

Acorn

Architectural Conservancy Ontario

Spring 2020



GALLERY
Additional seating

BALZAC'S UPSTAIRS

In 1901, a collection of upstairs offices was built in the building. These upstairs made up the offices of the Canadian Bank. The bank closed down in 1914. The building was not only built for the bank and that these offices were eventually purchased, but also for the community, making it a landmark and a place where they had the birth of their collective destination.

PLACE
ORDER
HERE

Heritage Tourism



Working together to preserve Ontario's history



photo Barnum House in Grafton was the first building that ACO saved, at the time of its founding in 1933

Since 1933, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario has helped save hundreds of architecturally significant buildings for future generations to use and enjoy. We believe that our heritage structures and landscapes are more than just a physical connection to the past; they enhance well-being, reduce environmental waste, and provide strong economic and social benefits. Helping communities preserve their heritage is why ACO exists. It takes a lot of work, and in our ongoing efforts every person makes a difference. ACO's mission depends on the commitment and contributions of our members, volunteers and donors. To everyone who has given their time, energy, and money, thank you!

If you care about preserving heritage structures and neighbourhoods, please consider making a donation. Contributions from generous individuals and companies who care about heritage help us do the important work of protecting these resources for future generations. The most popular way of giving to ACO is through an annual or monthly donation. We are also grateful to our members who include ACO in their will. We can't do this work without you.

We're in this for the long haul,
and we need your help.

You can donate now at acontario.ca or at canadahelps.org. If you are interested in making a legacy gift in your will, or if you would like any information about giving to ACO, please contact Devorah Miller at 416.367.8075 ext. 403 or at devorah@acontario.ca.

ACO works on behalf of all Ontarians.
Your support is vital.



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photo Tourism in Kingston, Courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust

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On the Cover

In Toronto's Distillery District, Courtesy of Ontario Tourism

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photo Richard Longley

photo Phil Elsworth

In 2016, seven out of every ten Ontarians visited a heritage site.

Heritage is big business. As ACO pointed out to legislators in its annual Heritage Week visit to Queen's Park, the heritage industry contributed \$26.7 billion to Ontario's Gross Domestic Product in 2017 — an average of \$1,900 per capita.¹

Tourism is big business. In 2018, Ontario had 150 million visitors who generated 400,000 jobs the Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries told the Economic Club of Canada.

Heritage Tourism is popular. In 2016, seven out of every ten Ontarians visited a heritage site.² ACO plays its part in generating these numbers. Several branches (Windsor, Clarington, Muskoka, St Thomas-Elgin, and Hamilton) have coordinated Doors Open for their communities. Many lead historic walking tours, heritage house tours and bus tours. Other branches own and/or operate heritage venues which tourists, among others, frequent — for example South Bruce Grey's Jubilee Hall, Cambridge's Sheave Tower, and Port Hope's Little Station. ACO Toronto promotes heritage tourist sites on the Old Toronto social media channels. Such ACO branch activities attract out-of-town visitors (tourists) as well as starting local residents on the first step of their progression from awareness and enjoyment to valuing and caring for their community's heritage.

Heritage Tourism could be even bigger if we expanded our thinking about what heritage is. One could argue that, for the first 87 years of existence, ACO focused its attention on conserving the history and architecture of European settlers who came to Ontario in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When I attended the National Council of heritage organizations meeting in Winnipeg last October, I was taken aback at the way some provincial heritage organizations were defining heritage. "Heritage is not what I tell you is important; it's what matters to you," said one representative. "How can this be?" I thought.

As they talked, I realized these organizations were grappling with a problem crucial to ACO — a shrinking, aging membership — while simultaneously acknowledging the Indigenous peoples who preceded Europeans in Canada and the growing number of Canadians with no European roots in their communities. Considered in this light, expanding our definition of heritage is essential.

One objective of ACO's 2018-2022 strategic plan is to **Increase Our Reach**, to pursue a deeper connection with more diverse groups. Which ACO branch will be the first to accomplish this?

I look forward to hearing from you. ■

— Kae Elgie, president@acontario.ca

FROM THE CHAIR



Expanding our definition of heritage is essential to pursue a deeper connection with more diverse groups.

^{1,2} Hill Strategies. "Measuring the Economic Impacts of Heritage." Ontario Heritage Conference, 2019. https://hillstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/goderich_kellyhill_may2019.pdf

Congratulations!

ACO's 2019 Heritage Awards went to...

Lynes Blacksmith Shop Committee

A.K. Sculthorpe Award for Advocacy

for their collaborative efforts and advocacy that preserved this special heritage blacksmith shop in Kenilworth, previously untouched for more than 65 years.

