



# NORTH YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July-September 2016  
1960-2016 – 56<sup>th</sup> Year

[www.nyhs.ca](http://www.nyhs.ca)

## **From the President**

We enjoyed the Gibson House Museum's Garden Party celebrating their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The NYHS's story of the Society was on display in the Discovery Gallery. The Fall Festival is on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (see page 6)

On September 17, 1816, the first members of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church laid the cornerstone of their first church building. On Sunday, September 18, 2016, there will be a service of Thanksgiving, at 10.30 a.m. Jeanne Hopkins' article on page 3 describes the beginning of the church. She's a long time NYHS member, and author of *Bayview Village*, *Henry Farm Oriole*, *Jackson's Point*, and more. Some of her books are for sale in the Gibson House Museum.

Congratulations to this year's recipients of Volunteer Service Awards listed on page 2 (NYHS members and Gibson House Volunteers).

Be sure to check out *Cultural Hot Spots* (continues to October) which celebrates local culture, heritage, creativity, business and community with special events, festival and art happenings. Visit [www.toronto.ca/culturalhotspot](http://www.toronto.ca/culturalhotspot) for details.

*Glenn Bonnetta*

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Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

## **HISTORIC UNIONVILLE – A VILLAGE IN THE CITY**

George Duncan, Author, Architectural Historian and Senior Heritage Planner, City of Markham

Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

## **HISTORY OF THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE NEW CREDIT FIRST NATION AND SOME CURRENT INITIATIVES RECOGNIZING THEIR HISTORY**

Carolyn King, Cultural Awareness Consultant and Member of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

Wednesday November 16, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

## **BOMB GIRLS: TRADING APRONS FOR AMMO**

Barbara Dickson, Author and Historian

Meeting Location: September 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting Room #1, October 19<sup>th</sup> & November 16<sup>th</sup> The Auditorium in the North York Central Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 5120 Yonge Street, (west side of atrium) use elevator outside library.

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

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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

## September – November 2016 Program

Wednesday September 21 at 7:30 p.m.

**HISTORIC UNIONVILLE- A VILLAGE IN THE CITY** by George Duncan

An architectural historian, interested in the documentation of Ontario's heritage buildings, local history and cultural landscapes. Over the past 28 years or so, he has authored several books and numerous articles on local history, early buildings and issues around heritage conservation. His best-known work in print is *York County Mouldings from Historic Interiors*, originally published by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario in 2001, with a second edition published by Lee Valley Tools Ltd.

Wednesday October 19 at 7:30 p.m.

**HISTORY OF THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE NEW CREDIT FIRST NATION AND SOME CURRENT INITIATIVES RECOGNIZING THEIR HISTORY**

Carolyn King is a long time economic and community developer, and lifetime volunteer. Served as elected Chief of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation 1997-1999. Currently serves on boards of several community based organizations, such as New Credit Public Library, New Credit Cultural Committee, SONIC Inc., the Six Nations/New Credit Community Radio Station and the Ontario Historical Society.

Wednesday November 16, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

**BOMB GIRLS: TRADING APRONS FOR AMMO** by Barbara Dickson

*Historical record of Canada's biggest WWII munitions plant employing over 21,000 people, predominantly women, who courageously worked with high explosives around the clock over its four year history.*

### ONTARIO VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS 2016

#### Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Congratulations to NYHS Members

Ruth Kingma – 10-year award

Glenn Bonnetta, Mary Ann Cross, Marion Simpson – 15-year award

Congratulations to Gibson House Volunteers

Sheryl Adelkind – 15-year award

Judy Howdle – 20-year award

Betty Campbell, Betty Ann Moyer, Vivian Reid, Elaine McCuaig – 30-year award

### DONATIONS 2016

**General Operating Fund** Margaret Chadwick, Janet Batchelor, Betty Brannen, Margaret Cameron, Mike Filey, Linda Gargaro, Gordon Hawkins, Marion Kinch, Patricia MacNaughton, Daphne McMullan, Lillian Methven, Eleanor Pyke, Kathlyn Reader, Tony Wagner, Cathey Waine

