



NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
November 2014- January 2015
Founded in 1960

www.nyhs.ca

From the President

It is almost the end of another year – first of all my thanks to our board, committee members and the Canadiana Dept., North York Central Library for their work and support. It has been a pleasure for us all to welcome members and visitors.

2015 is our 55th year. We look forward to continuing to discover and disseminate historical information and also participate in events and projects. Our aim for next year is to increase our membership and I encourage you to spread the word to your family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc. I assure you that we will continue to promote fellowship and friendship in our quest to learn more about the North York community.

I understand that because of busy schedules, it is not always possible to attend and participate in all our meetings and projects. Your support is much appreciated and if you have questions do please let us know. Visit our website, send an email or talk or call us – we welcome your input and help.

Season's greetings.

Bill Aird

Sunday, December 7, 2014, at 2.30 p.m. **SEASONAL GATHERING**, Gibson House Museum (lower gallery), 5172 Yonge Street.
(Members only)

Wednesday, February 18, 2015, at 7.30 p.m. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SEASON OF RAGE: RACIAL CONFLICT IN A SMALL TOWN**
John Cooper, author and co-author of several books on African-Canadian history.

Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 7.30 p.m. **HISTORY OF THE PHONOGRAPH AND RECORDED SOUND**
Mike Bryan & Keith Wright, Canadian Antique Phonograph Society Presentation will include demonstration of phonographs dating from the early 1900s and the 1950s.

February & March meetings are at the North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge St. Meeting Rm #1, 2nd floor (west side of atrium) take elevator outside library.

Meeting are co-sponsored by the North York Historical Society and the North York Central Library, Canadiana Department.

Contents:

Page 2: 2014 AGM Minutes

Page 3: *Urban Hero*, In Memoriam, Donations

Page 4: President's Report

Page 5: John McKenzie House

Page 6: Annual Reports

Page 7: Program Report, Proxy Form

Page 8: Gibson House Museum, Membership Form

The North York Historical Society is an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society
and a non-profit organization sponsored in part by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Sport

**NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
February 19th, 2014
North York Central Library, Meeting Room #1**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** The President, Bill Aird, called the meeting to order, and welcomed Members to the North York Historical Society's 54th Annual General Meeting. He noted that the Society has had a good year, with fundraising for plaquing being successful, and the Society's profile in the Community being raised - numerous activities are listed in the recent Newsletter. We have raised over \$600.00 for the Miriam Jackson Fund, and, after consultation with the family, a suitable gift will be given to Gibson House in Miriam's memory. The President has been involved in Community Outreach, giving talks on the history of Willowdale to a number of groups. More of these events are being planned, including one at Barbara Frum Library next month.
- 2. MINUTES of the 2013 AGM** were published in the November 2013-January 2014 Newsletter. These were approved by the membership. (Edith Geduld, Myrna Fox)
- 3. REPORTS:** Included in the Newsletter are reports from: The President, the North York Community Preservation Panel, and the following Committees: Archives, Heritage Resource Centre, Plaquing, Programs and Webmaster. These were approved by the Membership. (Edith Geduld, Betty McQuillan)
- 4. TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Statement of Financial Position as at December 31, 2013, prepared by Edward Macdonell, was distributed to the Members. The Chair gave an explanation of some of the figures, noting that the Society is in a much better financial position in 2103 than in 2012, because we no longer need to pay for premises at the Miller. Revenue and Expenses are roughly even. The Statement is still to be audited, and if there are any changes, these will be brought back to the Membership next month. A motion to receive the report was approved by the membership. (Edith Geduld, Tony Wagner)
- 5. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:** The President handed the Chair to Geoff Geduld, Past President, Chair of the Nominating Committee. Other members are Linda Gargaro (Board) and Edith Geduld (Member at Large). The 2014 slate of Board Officers and Directors were listed on the Agenda: Past President, Geoff Geduld: President, Bill Aird: Vice President, Glenn Bonnetta: Treasurer, Edward Macdonell: Secretary, Ruth Kingma: Directors,(5) Linda Gargaro, Edith Geduld, Susan Goldenberg, 2 vacancies. The Chair called for nominations from the floor, and Maria Sabatino volunteered to be a Director, leaving 1 vacancy. Approved.
- 6. THE PRESIDENT** resumed the Chair. Edith Geduld gave a report on the membership of the Committees listed on the agenda, and appealed for volunteers. Bill Aird noted that we are now being charged for the use of Edithvale Community Centre for Board meetings, and Tony Wagner noted that O'Connor house may be able to be helpful in future. Motion to Adjourn approved. (Geoff Geduld, Christina Ferguson)
- 7. PROGRAM:** "Working for Freedom, the Story of Josiah Henson" Speaker: Rona Arato, author.
Ruth Kingma, Secretary

NORTH YORK'S URBAN HERITAGE HERO

Our congratulations to Mary Ann Cross, member of the North York Community Preservation Panel and a member of the North York Historical Society.