Main Street Ontario, Charles Ketchabaw

ACO News Media Award

for an innovative and informative approach to community engagement, animation, dramatization and use of various media to tell the stories of Ontario's historic Main Streets.

Robert Eisenberg and Michael Cruickshank

Eric Arthur Lifetime Achievement Award

for their passion and business acumen which proved the viability and profitability of heritage restoration and created an appetite for investment in heritage buildings.

Arlin Otto

ACO NextGen Award

for her considerable commitment to heritage conservation in her work and community, as well as her efforts to engage other young professionals in key issues of heritage engineering.

Campbell House Museum, Lost and Found (Liz Driver with exhibit co-curators Leora Bebko, Hannah Hadfield, and Tanya McCullough)

ACO Public Education and Engagement Award

for the outdoor exhibit "Lost & Found: Rediscovering Fragments of Old Toronto," which demonstrated an innovative approach to curation, and a spirit of collaboration between students and professionals.

Roger Vaughan

James D. Strachan Award for Craftsmanship

for his exceptional craftsmanship with a rare ability to shift between the disciplines of wood, brick, stone and metal.

George Duncan

Stephen A. Otto Award for Scholarship

for his book *Historic Unionville: A Village in the City*, which presents extensive research and solid scholarship, contributing to a new sense of place for Unionville.

George Robb Architect, Montgomery's Inn

Peter Stokes Restoration Award – Corporate

for an exceptional restoration project that revealed the construction processes in the finished project, and enhanced the Inn's role as a community hub and museum.

F. Leslie Thompson

Mary Millard Award for Special Contributions to ACO

for achieving an extraordinary amount as President of ACO during a period of personal challenge, contributing the right skills and countless hours to take ACO through a critical transition period, and reshape the infrastructure and culture of the organization.

The Daniels Building at One Spadina Crescent

Paul Oberman Award for Adaptive Reuse – Corporate

for the renewal of the south-facing nineteenth century Gothic Revival building and a contemporary three-storey addition on the north façade, bringing new life to a long-neglected building, and creating a complex worthy of its landmark location.

St. Thomas Elevated Park

Paul Oberman Award for Adaptive Reuse – Small Scale/Individual/Small Business

An outstanding example of adaptive reuse of a heritage structure threatened with demolition, with the innovative planning and leadership of On Track. This project demonstrates what can be accomplished when members of a community work together.

Port Hope Barn Quilt Trail (Moya McPhail, Kathryn McHolm, Lois Richardson, and Pamela Tate)

Robert and Nicholas Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Award

for their dedicated volunteer effort to draw attention to and deepen appreciation of historic barns, a rapidly disappearing Ontario building type, while highlighting the value of rural cultural landscapes.

Dale and Lori Clarke for the restoration of a major section of The Marshall Block in downtown Fergus

Peter Stokes Restoration Award – Small Scale/Individual/Small Business

for tremendous initiative by the owners, excellent restoration work, and its impact on the broader community at a very important traffic and pedestrian intersection in the town of Fergus.

Barbara Hall, Paul Bedford, Ken Greenberg, Bob Eisenberg, Max Beck, Michael Emory with the late Jane Jacobs and Gary Stamm

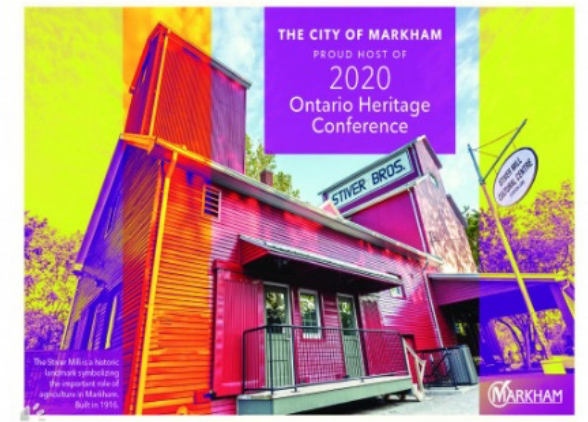
Post-1945 Design Award

for regenerating Toronto's King-Spadina and King-Parliament neighbourhoods, anchored by their historic buildings. This outstanding planning initiative has led to multiple adaptive reuse projects that combine historic and new architecture.

For information about this year's award nomination process, go to the ACO website at <https://www.acontario.ca/awards.php>

Oct 22-24

Registration opens in early August. The early bird rate (before Sep 22) for full conference is \$250 and includes the gala dinner. The main venue will be the SMSV Banquet facility in Markham.



