



North Toronto Town Hall

NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 34 NO. 4

DECEMBER 2010



Winter Programme

NOTE: During closure of the main floor of Northern District Library for renovation, the second floor meeting room will be accessible by elevator or stairs from the front lobby of the building. The library will reopen shortly.

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

THE JEWS OF OLD TORONTO: FROM THE 1850s TO THE 1950s

Bill Gladstone presents an illustrated talk about Toronto's Jewish community from its beginnings to the era when the downtown congregations began moving uptown. The focus is on the synagogues, personalities, neighbourhoods, issues and the Yiddish immigrant culture that once thrived in the downtown Spadina corridor. Bill Gladstone is an author, publisher, genealogist and columnist for the *Canadian Jewish News*.

Wednesday, 23 February, 7:30 p.m.

THE CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM IN CANADA:

UNDERSTANDING EMANCIPATION DAY COMMEMORATIONS AS AN AFRICAN-CANADIAN CULTURAL TRADITION

Every August First since 1834 when the Abolition of Slavery Act came into effect in the British colonies, African Canadians have celebrated freedom from slavery. Based on research for her book *Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada* (Dundurn 2010), author **Natasha Henry** traces the development and evolution of Emancipation Day celebrations, with emphasis on Ontario and Toronto. This program is in celebration of Black History Month.

NOTE: A brief Annual General Meeting will precede the February programme.

Wednesday, 30 March, 7:30 p.m.

C.W. JEFFERYS: PICTURING CANADA

A screening of the documentary film *C.W. Jefferys, Picturing Canada*. **John Bessai** of CineFocus Canada will introduce his film on the life and work of the well-known artist and illustrator who brought Canadian history to life.

Join us at 7:10 for refreshments before the programme.



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.

President's Message

Best wishes for 2011 as the North Toronto Historical Society enters its 36th year.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the beginning of the monthly programme in February. If you are interested in taking a more active role in the Society, please contact a member of our executive committee. We would be happy to welcome new members and ideas.

I would like to thank our executive for their contributions during 2010 - Hilary Dawson, newsletter editor; Bill Dawson, treasurer; Alex Grenzebach, membership secretary; Joan Sampson, publicity co-ordinator; Donald Duncan, recording secretary; and Marta O'Brien, Doug Campbell and Ken Pon, members-at-large who contributed to programmes, the annual walk and sale of publications. Librarian Valentina Ciric represented Northern District Library and facilitated the arrangements for the equipment used by our guest speakers.

Special thanks to Janet and Brian Dunfield who helped serve refreshments during our monthly meetings and to the members who contributed to the work of the Society through their financial donations.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our programmes in 2011,

Lynda Moon, President

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1960, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



Rumble Buick-Vauxhall on Bayview at Broadway proudly announced the 1961 models, including the new compact Buck Special. It is now a development site.

The Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation passed a resolution "urging the Board of Broadcast Governors to undertake comprehensive research into the effect of television upon the minds and personalities of boys and girls."

The Canadian Medical Association expressed concern about the physical fitness of Canadians. Prince Philip had stated that 78% of Canadian children has failed minimum muscular fitness tests, as compared to 8.5% of European children.



50 Years Ago continues on page 3

Vote JEAN NEWMAN for MAYOR

Controllor Newman has served as President of City Council and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Control for the last 4 years and Acting Mayor on many occasions.



Reprinted from the *Globe & Mail*, Wednesday, Nov. 23rd, 1960:

"The third candidate is Mrs. Jean Newman, who is asking for promotion after four years as senior member of Board of Control. She has much to commend her. Mrs. Newman's claims are not as extravagant as those of Mr. Phillips, her personality is not as exciting as that of Mr. Lampert, but her record in local government is better than the record of either.

She has been a competent and hard-working administrator at City Hall, where she has brought in four budgets, and demonstrated a talent for working in committee, and with civic officials. She has served with success on the Toronto Housing Authority, and can claim more credit than anyone else for urging and pushing the Moss Park redevelopment project toward achievement.