"If not for Mary Ann Cross many of North York's streets and parks would bear names of no significance whatsoever, such as flowers that never grew in the area. But thanks to Cross' tireless efforts, several now carry the names of community pioneers.

'Mary Ann Cross has assumed the role of champion for the naming of streets and parks in North York to remember, honour and celebrate the early settlers in North York, with the active support of the North York Community Preservation Panel', said panel chair, Geoff Kettel, who nominated her for an Urban Hero Award.

Cross has worked diligently to get families' consent for their ancestors' names to be honoured, Kettel said.

She is so far responsible for eight historical names being used for road signs including Johnson Farm Lane southwest of Finch Avenue and Yonge Street commemorating the area's once rural landscape and a number of streets in Downsview's Stanley Greene neighbourhood."



Reprinted from the *North York Mirror*, Thursday, November 6, 2014, page 16.

JOHNSON FARM LANE

Johnson Farm Lane commemorates the Johnson family who settled in Willow Dale in 1797, and donated land for a cemetery in 1834, part of which still remains at Yonge Street and Churchill Avenue, although the adjoining church on Jacob Cummer's land is long gone. Rather than Lawrence or Abraham Johnson, Johnson Farm was chosen to commemorate the farmland of early days, and the whole family rather than only the men.

Since there are so few vestiges of our rural, pioneering days left, it is important to commemorate early settlers by naming new streets after them.

Note: This street name was adopted by the North York Community Council on May 29, 2011, and was the last heritage name recommended by the North York Community Preservation Panel before the Honourific and Street Naming Policy was changed to require the consent of a descendent on November 29, 2011.

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Elizabeth Wyatt (nee Johnston)
August 13, 1927-September 25, 2014
Long time member. Student at Zion Public School,
now Historic Zion Schoolhouse

DONATIONS 2014 (September-November)

General Operating Fund: Betty Brannen, Myrna Frost, Tony Ricci

Plaquing Fund: Myrna Frost

Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund: Isobel Davey, Tony Ricci

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Below are items that some additional events, lectures, etc., that we co-hosted, attended that not covered in the annual reports.

Attended

Downton Abbey Costumes at Spadina House, March 7th
Downsview Community Reference Group (Canada Lands), April 14th

Canada In Song, featuring Mike Ford, at Canterbury Retirement Residence, March 12th

Todmorden Mills Heritage Centre: community information session, April 12th

Growing Figs, Stephen Biggs, at the OHS, April 24th

Stories of North York, Susan Goldenberg: NYCL publication possibility discussion, May 5th

Single Thread Theatre Company discussion at Gibson House: to integrate local history into theatre production, May 15th, and provided relevant material from NYHS scrapbooks.

Consultation Round Table, 150th anniversary:

Chungsen Leung, MP Willowdale, May 20th

OHS AGM at O'Connor House, June 14th

North York Centre Walk, Mary Ann Cross, June 14th

Spire Stelae, Peter Powning's sculpture unveiling, June 16th

Heritage Toronto's *Heritage Report* at NYCL, June 26th

Heritage Toronto's *Mayor's Forum* at Cathedral Centre, August 21st

Memories of the Future exhibit at Gibson House, September 21st

Funeral: Mary Wyatt, September 28th

Heritage Toronto Awards, October 21st

Urban Heroes Award, North York Mirror, Mary Ann Cross, November 4th

Miriam Jackson Memorial: artifact/lecture meeting at Gibson House, November 4th

Great War Attic at Gibson House, November 15th

Supported

Friends of Dempsey Park group.

Heritage Toronto Awards, book nomination: *Willowdale*, Scott Kennedy

North York Community Preservation Panel's heritage street names' recommendations.

Participated

Museum Services, City of Toronto, survey on museum revitalization.

Spire Stelae: Impressions of a Community, Peter Powning, sculptor's community group meetings, coordinated artifacts and booklet, posted on NYHS website

Earl Haig SS Community Fair, February 22nd

Community BBQ, Hon. David Zimmer, MPP, Willowdale, September 7th

Heritage Toronto/Weston Family Parks Challenge: John Bales House, October 15th

Outreach

Memories of North York, Bill Aird at Blessed Trinity Church, February 25th

Memories of North York, Bill Aird at the Barbara Frum Library, March 3rd

Reports/Applications

Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG), Ontario

Volunteer Service Awards (VSO), Ontario

Charitable Report, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

JOHN MCKENZIE HOUSE

The John McKenzie House is a three-storey brick structure, lot 18, concession 1 East, north of Sheppard Avenue, east of Yonge Street. It was constructed in 1913 as the second Willowdale home of a pioneer family, on property deeded to Jacob Cummer in 1801. In 1884, a portion of the original property was sold to Philip McKenzie (John's father), who was an English immigrant trained as a carpenter and casket maker.