The 2020 Heritage Ontario Conference will be held in Markham Ontario from October 22-24. The conference theme is "2020 Vision - Clarity for a new Decade." With three streams of concurrent sessions there will be something for everyone. All within the backdrop of a city that has been recognized as the first recipient of both the Prince of Wales Prize (Heritage Canada/ Heritage Trust) and the Ontario Lieutenant Governor's Heritage Award for Community Leadership (125,000+).

www.ontarioheritageconference.ca
ginetteguy@communityheritageontario.ca

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Call for Nominations: ACO Heritage Awards



Every year, ACO's Awards honour and celebrate people working to preserve Ontario's heritage.

Acorn's Fall 2020 issue will focus on the ACO Heritage Awards. There will not be a call for article submissions.

Instead, ACO members and Acorn contributors are encouraged to submit award nominations. For award descriptions and information about submitting a nomination, please visit www.acontario.ca



Mary Webb Cultural and Community Centre

A Heritage and Tourism Success in Highgate, Ontario

by Marlee Robinson

They said it couldn't be done. No matter how rare a building, no matter how enthusiastic the supporters, "they" said the Highgate United Church could not be transformed into a viable cultural and community centre.

In 2008, the majestic Erie Street United Church in nearby Ridgetown was demolished in spite of heroic efforts strongly supported by the ACO. A year later in the nearby hamlet of Highgate — population less than 400 — eight people gathered to begin efforts to prevent the Highgate church from meeting a similar fate.

The group had no funding, no authority and no affiliation with other support groups (although there were several members of the newly-created Chatham-Kent branch of the ACO involved).

Yet by 2010, the group had achieved a viable business plan, a charitable number and basic repairs to the building. In addition, John Rutledge had completed an extensive Preservation Works! report and the building was the subject of a full afternoon session organized by the Ontario Heritage Trust as part of Chatham-Kent's 2010 Ontario Heritage Conference.

The brick church which was the subject of all this effort was designed by local minister The Reverend T. T. George and completed in 1898. Sadly, the church was destroyed by fire but was replicated and re-opened in 1918.

Rutledge described the rare round building as "a Palladian

version of the historic Richardson and Romanesque styles layered with complex cultural meanings. The superimposition of the circle and square form the overall shape of the building's floor plan topped with a triangulated pyramidal roof illustrates how Reverend T. T. George's knowledge of symbols and their meanings created a building that is architecturally powerful and quietly reassuring at the same time." Rutledge continues, "The octagonal stained glass dome, backlit from the roof lantern above, is the centrepiece of the mandala-like geometrically symmetrical wood ceiling of the Upper Sanctuary Level. Highgate's Dome is the crowning achievement of T. T. George's one-of-a-kind architectural gem."

A gem it may be but vital repairs plus compliance with municipal zoning and fire regulations meant challenges. Gradually the roof, furnace, electrical wiring and some plumbing were replaced. A call went out for ways to bring the building up to modern standards. From over a dozen architects' proposals, the group chose Peter Cook's solution — one which involved an addition to the side of the church containing an elevator, all required washrooms plus meeting and storage space.

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photo Marlee Robinson

In the summer of 2019 a ribbon cutting officially opened the extension. The day also celebrated the 101st anniversary of the building of the church and the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Mary Webb Cultural and Community Centre.

During transformation from a church to a community building, the energetic team of volunteers was busy organizing activities which would draw residents and visitors to the destination with music, art, spoken word events, meetings, classes, teas and tours.

In May 2010, the Celtic band Rant Maggie Rant played the inaugural concert at the Mary Webb Centre to a full house. At the same time, an exhibition of photographs by Fanshawe College students drew curious spectators to the centre.

Since then volunteer Musical Director Peter Garapick has scheduled monthly concerts between September and June each year. Artists range from Steven Page (formerly of the Bare Naked Ladies), balladeer John McDermott, east coast folk artist Jimmy Rankin, jazz group Red Hot Rambles and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

Evenings led by Brantford's Poet Laureate John B. Lee and Friends (John was raised in Highgate) and Windsor's Poet Laureate Marty Gervais celebrated authors. A mystery writers' weekend and a poetry writing weekend attracted those who want to "do" as well as "listen." In addition mini lecture series have appeared in the varied schedule.

In the former Sunday school in the lower level, an Art and Artisan Gallery thrives featuring painters, sculptors and carvers from across Chatham-Kent. Highgate's local artists welcome visitors on annual studio tours which feature 15 to 20 different venues. Painting classes, yoga classes, carding sessions and free "tea and tours" keep an eclectic group of people coming to the Mary Webb Centre.