In Metro, Mrs. Newman has been a distinguished city representative, both on the Executive and in Council. Perhaps because she entered City Hall after Metro had begun to function, she has not been hindered by a narrow view of Toronto affairs, and has shown a better understanding of the Metro concept than either of her opponents. This has been reflected in her vote at Metro, where her courage in standing on principle has earned her wide respect.

This newspaper is firmly of the opinion that of the three candidates, Mrs. Newman is much the best fitted to be Mayor, and we commend her to the voters."

On December 5th
Elect Mrs. Jean
**NEWMAN
MAYOR**
Cars and Information
HUDSON 3-5901

Vote JEAN NEWMAN for MAYOR

Lawrence Park resident, Controllor Jean Newman, ran against the incumbent mayor, Nathan Phillips, in the municipal elections on December 5. Unfortunately, in spite of the enthusiastic support of the *Globe and Mail*, she lost her bid to become Toronto's first female mayor and Toronto was deprived of the services of an extremely capable and progressive person. In her final column for the *Herald*, she stated that she had "enjoyed serving the people of Toronto during the past 10 years." The *Herald* printed an "open letter" editorial outlining her service to the City, starting as a school trustee and stating that "you would have made an excellent mayor, and that we would rather Toronto's first woman mayor had been you than anybody else we think of offhand."

Various briefs were submitted to the Metro Executive "offering the solution to the TTC problem". One Metro Councillor had complained that "the present Commission with its eternal wrangling is certainly bringing Toronto into disrepute."

Mr. Percy Band of 41 Teddington Park Avenue loaned his collection of 19th century pioneer toys for display at the Dalziel Barn in what is now Black Creek Pioneer Village. Valued at \$15,000, the collection was described as the "most comprehensive of its kind in Canada". I wonder what has happened to this collection?

Bell Issues New Phones For Area



"The Princess" For A Princess

"The Princess" phone was introduced by Bell. Claimed to be the result of five years of research, it reduced by more than a third the space needed for desk-type telephones and was available in five colours.

Johnstone & Babcock

TELEVISION & HI-FI SPECIALISTS

Our combined experience of over 50 years is your assurance of ... Complete Satisfaction.

Merchandise available on 6% Bank Rate Terms




H. Johnny Johnstone Jack Babcock

Authorized Dealers for

- ELECTROHOME
- CLAIRTONE
- PHILIPS
- ZENITH
- PHILCO
- VICTOR

20% OFF ON ALL STEREO AND HIGH FIDELITY RECORDS

Johnstone & Babcock LTD.

STEREO HI-FI TELEVISION

2463 YONGE ST., 3 Blocks North of Eglinton HU. 5-4401

Open Mon., Thurs. and Fri. till 9 p.m.

"The store that gives you more"

Fall Walk

OCTOBER North Toronto's Town Centre.

Many thanks to Ellen Anger for photographing our annual walk.



The Orange Hall, Yonge and St. Clements.

The main part of the building was the old Eglinton School, built in the 1850s in brick after the first school burned down. It fronted on Yonge Street. When the Orange Lodge purchased the disused school building, the taxes for the Yonge Street frontage were so high that the building was moved back to its current location, and the private lane was cut through to St. Clements Avenue.



Bank of Montreal, Yonge Street. Tour leaders Bill Dawson and Alex Grenzebach.