**Plaquing Fund** Carole Carruthers, Robert & Elizabeth McQuillan, Gunild Spiess

**Miriam Jackson Memorial Fund** Robert & Elizabeth McQuillan, Elizabeth Minaker, Penelope Potter

**THE GIBSONS – PRUDENCE'S STORY** by Richard Ong

A photographic presentation of the Gibson House Museum. The reader is treated to a virtual tour of this historic home. E-book version available for free through iTunes. Hard copy from [www.blurb.ca](http://www.blurb.ca)

## ST. JOHN'S, YORK MILLS, 200 YEARS OLD

On September 16, 2016, St. John's, York Mills Anglican Church will celebrate its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the first Church of England north of the Town of York; St. James Church, later Cathedral, on King Street East in the Town of York was established in 1804.

Mr. Seneca Ketchum, a Loyalist, who arrived in Kingston in 1792, later came to York and settled on a Lawrence Park farm. He regularly walked down Yonge Street, summer and winter, to attend Sunday morning services at St. James Church, then returning home, he held evening services in his log cabin on North Yonge Street for his neighbours.

By the end of the War of 1812, his congregation grew too large for his little house, so they met in the rickety schoolhouse, and soon determined that they could support their own church in York Mills. Joseph and Catherine Shepard donated about three acres of their land "high on the hill", while Seneca donated time and money for a building. On September 17, 1816 a cornerstone was laid by Lt. Governor Francis Gore and The Rev. John Strachan of St. James Church. Over the summer, work bees (gatherings) were held each Saturday to build a log church, ready for the first service held on December 30, 1816.

Once a month The Rev. Dr. John Strachan came north to conduct a service for baptisms, confirmations and marriages on Sundays. On other Sundays, divinity students, like Derwyn Trevor Owen, delivered sermons written by Rev. Strachan.

By the 1840s, the congregation had grown so much that a larger, more permanent church was needed. Architect John George Howard of High Park was hired, who had also designed a similar church at Holland Landing on Lake Simcoe. When the church "high on the hill" was dedicated in 1843, it was officially named St. John's Church, York Mills.

Over the years, St. John's has been served by many clergy, some for more than twenty years. While the present St. John's was being built, The Rev. Alexander Sanson constantly inspected the building of his new church. Some clergy who served St. John's over twenty years include The Rev. Henry Bath Osler (1874-1900), The Rev. Richard Ashcroft (1900-1926), Archdeacon Arthur C. McCollum (1926-1960), The Rev. Lewis Garnsworthy (1960-1969), The Rev. James O'Neil (1969-1989), The Rev. Hollis Hiscock (1990-2007) and the present Rector, The Rev. Drew Macdonald.

Two clergy became bishops of Toronto: Archbishop Derwyn Trevor Owen, who studied under Rev. Osler, liked St. John's so much that he asked to be buried in the cemetery. He later became Primate of All Canada in 1934. Archbishop Lewis Garnsworthy, who became Bishop of Toronto in 1990.

After over two years of renovations and updates, St. John's, York Mills held many anniversary events this year, culminating with an anniversary service on Sunday September 18, 2016 with The Right Rev. Colin Johnson, Archbishop of the Diocese of Toronto, officiating.

*Written and researched by Jeanne Hopkins, Writer, Historian (edited)*

Photograph: Unknown, before 1939

See page 6 for September 16<sup>th</sup> services, celebrating 200 Years: Toronto's oldest parish church.