Tourism Destination

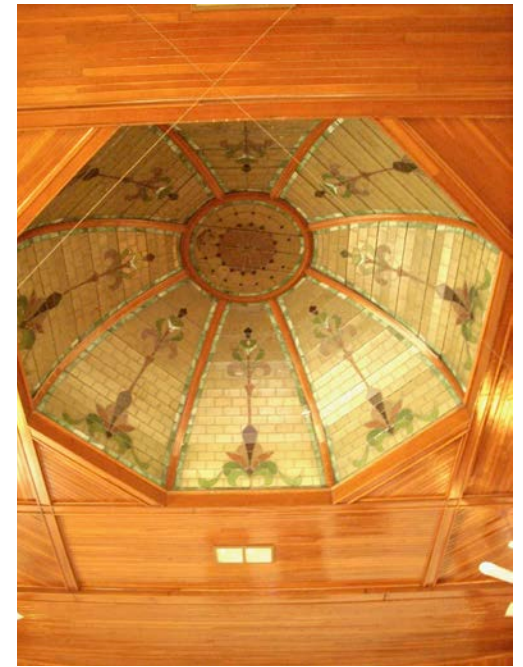
The Mary Webb Centre benefits the wider community, attracting heritage-minded tourists to the area. Chatham-Kent is a travel hub with spokes of the wheel reaching an easy hour or so to Windsor, Detroit, Sarnia and London.

Nearby, visitors can enjoy the Crazy 8 Barn and Gardens — a rare eight-sided barn transformed into a centre for crafts and meals based on local produce. The Ridge House Museum in Ridgetown has been called "one of Ontario's best preserved small house museums." Travellers can explore Petrolia's living museum where the world's oil industry started in the 1850s and contemplate "A Place of Many Grasses" — a sculptural tribute to Tecumseh and all native peoples just east of Thamesville within sight of the 1813 battle where the Shawnee leader was killed.

Visitors might even stay in historic buildings like "The Churchill," an Air B&B in Morpeth's 1877 church, the purpose-built Log Home B&B of the Delaware Nation of Moraviantown or Chatham's award-winning boutique Retro Suites Hotel in a repurposed Victorian building.

At an early concert, an attendee was overheard to say, "If it is at the Mary Webb Centre, you know it is going to be great." The volunteers who continue to run the Mary Webb Centre know that early critics were wrong. Creating a vibrant community centre from an historic church *can* be done. ■

photo Marlee Robinson



2

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Building:
Mary Webb Centre

Location:
87 Main Street West,
Highgate, Ontario

Completion Date:
1918

Expansion:
2019

1 Mary Webb Centre in 2019.

2 Stained-glass dome of Mary Webb Centre.

About the author

Marlee Robinson is a new member of the ACO Executive and Provincial Board. She was a founding member of ACO's Chatham-Kent branch where she served as Vice-President and then President. A dedicated volunteer, Marlee is a member of the Chatham-Kent Tourism Advisory Council and the Art Advisory Committee. She is blessed to be the fifth generation living in the family farmhouse south of Morpeth on the shores of Lake Erie.

Heritage Tourism 101

The who, what, where and why of the importance of heritage to tourism

By Sarah Hill

What is Cultural Heritage Tourism?

Whether by plane, train, or automobile, people today are highly mobile and very motivated to travel. What drives this need to travel? There are too many reasons to count. It could be to visit friends and relatives or it might be to attend a conference. Perhaps it's to be pampered at a spa or to escape the pressures of social media somewhere on a sandy beach. Maybe it's to see a favourite sports team take on their archrivals or it could simply just be for a change of scenery.

Naturally curious, people often travel to learn about, explore, and experience new places, new cultures and new cuisines. This is “cultural heritage tourism” or “heritage tourism” — travel motivated by the specific desire to learn about and experience the arts, culture, heritage, and the special character of a place, of a community of people, or even of one's own ancestral past. Heritage tourists can typically be found visiting museums and heritage sites, going to cultural performances, sightseeing, enjoying historic settings and architecture, participating in Indigenous experiences, and researching their family history, as well as connecting with nature in many of our national and provincial parks.

Why is Heritage Tourism Important to Ontario?

Global tourism has grown exponentially since the end of the Second World War. Canada is a major destination for the world's travellers and, unsurprisingly, tourism is an important contributor to the prosperity of Ontario's economy. Statistics Canada reports that in 2018 Ontario received a record breaking 15.8 million international visitors. Combined with Ontario-based travellers and visitors from the rest of Canada, the Ministry of Heritage, Tourism, Sport and Culture Industries estimates that the province typically receives around 145 million person visits per year. Future forecasts suggest that this number is going to keep growing.

The overall tourism product for Ontario is diverse — offering everything from city breaks, shopping and fine dining, to camping, boating and other outdoor recreation. Heritage tourism is also vital part of the tourism product and a key aspect of what the province uses to market itself as a destination and draw people here for a visit. Last year, the Government of Ontario reported that 12.9 million visitors (9% of all annual visitors) participated in cultural activities in Ontario and spent a total of \$7.7 billion on the trips that brought them to the province in 2016. This makes the heritage tourism market one of the biggest after shopping (15%) and outdoor activities (12%). It's also very valuable.