Philip and his wife, Sarah Thompson, of Whitchurch Township, first moved into the old Cummer farmhouse, a one and a one-half storey brick Georgian style dwelling. This house was built about 1840, between Parkview and Norton Avenue, facing west. When Philip McKenzie died, John ran the farm and specialized in Holstein cattle until the local economy for farmers began to deteriorate. John then decided to subdivide the farm, and in 1912, registered the "Empress Subdivision" that was to become the heart of modern east Willowdale, as the area was transformed from a rural village to a suburban community.



In 1913, John and his wife, Eva, chose a large lot on the rise of land just east of Yonge Street on Parkview Avenue, as the site for their new home. From their farm, they retained the 1907 brick milk house, built a stable in 1915 and a coach house in 1918.

Built in a style which has been described as Queen Anne Revival, Arts and Crafts and Edwardian this red brick house contains 12 rooms and 3 bathrooms. The front of the house is profiled by a grand L-shaped, wrap-around verandah with stylized Doric columns. A large attached coach house was converted to accommodate automobiles and has a recreation room above. Significant interior features include a centre hall plan, a vestibule door and sidelights with bevelled leaded glass, a large leaded art glass window which lights the landing of the main staircase, two sunrooms, panelled doors and wainscoting, strip hardwood flooring and radiators.

Descendants of the McKenzie family lived in the house until the 1970s. By the 1980s it was in the hands of a developer, and the then City of North York (NY) planned to demolish the buildings for road construction. The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) lobbied to retain the buildings and NY agreed to relocate the proposed road. In 1993, the OHS proposed the restoration of the property, which resulted in a long term lease with NY. The OHS has restored all four buildings and the interior of the coach house has been renovated for adaptive use as a community program and exhibit area.

This property is owned by the City of Toronto (City) and leased to the OHS as its head office. 2013 marked both the 125th anniversary of the OHS and the 100th anniversary of the John McKenzie House.

The Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) has a number of conservation tools available to protect and preserve heritage throughout the province. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements, between heritage property owners and the OHT, that protect significant features of a property.

In 2013 the OHT and the City completed an easement agreement to protect this provincially significant property, which is leased to the OHS as its head office. The easement will protect the impressive Edwardian classical-style house constructed in 1913, as well as the attached coach house (1918), milk house (1907), stable (1915), the McKenzie Parkette and community garden.

Edited from OHS Be a *Partner in Parkview* and OHT *Heritage Matters: Partnering for conservation*, September 2013

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Letter of Agreement with the North York Central Library's Canadiana Department have been approved by all parties. A gathering is being planned for the signing of the MOU and completion of the donation sometime early 2015.
Ruth Kingma (Chair), Glenn Bonnetta, Edith & Geoff Geduld, John Laraway and Bill Aird (ex officio)

HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTRE REPORT

The "Monday Group of Volunteers" continues to meet regularly at a temporary location. Indexing of the NYHS scrapbooks is an ongoing project that is progressing well. Donations also continue to be sorted, some will be integrated into the business papers of the Society, which are currently in storage, and the remainder will be offered to the North York Central Library's Canadiana Department.

Most of the NYHS archival collection has been accepted by the library. The material not accepted has been returned to the Society and placed in storage for the time being.

Glenn Bonnetta, Vice President (Coordinator): Bill Aird, Sheryl Adelkind, Susan Goldenberg, John Laraway and Sarah McCabe.

NORTH YORK COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PANEL REPORT

The panel is concerned that the City's new street naming policy requires consent of a descendent, thus making it very difficult to recommend pioneer names. The Official Plan's Heritage Policies (update) although approved by the City and Ontario Ministry is facing 49 appeals at the OMB in 2015.

Congratulations and thanks to Mary Ann Cross for her work on street naming (see page 3).

NYCPP Past Chair: Edith Geduld

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The constitution of the NYHS calls for the nomination and election of board members at each AGM. The 2015 AGM takes place on Wednesday, February 15th. If you are interested and willing to join the board please call or email me at 416-222-3485 geoff.geduld@sympatico.ca

Chair: Geoff Geduld (Past President)

PLAQUING COMMITTEE REPORT

Cummer Family Plaque: Unveiled at the McKee Public School on November 28, 2014. Installation will take place after the winter. It will be cited close to where the Joshua Cummer House stood at 20 McKee Avenue.