More Ron Brown

From Queenston to Kingston: The Hidden Heritage of Lake Ontario's Shoreline (Dundurn 2010)

Visit Ron's website to find out about his other books, tours and talks:

<http://www.ronbrown.ca/>

Fall Lecture Series

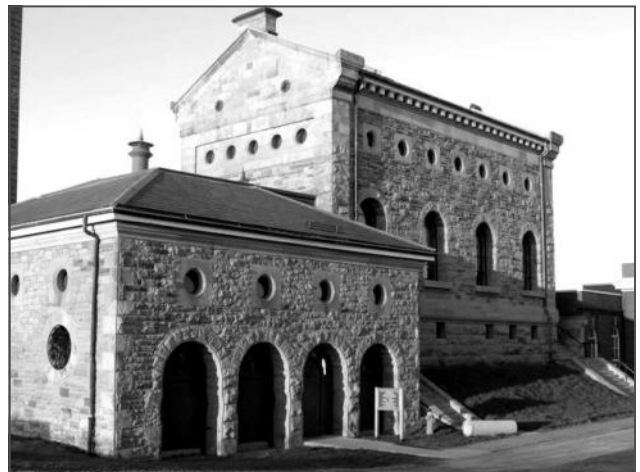
SEPTEMBER From Queenston to Kingston: Hidden Heritage of Ontario's Shoreline

From the Niagara River to the Loyalist Parkway, travel writer Ron Brown has discovered curious places and forgotten stories. He shared these with us at our September meeting.



Shipwreck at Jordan Station

The mysterious vessel visible from the highway was originally a St. Lawrence ferry. In the 1970s, a Quebec businessman had plans for a themed restaurant, and the 1914 boat was refurbished to resemble one of Jacques Cartier's 1535 ships. In 1997 the boat was towed to Jordan harbour.



Hamilton Waterworks

Built 1858-59, designed by engineer Thomas C. Keefer.

OCTOBER The Trillium and Toronto Island

In 2010, *Trillium* celebrated her 100th birthday. Author Mike Filey told the story of the world's only double-ended side-paddle steamer ferry, which was launched on 18 June 1910.

The Peninsula (later to become an island) was a favourite recreational destination from the days of Mrs. Simcoe, for horseback riding and picnics. From 1833, a ferry shortened the trip for a day's outing. After the Eastern Gap was breached in 1858, the ferry became essential. A number of commercial amusements were established on the Island, from fun fairs to sporting events.

Trillium was built for the Toronto Ferry Company as the sister ship to the paddle wheeler *Bluebell*. Constructed by the Polson Iron Works, her first day of service was Dominion Day, 1 July 1910. For forty-six years she travelled between the mainland and the islands, but was taken out of service in 1956 in favour of modern diesel ferries. She was abandoned in an island lagoon.

In 1974, a group of enthusiasts (including Mike) successfully had *Trillium* raised and refurbished. On 18 June 1976, she was back in service.



Trillium abandoned in an island lagoon, 1974

Mike Filey's new book **Trillium and Toronto Island, The Centennial Edition** (Dundurn 2010) has many more photos than the 1976 edition, and brings the story up to date.



Grannies' tug-of-war, Centre Island, c. 1920

NOVEMBER Remembering Toronto: A Brief History of How We Have Marked Our Past

Historian Gary Miedema, of Heritage Toronto, looked at the various ways we have commemorated the past. The desire to remember past events and people seems to be a natural human instinct. In many cases, the remembrance is part of a grieving process. The mural in a parkette in the Roncesvalles area of Toronto is a modern way of commemorating the tragic murder of young Holly Jones.

Cemeteries are an obvious source of commemorative monuments and commemorative plaques are often found inside churches. Stained glass windows, both in churches and public buildings, are also used to commemorate people and events.

The earliest public monuments tended to commemorate military or related events. A monument to General Isaac Brock, who was killed in the War of 1812, was erected at Queenston Heights after the War, but it was bombed in 1840. It was replaced by the present monument in 1853.

The War of 1812 monument in Victoria Square (on the south side of Wellington Street, west of Portland Street) is on the site of the military burying ground which is the oldest European cemetery in Toronto. An infant daughter of Elizabeth Simcoe was buried there in 1793. The cemetery was "cleaned up" in the 1880s with the gravestones moved to the side. Victoria Memorial Square and Fort York were designated a National

Remembering Toronto continues on page 6

Remembering Toronto continued from page 5

Historic Site in 2003.