While heritage tourism activities are often concentrated in larger cities, they also have made a profound contribution

to many of Ontario's small towns and regions. When done in a considered and strategic way, heritage tourism allows for economic diversification away from local industries that might be lagging or underperforming. It can also spark revitalization, bringing in new investment, creating new jobs, and attracting new residents looking for a community with a great sense of place and quality of life.

Who Are These Heritage Tourists and What Do They Want?

Heritage tourists come in all shapes and sizes. Some are constantly immersing themselves in a range of natural, culture and history experiences, while others want to make an authentic connection with the specific community and place they are visiting. Some want to know more about their own personal ancestry and heritage, where others are looking to go beyond their roots to connect more deeply with the history and culture of other people. Whatever the case, these tourists are typically motivated by the inherent benefits they believe culture and heritage travel afford them — unique experiences, lifelong learning, social media status and fun.

In the last decade, our national marketing agency, Destination Canada, has been working to get to know our visitors better and to group them into smaller segments. The result is eight different Explorer Quotient (EQ) profiles that focus on values, preferences and motivations, rather than demographic data like age and household income. Reviewing each EQ profile, we can see that there are four key EQs interested in heritage tourism — Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Cultural History Buffs, and Personal History Explorers. Combined, these four segments represent at least 40% of the total Canadian tourism market. These EQ markets are actively seeking out your heritage experiences and it's worth getting to know them a bit better.

Why is Protecting, Conserving and Investing in Our Heritage Assets Important to Heritage Tourism?

Bottom line, without these assets — authentic architecture and landscapes; walkable and



Embarking from The Muskoka Steamships & Discovery Centre, tourists can select from a variety of cruises including one on Lake Muskoka that highlights heritage summer homes.



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“heritage cycle” philosophy and applies it to the management and development all of their wonderful historic attractions and properties. This philosophy recognizes that if someone is having an enjoyable heritage experience, they’ll want to know more about their heritage. By learning more about their heritage, they’ll begin to value it. If they value their heritage, they’ll be more likely to care for it — either through conservation, volunteering, membership, donation, or advocacy. And, if they care for something, they’re likely to enjoy doing so. This enjoyment will lead them back to engage with their heritage again and thus start the cycle once more.

We must be vigilant though, remembering that motivations, preferences and values are constantly changing. Today, there is a shift occurring and heritage tourism is no longer just about experiences. Destination Canada suggests heritage tourists are seeking a deeper connection with culture through a change in perspective and self-reflection. Visitors are shifting from experiential travel to transformative travel. It is no longer just about what they can do while in Canada, but how Canada can make them feel. How can our cultural heritage organizations, attractions and institutions in Ontario tap into this new preference? ■

i

What type of traveller are you?

Not sure? Take Destination Canada’s quiz to find out: <https://quiz.canada.travel/caen>

- 1 Heritage tourists seek unique cultural experiences. Green Gables in Cavendish, P. E. I. attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the world.
- 2 By learning more about their heritage, community members value it and care for it. Muskoka Lakes Museum, Port Carling, Ontario.

About the author

Sarah Hill is a Senior Consultant at Lord Cultural Resources, the world leader in planning services for museums and cultural organizations. Sarah joined Architectural Conservancy Ontario in 2014 and was elected to the Executive Committee in 2016. As a volunteer, she has served on the strategic planning and ACO Awards committees, as well as through the PreservationWorks! program.

Sources

- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl/en/cv.action?pid=2410000501#timeframe>
- <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/rtp/rtp.shtml>
- <https://news.ontario.ca/mtc/en/2019/05/investing-in-cultural-tourism-across-ontario.html>
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- <https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/206-explorer-quotient-toolkit/toolsexplorerquotienttoolkitaug2017en.pdf>
- Simon Thurley, “Into the Future: Our strategy for 2005-2010,” *Conservation Bulletin* (English Heritage, 2005).

top photo Sarah Hill; bottom photo Liz Lundell

beautiful downtowns; relevant histories and stories to experience; meaningful museums and heritage sites to visit; opportunities to connect with Indigenous culture and ways of life; exciting cultural events or festivals — we would have very little to interest people. There would be little to tempt potential visitors to make a trip, little for them to do once they are here, and little from which they could learn. Think of how dull those holiday photos would be and how easy it would be to forget such a lackluster trip. Think of how disappointed so many of Ontario’s visitors would be if they arrived expecting to participate in dynamic, high-quality cultural heritage activities and to visit beautiful towns, buildings, and landscapes, only to find there were none. Unsatisfied visitors don’t return for a repeat visit and they’re definitely not afraid to share their disappointment online for others to read.

