance companies, real estate firms, and other commercial offices. In a bit of poetic justice, this grand building was extremely difficult to demolish!

One of Toronto's best-known landmarks is on this part of King. Built as the head office for the Canadian Bank of Commerce, the 34-storey 1931 skyscraper was the tallest building in the British Empire for over 30 years. The intricate stone carvings surrounding the main entrance represent symbols of hard work and thriftiness, including roosters, squirrels, and bees. The Roman god of commerce, Mercury, stands above with his snake-swirled staff (called a caduceus). The highlight, however, was the now-closed observation deck where the public could be astounded by the panoramic view of the city and lake for a modest fee. Thankfully, the newly formed Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has kept this wonderful tower as part of Commerce Court. Step inside on a weekday to view the incredible banking hall with its gilded and coffered ceiling vaults.

King Street West was the location of several important newspaper presses and offices. The *Evening Telegram* moved here three years after its 1876 founding. Its building featured huge windows with the presses in plain view. The 1881 Mail Building was on what's now the First Canadian Place corner at Bay St. Although just four storeys plus mansard roof, it featured a tower with observation deck open to the public. This public access may be why the lobby and elevator were finished in various marbles and fine woods. Finally, the *Toronto Star* moved into its own Art Deco skyscraper in 1929. The 6-storey reinforced concrete base housed *Star* operations while the steel frame tower above provided office space for rent. Stylish Deco ornament decorated the stone cladding



**Banking hall, former Canadian Bank of
Commerce Head Office
(now Commerce Court North)**

Photo: Marta O'Brien

King Street West continues on page 4

and bronze doors. It's disappointing that this marvelous skyscraper was demolished after just 43 years for the unremarkable Exchange Tower. (To add insult to injury, the *Star* moved into one of the most boring buildings in the city at 1 Yonge.)

Between Simcoe and John streets, King is dominated by part of the Entertainment District – reflecting Toronto's importance as a cultural centre. After decades of industrial use, Ed Mirvish's purchase of the Royal Alexandra Theatre (and adjoining warehouses to serve as restaurants) kick-started this area's redevelopment in the 1970s. Roy Thomson Hall, the Princess of Wales Theatre, and TIFF have been added since then. Restaurants and clubs have joined these.

King Street West has come full circle in one way – the recent condos mean thousands of people are living on downtown King for the first time in over 75 years. No doubt this will result in more changes over the next decades.

NEED MORE MARTA?

See *Heritage Calendar* at back of *Newsletter* for Marta O'Brien's walks and talks.



“The Defence of Fort York” by C.W. Jefferys
Toronto Star, 11 October, 1905

MAY: Sarah McCabe

The Ontario Historical Society: Looking Back at 130 Years of Toronto History

The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) has been preserving, promoting and protecting Ontario's history since 1888. Project manager and librarian Sarah McCabe told us about the organisation's history, and gave three specific examples of its successful work.

The OHS was incorporated in 1898 as a federation of local groups with an interest in history, like the York Pioneers. Soon the group found itself more actively involved in preservation. It is now the only North American not-for-profit which is allowed to incorporate other organisations. NTHS affiliated with the OHS in 1984. We are one of 350 affiliate societies, museums and archives. Since 2008, the OHS has offered an insurance programme to affiliates.

Since the publication of its first volume of *Papers and Records* in 1899 (renamed *Ontario History* in 1947), the OHS has published countless articles about Ontario's history. It also produces a directory and map of historic places, and a calendar of events. A major ongoing project is the identification and formal listing of unregistered cemeteries, like Bethel-Union Cemetery in New Lowell, now carefully tended by the Silver Shoe Historical Society.

The OHS & the Defence of Fort York

The OHS was instrumental in the saving of Fort York. In 1903, the property was bought from the Federal Government by the City of Toronto. Soon, the Fort was in the line of a planned street railway line. A coalition of military and heritage groups, including the OHS, raised public awareness, and as a result of petitions and protests the project was dropped in 1905. However, a newly elected Mayor and Council not only revived the project, but saw the Fort property as ideal for a GTR shunting yard. Taking the lead, the OHS contacted other organisations to write letters and petitions, and in 1907 the project by-law was defeated. OHS President at the time was architect Fred Cumberland.