The Canadian Volunteers War Memorial, Toronto's oldest public monument (1870), was constructed on the west side of Queen's Park Crescent to commemorate volunteers killed in the Fenian raids of 1865-66. Three university students were killed and there was tremendous public interest, with a half-mile procession to the burial in St. James Cemetery. \$40,000 was contributed to a volunteer relief fund and \$5,000 of this was used to build the memorial. The monument had become badly eroded, but has been recently restored.

There was an upsurge in public interest in remembering the past after the Fenian raids and through the 1870s and 1880s. A number of historical societies were founded at this time, including the York Pioneer and Historical Society in 1869. In 1879, Society members moved the Scadding Cabin from its Don River location to what is now the C.N.E.

In the 1890s, Frank Yeigh, a local history enthusiast, lead walking and cycling tours to various historical sites in Toronto. He headed up a committee to create historical plaques and in 1901 the first of these stone plaques were produced. These plaques tended to focus on military, legislative and judicial subjects as well as homes of prominent citizens. One of these plaques was found amongst the gravestones in Victoria Memorial Square – it had been assumed for years that it was a gravestone!

In 1919, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada was created, partly in response to increased interest in heritage following World War I and the tercentennial of the founding of Quebec in 1908. In 1949, the Toronto Historical Committee (which became the Toronto Historical Board a decade later) was formed. In 1953, the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario (later to become the Ontario Heritage Foundation) was created and in 1956 the first gold and blue plaque was installed in Port Carling.

In 1969, the Toronto Historical Board installed its first "independent" plaque on a building on the site of Scotia Plaza. It commemorated the first training site for the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer



Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve plaques unveiled. From left, Commander Davies (HMCS YORK), John Doig (Bank of Nova Scotia VP) Commander McKee, Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone and Peter Ortvad (Chair, Heritage Toronto).

Reserve. This plaque disappeared for years and was finally located in storage at Stanley Barracks. It was recently re-installed at Scotia Plaza, along with a modern Heritage Toronto plaque.

Although the methods of commemoration have changed over the years, the basic urge to remember the past is still strong. With an increasing percentage of Torontonians coming from elsewhere, it is particularly important to commemorate our collective past. The current Heritage Toronto plaques strive to provide the context, as well as providing the "facts". You can even do your own historical tour using your iPod or similar player. (<http://www.heritagetoronto.org/discover-toronto/plaque>)

Alex. Grenzebach

More plaques

Lest We Forget - City of Toronto War Memorials

<http://www.toronto.ca/lestweforget/war-memorials.htm>

Heritage Toronto Plaques and Markers

<http://www.heritagetoronto.org/discover-toronto/plaque>

Toronto's Historical Plaques, by Alan Brown

<http://www.torontohistory.org>

Find Ontario plaques at Alan's other site

Ontario's Historical Plaques

<http://www.ontarioplaques.com/>

North Toronto Memories. More in an occasional series written by *you*, our members.

Thanks to members of **Stanley Heather** of Mississauga and **Brian Weller** of Markham for sharing their stories in this edition.

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

North Toronto Memories *by Stanley Heather*

The Heathers (all nine of us) moved into 96 Heddington Avenue in 1930. I was seven years old at the time. Many of the lots on Heddington were still vacant – great places to dig caves and build forts. The street to the west of Heddington, Castlewood Avenue, had no homes on it at that time (1931-1933). We called this area the bush. The digging at the top of the hill on Castlewood (now occupied by houses # 95-107) brought up many Indian artifacts – pottery shards, arrowheads, etc. Obviously an old Indian encampment.

One of my Heddington friends, Stan Bidgood, built an extensive collection of Indian artifacts – I kept a 4” piece of pottery for many years – all from the Castlewood site.

The other dig was on the northwest corner of Roselawn Avenue and Avenue Road. This appeared to be one of the main aboriginal settlements in the area. It was on the site of the large water tower, remembered by many old timers. A natural spring was the attraction for the early encampments.