Perhaps more importantly though, if visitors are having a fun and enjoyable experience engaging with our shared Ontario heritage and our stories, we are essentially nurturing members, stewards, advocates, volunteers, and donors for the future. English Heritage is the independent charity that cares for more than 400 historic buildings, monuments and sites in England. The organization recognizes the importance of positive experience in their

Celebrating ACO’s most generous donors

The following people and companies have contributed to ACO’s Provincial Office at the \$500+ level in the past 12 months. We are very grateful for their support.

Future donations will be recognized in the Fall issue of *Acorn*, at the Heritage Awards on October 1, and on the ACO website at acontario.ca.

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1

A Perennial Spring Favourite

ACO London Region hosts annual Geranium Heritage House Tour

By Kelley McKeating

Forty-seven years ago, ACO London's leadership group decided to organize an event that would serve two functions: raise funds and educate the general public about heritage architecture. Thus, the Geranium Heritage House Tour was born. It's still going strong.

Every year on the first Sunday in June, close to 600 people take part in this self-guided walking tour that includes interior tours of eight to ten homes and public buildings. It's a chance for Londoners from all walks of life and all areas of the city to explore a new neighbourhood and learn about its history, streetscapes and architecture.

Potted red geraniums sit out on the sidewalk to mark the "interior tour" homes. In the early years, the tour was known as the Geranium Walk. After 30 or so years of explaining to friends and family that "no, it's not a garden tour," the organizers decided to tweak the name slightly. Geranium Heritage House Tour honours the past, but makes it a bit clearer what the event is about.

Although a number of tourists participate each year, most who purchase tickets are Londoners who are excited to explore a new part of their city. Call it local tourism!

Much effort is put into creating a memorable experience for attendees. The neighbourhood is

selected months in advance, rotating through London's many heritage areas so that each year's tour feels fresh and new. Organizers identify and research suitable homes. A school, church, or library is selected for the starting point of the tour, and one of the neighbourhood churches partners with ACO by setting up a tea room for participants.

The tour booklet is written, edited, and proofed many times over. Although there's discussion of brackets and oriels and cornices and arches, there is also local history including stories about the people who occupied the homes on the tour. The goal is to make architecture — particularly heritage architecture — fun. Booklets from prior years' tours are sold at the ACO exhibit table in the tea room, and they are always popular.

Dozens of volunteers, some ACO members and others from the wider community, help to make the event a success each year. It continues to be ACO London's flagship fundraising event.

This year's Geranium Heritage House Tour takes place on Sunday, June 7, in the Blackfriars neighbourhood just west of downtown London. Tickets will go on sale in local stores and at acolondon.ca on May 1. ■

About the author

Kelley McKeating has been a member of ACO for nearly 25 years. She currently serves as Vice-president of ACO's London Region Branch.

1 195 Elmwood opened for interior visits during London's Geranium Heritage House Tour in 2018.

photo Sylvia Chodas/ACO London Region



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Doors Open Ontario

Ontario Heritage Trust program activates Ontario's communities

By David Leonard

The Ontario Heritage Trust's Doors Open Ontario program works with communities and partners to open the doors, gates and courtyards of the province's most unique and fascinating cultural heritage sites in order to encourage Ontarians to discover the stories inside. From historical houses to modern marvels of construction, the program showcases the buildings, natural spaces, infrastructure and cultural landscapes that shape and define Ontario's communities.

The Trust launched the program in 2002 to create interest, awareness and excitement about Ontario's heritage. Since that time, it has matured and contributes to a double bottom line of both positive economic and cultural development throughout the province. By 2020, the program has developed into a rich network of partnerships — including municipalities and regions, arts and culture groups, and heritage organizations across Ontario — cooperating to deliver free public events that encourage exploration and discovery of each participating community. This combination generates substantial opportunities for community and economic development through cultural tourism.

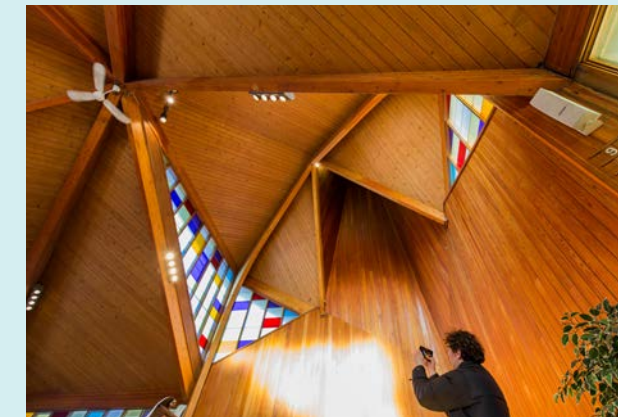
Inspired by European Heritage Days, the Trust has worked since 2002 to activate a province-wide

scope for Doors Open Ontario events. From major cities like Toronto or Ottawa to predominantly rural places such as Dutton Dunwich — and many in between — Ontario's diverse range of people and communities are represented. More than 93 per cent of Ontarians live in a community that has hosted an event since the program was launched. Approximately 500,000 people take part in the program each year, and nearly eight and a half million people have visited events since it began.