OHS continues on page 5

When Mayor Joseph Oliver again insisted on running a streetcar track through the historic site, the OHS under Cumberland took a more creative approach. They requested a delay while plans were drawn up for reconstruction of the Fort. A surprising supporter guaranteed the success of the project: Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier prohibited running streetcars through Fort York, and required that the city restore the historic site. In January, 1909 the restoration plans were unveiled, an early victory for this federation of heritage supporters. In 1923, Fort York was made a National Historic Site.

The OHS & John McKenzie House

The headquarters of the OHS resides in the John McKenzie House, 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale. This was the “new” house built by farmer John McKenzie in 1913 for his wife, five children, and resident servants. It combines Queen Anne Revival, Edwardian and Arts & Crafts Styles. It was a luxurious home with bookcases surrounding the fireplaces in the living room and parlour, and a large floral stained-glass window by Robert McCausland, Ltd. brightening the staircase. John McKenzie installed electrical wiring, and purchased power from the Metropolitan Street Railway, because there was no electrical grid in the area. John lived in the house for the rest of his life, dying in 1941. The house stayed in the family until it was sold in 1975.

A developer who had purchased the property went bankrupt in 1988, and ownership was transferred to the City of North York for \$1.00. The house remained empty until the 1990s, when Rob Levery (now OHS Executive Director) and Councillor John Fillion suggested that it be used as the OHS headquarters. In 1993, the OHS signed a 25-year lease with City of Toronto, acquiring stewardship of the property and buildings.

The OHS is responsible for maintenance of the buildings. This has involved some major projects, from upgrading utilities to replacing the slate roof of the house. Outbuildings on the property were desperately in need of care: the milk house and stable are now structurally sound; and the exterior of the coach house is restored. The coach house now houses the OHS library, which is open to the

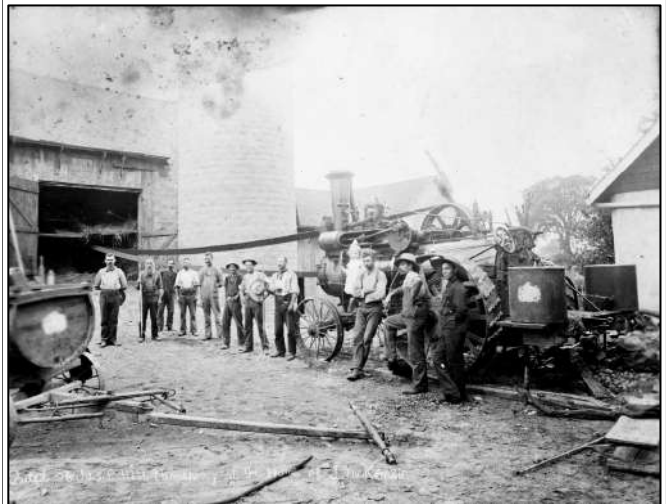
public. There are over five thousand titles, and books include the culinary collection of Dorothy Duncan.

The OHS & Lee Sew’s Cookbook

One of the treasures in the OHS library is a hand-bound recipe book written in Chinese and English. It was discovered in a used-book store by journalist Joe Fiorito. While nothing is known about Lee Sew, consultation with Master Chef Leo Chan revealed that the book’s 200 pages contain sophisticated dishes for upper class entertaining, and also recipes suitable for children’s parties. Lee Sew probably left Canton before the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1911. He may have worked in a hotel, or for a wealthy family. While Lee Sew remains something of an enigma, his recipe-book lives on as it has been digitised by the OHS.

McKenzie Family in Willowdale

Philip McKenzie was an English carpenter and cabinetmaker. In 1884 he bought part of the property granted originally to UEL Jacob Cummer. McKenzie moved his family into the old Cummer farmhouse, which faced Yonge Street, between Parkview and Norton Avenue. After Philip’s death in 1901, his son John took over the farm. John specialized in Holstein cattle. In 1912, John sold a large part of his property for the “Empress Subdivision.” This was when John planned his new house, and the family subsequently moved out of the farmhouse.