A story told to me at the Allenby Public School’s 50th reunion was of two boys (who shall remain nameless) discovering a skull while digging on



Allenby Public School, c. 1929

Roselawn, tidying it up and putting it on their 6th Grade teacher’s desk. After being discovered, Major Kerruish [the principal] laid the strap on them and they had to go back and bury the skull.

Major Kerruish and my father, Harry Heather (also a veteran on the 1914-1918 war) played poker together so the behaviour of the four young Heathers enrolled at Allenby – Joan, Dorothy (Milne), Ken and myself – was always kept current in the Heather household.

Heddington Avenue was a great place in the thirties for kids to grow up. We played baseball (when not playing on the street) on a large vacant lot on Roselawn Avenue at the top of Heddington.

Among some of the dozens of kids on the street, the family names that stick out are Simmons, Bates, Campbell, Howden, Sampson, Batten, Bidgood, and McDiarmid.

I left 96 Heddington in 1941 to enter the RCAF – my family stayed until around 1960.

North Toronto Memories *by Brian Weller*

My Dad's family with six kids lived at 227 Erskine Ave. and the kids went to John Fisher Public School.

My grandfather, James Weller fought at Paschendaele in Belgium during WW1. My Uncle Bill served with the Canadian Army sent to liberate Belgium once again in WW2. Robert, my Dad served in the RCAF in WW2, training in Dunnville, Ontario and Comox, B.C. He ended up being one of the youngest commissioned officers, as a Pilot Officer at 19. I still have his commission, awards and uniform.

After WW2, my Dad joined the North Toronto Police Force and was stationed at old #12 at Yonge and Montgomery where, amongst many other events he was in on the arrests of the Boyd Gang after their many prison breaks.



Brian with Dad and Mom, 1951

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

MILDRED WICKSON
Studio of Dancing

Re-Opening September 19th

BALLET CLASSES
 — for —
 ADULTS — CHILDREN

BEGINNERS — INTERMEDIATE — ADVANCED

Also Recreational Classes for Married Ladies

REGISTRATION FROM SEPTEMBER 6th

MILDRED WICKSON — CAROLE CHADWICK
 (C.D.T.A. BALLET) (M.I.S.T.D.) (C.S.B.)

36 Eglinton Avenue West HUDSON 8-2166
 (Telephone 10 to 12 noon; 2 to 5 p.m., Sat. 10 to 1 p.m.)

Globe & Mail, 7 December 1868

PENNY READINGS AT EGLINTON.—A number of the inhabitants of Eglinton have started the project of giving cheap literary entertainments during the winter months, in the style of the penny readings; and a meeting was held in the village on Saturday night to inaugurate the project. The main difficulty in the way of securing the success of the project, lies in the want of a hall, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the only building available, being refused, in consequence of the objection of some of the members. This difficulty will, however, be overcome, and it is likely that some very pleasant gatherings will be the result of the proposed readings. The proceeds are intended to be devoted towards the Sunday School Fund of the Wesleyan Church in the village.

Heritage Calendar

Black History Month Events

City of Toronto

<http://www.toronto.ca/blackhistory/events.htm>

Toronto Public Library

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/programs-and-classes/featured/black-history-month.jsp>

Canadian Black Heritage in the Third Millennium

Movies and more:

<http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~gpieters/bhmcalendar.html>



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

Submissions for the next *Newsletter* by 15 March to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.



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

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

2010 Executive (*Directors)

President & Programmes: *Lynda Moon

Membership Co-ordinator: *Alex Grenzebach, 416-483-8475

Newsletter Editor: *Hilary Dawson

Treasurer: Bill Dawson

Members-at-large: Don Ritchie, Doug Campbell, Ken Pon

Past President: John Hutchinson

Publicity: *Joan Sampson, 416-488-0939

Secretary: Donald Duncan

Research: Hilary Dawson

Walks: *Bill Ramsay