John Bales House Plaque in Earl Bales Park: NYHS members donated \$1,000.00. At Councillor James Pasternak's request City Council approved \$4,500.00 funding from Section 37 community benefits in 2014. Plaque is in production. Unveiling and installation in 2015.

Golden Lion Plaque: Research complete. Application will be submitted to Heritage Toronto.

Glenn Bonnetta, Vice President, Edith Geduld

PROGRAM REPORT: February-December 2014

- February 19, 2014 **Annual General Meeting & *WORKING FOR FREEDOM, THE STORY OF JOSIAH HENSON***, Rona Arato, author
- March 19, 2014 ***GRACE: A TEACHER'S LIFE, ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS, AND A CENTURY OF CHANGE IN ONTARIO***, Millie Morton, author
- April 16, 2014 ***WILLOWDALE: YESTERDAY'S FARMS, TODAY'S LEGACY***, Scott Kennedy, author
- May 21, 2014 ***TORONTO, THEN AND NOW***, Mike Filey, author
- June 8, 2014 **MARKHAM MUSEUM & Historic Village**, members outing
- September 17, 2014 ***EDWIN ALONZO BOYD: Life and Crimes of Canada's Master Bank Robber***, Nate Handley, author
- October 15, 2014 ***INSIDE THEMUSEUMS: Toronto's Heritage Sites and Their Most Prized Objects***, John Goddard, author
- November 19, 2014 ***CANADIANS AT WAR: a Guide to the Battlefields of World War1*** Susan Evans Shaw, author
Above in partnership with the North York Central Library, Canadiana Department
- December 7, 2014 **SEASONAL GATHERING** at the Gibson House Museum, members only.
- September 23, 2014 ***NORTH YORK: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY BUILDING AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE***, Professor Don Smith, U. of Alberta; Victoria Freeman, York U., Carolyn King, Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation.
September 23rd in partnership with The Ontario Historical Society
- November 13, 2014 ***100 Years of Medical Progress: The History of Connaught Labs at the Steeles and Dufferin site***: Michael Bliss, Joanna Dean, James Fitzgerald & Christopher J. Ruty
November 13th in partnership with Sanofi Pasteur Canada, North York Community Preservation Panel and North York Central Library, Canadiana Dept.
Linda Gargaro, Director of Programs

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY – PROXY

Solicited by the Board of Directors of the Society for February 18, 2015

The undersigned paid up member of the North York Historical Society hereby appoints Ruth Kingma, Secretary, as proxy holder, with full power of substitution to attend, vote and act on behalf of the undersigned at the Annual General Meeting of members of the Society to be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

The proxy holder is here instructed:

1. The election of persons nominated as Officers and Directors of the Society for the year 2015.
 2. The appointment of an auditor named by the Board of Directors or Nominating Committee.
- And hereby revoke any proxy given previously.

Name.....Date.....

Signature..... -7-

FALL & WINTER AT THE GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM

gibsonhouse@toronto.ca 416-395-7432 5172 Yonge Street (at Park Home Avenue)

Hogmanay Dinner on Monday, December 29th and Tuesday, December 30th at 6.30 p.m.

This special evening is inspired by the traditions of Hogmanay. Enjoy a scrumptious meal in the ambience of the historic dining room. Be lulled by the fire and moved by the music. Advance tickets required. \$55 plus HST.

Keeping You in Stitches, Sundays, 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

A social drop-in for knitters and crocheters of all ages and skill levels. Bring your own projects. Free.

Gingerbread Cookie Decorating on Saturday, December 13th, 1.00 to 4.30 p.m.

Learn how the Gibson's celebrated Christmas and Hogmanay in 1851, then help your child decorate a gingerbread cookie to take home. Regular admission applies.

P.A. Day Adventure for Ages 7-11

Friday, December 5th, 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. An exciting day with crafts, cooking, games and more. Participants make their own hearth-cooked lunch in the historic kitchen. Pre-registration required. \$30 plus HST.

Festive Fun Adventures for Ages 7-11 Monday or Tuesday, December 22/23, 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Need a day to finish your shopping? Sign your child up for a fun-filled day spent baking treats in the historic kitchen, making seasonal crafts and playing games. Pre-registration required. \$30 plus HST.

Suggestion: email Laura Gibbs and subscribe to the Gibson House Museum Monthly Newsletter lgibbs@toronto.ca

NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership 2015

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

Address.....
.....

Email : Newsletter by email: Yes.... No....

Family: \$25.00 Individual \$15.00..... Senior \$10.00..... Student \$5.00.....

Donation: General \$..... Plaquing Program \$..... Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund \$.....

North York Historical Society, Post Office Box 45045, 5845 Yonge Street, Willowdale, ON M2M 4C3