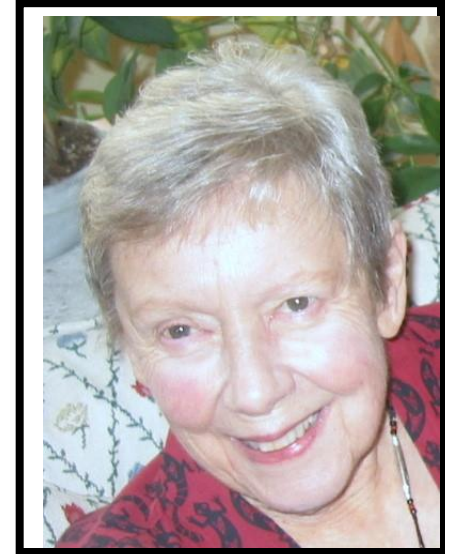


## IN MEMORIAM DONALDA EWART BADONE

(Née Hastie)1927-2016

Long time NYHS member and Gibson House Volunteer. She and her husband, Louis (1924-2012), lived in Willowdale for over 50 years. She worked for many years as a school librarian at Drewry Avenue Public School, helped organize Scholastic Book Fairs, and wrote numerous reviews of children's books for library journals. In the 1970s, she started a second career as a freelance journalist. Later, she published *The Complete House Detective* chronicling the history of their Willowdale home, built in 1834 by pioneer Elihu Pease; *Dundurn Castle*, a National Historic Site, Hamilton, Ontario, and *The Time Detectives*, an introduction to Canadian archaeology for young people.

In 1972, they purchased and restored a log house near Lakefield, Ontario and started another career as part-time farmers, raising Highland Cattle for over a decade. They also travelled extensively in Peru, Senegal and China, where Louis volunteered for Canadian Executive Services Overseas. Donnie continued her writing career, contributing letters to CBC radio's *Morningside*. She was an active volunteer in many organizations: The North York Historical Society, the Ontario Heritage Trust, the Ontario Archaeology Society, the William Morris Society of Canada and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.



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## TORONTO'S GREAT WAR ATTIC

Below is reprint from [www.toronto.ca/ww1](http://www.toronto.ca/ww1):

"The First World War 1914 to 1918, known at the time as the Great War, shocked the world with its catastrophic global reach. Unlike the Toronto of 1914 to 1918 when the city's population was 85 % British descent, at least half of today's residents come from all over the world. There are more than 230 self-identified ethnic groups in our city.

Therefore, we have an unprecedented opportunity to collect personal stories and images of keepsakes and heirlooms passed down from many countries by those who lived through the war, either in military service or on the home front, to their descendants who are now living in Toronto.

Through such a collection, we can present the war from multiple perspectives - allied nations of Great Britain and Germany; neutral and colonial nations in Europe and Africa, which inadvertently served as battle zones; and life on the home front in lands directly under attack and others, such as Canada, which were never battle zones but whose populations contributed to the war effort."

The City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services, in partnership with Historica Canada, York University and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario hosted 12 Pop-Up Museums through the fall of 2014. As a result, almost 100 stories are posted on the Canadian Encyclopedia website. Ten of the original stories are featured in the *Toronto's Great War Attic - 10 Short Films* were screened at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on May 14, 2016 before an invited audience. Visit [www.toronto.ca/ww1](http://www.toronto.ca/ww1) to view the ten short films.

## EARLY EDUCATION IN NORTH YORK

It is interesting to time travel back to the early days of education in North York. It was as early as 1801 that the first two schools were opened in North York. One was established in Newtonbrook and the other in Willowdale. They were simple log structures built in the road allowance. This was a deliberate choice because parents worried that if the schools were built off the road their children might get lost in the woods or be attacked by wild animals.

Moving forward two decades, the typical log schoolhouse in the 1820s was small, about eighteen by twenty feet with a fireplace at one end of the only room. A wood shed stood near the door, and logs supplied by the farmers were split by the older boys, who tended the fire. An outhouse stood on each side behind the building, one for the girls and the other for the boys.

This was well before the era of electricity and one or two small windows provided the only light. Not only the building was made of logs; so were the desks and benches for pupils. The younger children sat on the benches, one on each side of the room, and the older ones at the desks.

The teachers were not trained as they are today. Instead, they were often discharged British soldiers or hard-on-their-luck trades people, usually with little education themselves. The salary was minuscule, about 25 ¢ a month per pupil, plus free board and lodging provided by having the teacher move every two or three days from one student's home to another.

School opened and closed with a prayer. In addition, the children had to memorize New Testament verses and read the Bible. The other subjects taught were the basics, reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. Students had to provide their own paper, ink, pens and rulers.

Discipline was harsh. The strap was used when children didn't learn their lessons; whispering was often stopped by gagging the offender with a small wooden board; and hot mustard was applied to the tongue if someone was caught in a lie.