Outfit of James E. Hill threshing at the home of John McKenzie, Willowdale, c. 1910

TRL

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1968, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.

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Ontario Hospital Insurance premiums, unchanged since 1964, were to increase to \$5.50 a month (single) and \$11.00 a month (family).

The TTC opened two subway extensions – 2.77 miles east into Scarborough and 3.49 miles west into Etobicoke.



Lester B. Pearson and his wife Maryon wave goodbye after serving Canada for 10 years as leader of the Liberal Party. Mr. Pearson was succeeded last week by Pierre Elliott Trudeau (inset), who will officially become Canada's 15th Prime Minister within the next few days. Mr. Trudeau said he has not ruled out the possibility of a general election this year, probably in the fall.

The \$20 million Panarctic Oils program for joint federal government and private enterprise exploration “may cancel Canada's ‘have-not’ status” as far as petroleum resources are concerned.

The Good Idea Centre in Tokyo developed “a freon gas bag which inflates automatically and instantaneously to provide a cushion against forward thrust by the driver.”



This pretty young lady is just one of more than one million Torontonians and Montrealers who, in August, will be using ChargeX—the new, all-purpose credit cards from Banque Canadienne Nationale, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, The Royal Bank and Toronto-Dominion Bank. The card will be good with over 12,000 merchants in the two cities.

HU 3-8447

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● OPEN FRIDAYS TILL NINE ●

***Northern Star: J.S. Plaskett*, R. Peter Broughton**
(Toronto: UofT Press, 2018)

Congratulations to NTHS member Peter Broughton on the publication of his biography of outstanding Canadian astronomer, John Plaskett (1865-1941). At 16, Plaskett was running the family's farm near Woodstock. Later, he got a job with the Edison Company, then he became a technician at the University of Toronto. By the end of his life he had established the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory near Victoria, BC. As a result of his research he received five honorary degrees.



Summer Reading for All Ages

***Walking in the City With Jane*, by Susan Hughes, ill. Valérie Boivin** (Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2018)
Ages 6-9

A fictionalized story of the life of Jane Jacobs, one of the world's greatest urban thinkers and activists.

***50 Objects That Define Toronto*, Matthew Blackett with Jamie Bradburn** (Toronto: Spacing Media Inc., 2016)

This small book looks at everyday objects that define Toronto's character and played a role in significant historical moments. Pop it in your pocket and used as a guide on a walk.

***A Child's Voyage to a New Life: Memoir of a Little Italian Girl*, Rose Catalano** (Toronto: iUniverse, 2016)

Catalano recounts her childhood in Southern Italy, immigration to Canada in the early 1960s, discrimination and family pressures, and what it took to become a successful entrepreneur.

Heritage Toronto Plaque Presentation *Celebrating 40 years of Cafe Diplomatico*

DATE: Fri. 10 Aug. 5:00 -6:00 pm

REGISTER: <https://tinyurl.com/ya19v2uc>

WHERE: College & Clinton



Exhibits

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

Bike City: How industry, advocacy and infrastructure shaped Toronto's cycling culture

Showcasing over a dozen bicycles, archival photographs, early advertisements and artifacts from private and public collections, *Bike City* tells the story of the bicycle and its impact on Toronto, past, present and future.

DATES: June to 17 Nov. 2018; closed Sun. & Mon.

ADMISSION: \$5.00 - \$8.00

INFO: www.toronto.ca
(416) 392-7604

Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St. W

Connecting With Our First Family

TakingITGlobal's *Connected North* program has partnered with Indigenous artist Nyle Miigizi Johnston at Miigizi Creations to develop an Ojibwe language and education resource kit called *Connecting With Our First Family*. The AGO is hosting the exhibition to facilitate relationship building and future learning opportunities. This project supports students and educators in the process of understanding the Anishinaabe Nation, with the aim of strengthening Indigenous identity and culture as well as encouraging Ojibwe language revitalization and community development.

DATES: May to 30 Sept. 2018

ADMISSION: Free

LOCATION: Community Gallery of the Weston Family Learning Centre.