Doors Open Ontario is a valuable tool for both the economic and cultural development of communities around Ontario. The program generates more than \$11 million dollars per year — for a total of \$130 million dollars since its first year. While the majority of visitors to each Doors Open event are local, as many as 30 per cent are non-local tourists. Visitors predominantly spend on food and restaurants when they visit Doors Open Ontario events. This activity creates opportunities for convergence with historical downtown commercial areas where many Doors Open Ontario sites are typically concentrated, boosting business for a day or weekend. Beyond economic development, the program also generates cultural benefits, including pride of place, increased capacity in the arts and culture sectors, and discovery of local history and heritage. While these benefits are not as quantifiable as hard dollars spent, they are inseparable from the success the program has experienced.

Each year, the program features 900 to 1,200 individual

photo Courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust



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families in search of interesting and engaging experiences and exciting photo opportunities; reaching Ontarians digitally; and developing innovative programming experiences and events, incorporating places of interest beyond traditional heritage properties.

The Trust relies on its indispensable partners across the province to deliver this program, and on their vast network of volunteers. Without these volunteers, Doors Open Ontario would not be possible. Organizers and day-of volunteers contribute an average of more than 32,000 hours to support Doors Open Ontario annually! In 2019, many communities saw increased — and even record — visitation, and the program is approaching its twentieth year in 2021. We are inspired by the successes of the past 18 years, grateful for the work and partnerships made along the way, and excited to work together to make Ontario open for you to discover through Doors Open Ontario. ■

About the author

David Leonard is the Community Programs Officer and project lead for Doors Open Ontario in the Heritage Programs & Operations Branch at the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

1 Doors Open Ontario generates more than \$11 million dollars each year, combining for a total of \$130 million dollars since it first started in 2002.

2 In 2019 the Trust partnered with Niagara Parks showcasing a particularly exceptional heritage building, the decommissioned Canadian Niagara Power Generating Station in Niagara Falls.

3 Each year, Doors Open Ontario features 900 to 1,200 individual sites throughout Ontario, such as this church in 2018.

sites throughout Ontario. These are not just buildings and not just old ones either, although traditional heritage buildings are the program's treasured foundation. They can be churches or museums – but also craft breweries and local businesses. Sites can be innovative technology start-ups that have adaptively reused heritage buildings in the municipalities' respective cores and given them dynamic new purpose. Sites can also include natural heritage properties, such as trails or conservation areas. They can even be walking tours, telling stories and revealing hidden histories of communities. Each year the Trust and partners explore an interpretive theme. In 2019, the theme of communication saw the doors open to places like film and television studios. In 2020, the theme is environment – which will highlight natural heritage and sustainable development

across Ontario.

Typically, the most popular sites are those that are normally closed to the public. Infrastructure sites of this nature, such as Doors Open Toronto's R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant or the GO Whitby Maintenance Facility, activate a behind-the-scenes enthusiasm that is at the root of much of the program's appeal. One site, if special enough, can even serve as a marquee magnet to attract non-local visitors to a community and encourage knock-on visitation at other participating sites, as the David Dunlap Observatory in Doors Open Richmond Hill did in 2019.

The program continues to evolve, generating

new and exciting formats and attracting new audiences. In October 2019, the Trust partnered with Niagara Parks to offer the first Doors Open Ontario "Feature Event." This event showcased tours of a particularly exceptional heritage building, the decommissioned Canadian Niagara Power Generating Station in Niagara Falls. The spectacular 1905 Romanesque Revival hydroelectric plant had never been opened to the public; 3,000 people leaped at the opportunity to see inside and the event sold out in less than 20 minutes.

The Trust is continuing to search the province for the most exceptional doors not yet opened, to continue to engage new audiences, communities, and partnerships. Doors Open Ontario can continue to see growth by targeting the lucrative GTA-based, day-tripping market with millennials and young

photo Courtesy of Niagara Parks Commission

photo Courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust

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Port Hope's Barn Quilt Trail

Recipient of ACO's Margaret and Nicholas Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Award

By Moya McPhail

An ACORN article first put us on to the idea of the barn quilt tour. We didn't just want to do quilt patterns. As the ACO stands for conservation, restoration and rehabilitation, it was obvious that the relationship of the history of the barns, the families, the land and the produce was going to be the subject of the quilt boards. This meant driving out to the rural area and pinpointing barns that could be seen from the road, not hidden behind wild shrubbery, not falling down or in disrepair, and not too far away, having at least one side wall positioned to showcase a board, and having a surface that didn't need access by way of a barn door or a hay loft. Who knew so many restrictions would apply?