Moving forward three decades to the 1850s, many of the old log schoolhouses were replaced with frame buildings or red brick buildings that provided better light with two or three large windows along each side of the building. A huge bell, rung by the teacher, summoned the children to school. The fireplace of the original schools was replaced with a stove but it was still cold inside, so much so that each winter morning the ink had to be thawed out on top of the stove. Mischievous boys got fun out of leaving the top on the bottle as it thawed, resulting in an explosion with a large blob of ink splattering on the ceiling. Boys also got enjoyment from dipping the girls' pigtails in inkwells. One little girl dramatically got revenge. She broke her slate over the head of the culprit who ended up with a wooden collar and broken edges of slate around his neck.

In 1815, legislation legalized the organization of "common schools" by the residents of a township or village. If the group built a schoolhouse, paid a teacher and enrolled 20 or more students they could apply for a grant from the provincial board of education. In 1841, a new system was established. Schools were partly supported by taxation and partly by fees. In 1845, schools became free. (To be continued in the next Newsletter)

*Written & research by Susan Goldenberg, Director, North York Historical Society (edited)*

## GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM and HISTORIC ZION SCHOOLHOUSE

5172 Yonge St. (off Park Home Ave.)

416-395-7432

[gibsonhouse@toronto.ca](mailto:gibsonhouse@toronto.ca)

1091 Finch Ave East

416-395-7435

[zionschool@toronto.ca](mailto:zionschool@toronto.ca)

### GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM

**Neighbours** – The Gibson Family lived in Willowdale, one of many small farming communities that grew to become part of modern day Toronto. Meet the Gibson's neighbours and explore how these communities developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. Through September. Included with regular admission. Adults \$6.19; Seniors/Youth \$3.54, Children \$2.65 (+HST)

**Summer Camps** continue in August, Mon-Fri - 9 a.m./4 p.m. Different age groups and themes each week. Each camp includes a field trip, crafts and cooking heritage recipes in the historic kitchen. \$186 per child per week. Extended care available for an additional fee. Visit [www.toronto.ca/camps](http://www.toronto.ca/camps) to register. Click on North York, Gibson House on last page.

**Fall Festival!** on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Enjoy a fun day for all ages featuring local community groups, vendors, heritage demonstrations, hands-on activities and games, and a farm animal petting zoo. Tour the museum and play games of skill and chance! Learn about what grew on the Gibson's farm. FREE but non-perishable food items for the North York Harvest Food Bank appreciated.

### HISTORIC ZION SCHOOLHOUSE

**Suburban Steam Steampunk Festival** on Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Retro-futuristic family fun! Steampunk entertainment, activities, performers and merchants to delight the senses! Admission is FREE, donations gratefully accepted.

Directions to Zion Schoolhouse: TTC: take Finch East bus from Finch Station. Car: Leslie/Finch East, parking available off Trudy Road, south east of intersection.

**SPECIAL NOTICE TO NYHS MEMBERS:** December meeting will be **A Christmas Carol** – Saturday afternoon, December 10<sup>th</sup> at the schoolhouse. Details and ticket information will be announced at the September 21<sup>st</sup> program meeting.

## SCARBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

at Bendale Library, 1515 Danforth Road at 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>

**HISTORY OF THE TOILET**, Bev Dietrich

**EARLY AIRFIELDS OF TORONTO**, Dr. Robert Galway, Canadian Aviation Historical Society.

**AGM and Society's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**, power point history

and pictures of Society's activities from 1956 to 2016, Rick Schofield, archivist.

## ST. JOHN'S YORK MILLS ANGLICAN CHURCH CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

[welcome@sjym.ca](mailto:welcome@sjym.ca) [www.sjym.ca](http://www.sjym.ca) 416-225-6611

Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

9.00 a.m. **19<sup>th</sup> Century Morning Prayer**. Experience how worship was done in the 1800s, featuring the 1815 Prayer Book, period music and a hymn on the 1840s barrel organ – with the church set up as if it were 1816.

10.30 a.m. **A Service of Thanksgiving**. The church will be transformed to modernity for a joyful celebration of the modern Eucharist with Archbishop Colin Johnson. Music will include handbells, band, organ and choir – and singing.