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/ya4jjut4>

Photography: First World War, 1914-1918

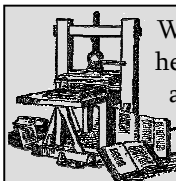
The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) holds nearly 500 albums from the First World War, covering British, French, German, Canadian, Austrian, American, Australian, Italian, Czech, and Russian experiences of the war. In addition to images from these albums, there is a display of works by Australian war photographer James Francis "Frank" Hurley, *Australian Units on the Western Front* (1916-1918)

DATES: Part I to 28 Oct. 2018

Part II 10 Nov. 2018 to 14 April 2019

ADMISSION: Tickets required

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/y8eqnwby>



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

Submissions for the next Newsletter by 20 Aug. to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.

Calendar continues on page 8

Heritage Calendar

Calendar continued from page 7

Marta O'Brien, Architectural Historian

Book a walk or go to a talk! citywalks.ca

Marta's library talks are FREE! And air-conditioned! *Toronto's Old City Hall: a Private Tour*

Marta received rarely-granted permission to photograph the amazing interior spaces and features of Old City Hall, and will share her best images while telling the intriguing story of this remarkable building.

LOCATION: Toronto Reference Library, Beeton Hall, main floor, 789 Yonge St. (1 block north of Bloor)

DATE: Tues. 24 July 2018; 6:00-7:30 pm

Toronto Architecture Between the Wars: Deco & Moderne

Join Marta at this illustrated lecture to see the types of buildings designed in these styles, and enjoy ornamental details that often go unnoticed.

LOCATION: Barbara Frum Library, 20 Covington Rd (1 block north of Lawrence Ave. W., just west of Bathurst St.)

DATE: Tues. 31 July 2018; 2:00-3:00 pm

Do-It-Yourself Walks



Discovery Walks

You've seen the signs—now go and discover! Explore ravines and parkland, or streets and architecture.

BROCHURES: <https://tinyurl.com/y83lx7eu>

Toronto in Time

A free mobile app for iOS and Android that highlights the history of Toronto through "then and now" photos, slideshows, trails, and historical stories for more than 150 sites! From First Peoples to the Rolling Stones – follow your own path.

INFO: <http://www.citiesintime.ca/toronto/>

THANKS TO: The Canadian Encyclopaedia, Historica Canada, Museum Services of the City of Toronto, and Heritage Toronto, and, of course, your tax dollars.



Guided Walks

What a great way to discover history in the summer!

Check details: most of these walks require reservations, even if they are free. Some even require tickets; some charge a fee.

Toronto Society of Architects

Each of these tours showcases a selection of modern and contemporary buildings and landscapes around a theme, neighbourhood or area. All include a mix of landmark buildings and hidden gems.

DATES: June to Oct., Sat. & Sun.

INFO: ticket \$10

<http://torontosocietyofarchitects.ca/tours/>

ROM Walks

<https://tinyurl.com/y8pje8re>

Walking tours encompass the diverse aspects of Toronto's vibrant neighbourhoods including history, architecture, arts of all varieties, education and more.

INFO: Most tours are free.

ROM WALKS BROCHURE: <https://tinyurl.com/yckeqaqd>

Heritage Toronto Tours

heritagetoronto.org/events

61 tours cover industries, architecture, personalities, culture, food. Catch Doug Campbell talking about Mayors and more in Mount Pleasant Cemetery on 28 July, 25 Aug and 27 Sept.

DATES: 3 May to 6 October, 2018

INFO: Registration required

2018 TOURS BROCHURE: <https://tinyurl.com/y7eeo7hx>

Lost Rivers

Discover lost rivers, lost neighbourhoods, lost ecosystems in Toronto.

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/pfs6d9u>

Riverside Walks

The Riverside BIA spans 10 blocks along Queen St. East, from Davies Avenue to Empire Avenue. Walks are led by local residents and Riverside personalities.

DATES: May to Oct.

INFO: Free

<https://tinyurl.com/yat4x9xv>

North Toronto Historical Society

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

NOTE NEW ADDRESS % 283 Deloraine Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5M 2B2

www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

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

2018 Executive (*Directors)

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Membership Co-ordinator: *Brian Dunfield, 416-484-9304

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