There was the problem of identifying who owned the barn and finding out how to contact them. We had to knock on doors, write letters and search the town registry for names and lots. Then we made phone calls and dropped in on farmers working in the fields. Thankfully, one of our committee members had lived in Port Hope for a long time and knew many of the "old farm families." Of the 44 barn owners we approached, 23 agreed to be part of the project.

In May 2016, our committee proposed a barn quilt trail to the Federal Government for funds set aside to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, but we were turned down. Although the

Municipality of Port Hope agreed to contribute \$14,000 to our project, they could not confirm funding until February of 2017, yet work had to start no later than August. Sponsors were persuaded, and in-kind contributions for materials, posters, brochures, installations and artistic talent were forthcoming. We were relieved to finally hear we had the funding from the Municipality and the work to date had all been worthwhile. Now the boards could be designed and painted.

We chose artists from the local community: Pam Tate who owed her own gallery, Lois Richardson, known for designing and painting sets for the Capitol theatre, and Kathryn McHolm, a quilter and watercolourist. They agreed to spend almost seven months (none of us knew it would take that long) designing and painting the panels. Finding a space that didn't cost much, that was big enough for three artists to work on 4 x 4, 6 x 6 and 8 x 8 foot panels simultaneously on huge tables and the floor, was stressful. It had to be heated over the winter months. Eventually, Ian Angus donated the second floor of the Canton Mill for a

photo Julie Mavis

very nominal fee. Its staircase was just wide enough to get the assembled panels down to the trucks for installation day.

Acrylic paints were purchased at cost and a coat of clear sealer was applied to all but the back of the boards. A local contractor, Steve Henderson, agreed to use his cherry picker to install the boards over a two-week period. A huge poster advertised the tour in the tourist bureau and Cat's Media produced brochures with descriptions of the quilt board patterns, identifications of the architectural style of the barn, family history and a map. Our local ACO website also posted the tour.

We have no count of how many people have taken the tour but we received several comments:

"We are pleased and proud to have such an attractive Barn Board to enhance our barn and reflect some of our family history. We have so enjoyed driving friends around the Trail especially those who are no longer able to drive themselves." Penny Harris

"Wow, what a great experience the barn quilts tour is. I took my family for a Sunday drive and we learned so much history from the rural community. Not to mention all the beautiful fall colours and the great art work in these quilts!" John Appleman

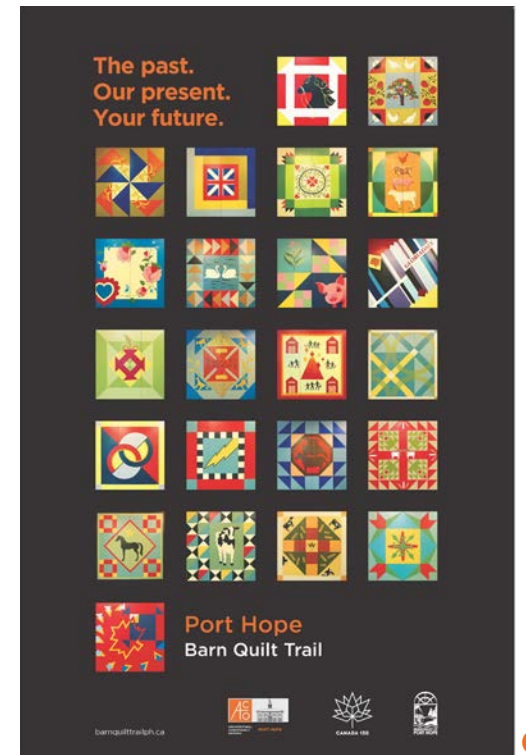
"The Barn Quilt Trail was an innovative way to combine talented artists with a chance to explore our local countryside. We thoroughly enjoyed taking an afternoon to meander through our rolling hills, stopping to read the information about the various artists' inspirations for their designs. It was a wonderful combination in a locale so rich with history... knowing that quilts were often constructed so long ago, in quilting bees, that brought rural women together." Barb Jackson

It's stunning, this Port Hope countryside of ours. We've always been quietly proud of its rolling hills, soft woods and comfortable farms, but suddenly something else, something new, has been thrown into the mix. Identity!

The stories and history that were always there in this countryside but unknown to outsiders have now been crystalized into "quilts," beautifully painted boards, lofted high on the walls of its barns. They record in symbolic form the legacies of past settlers of Dutch, Scottish, English and American origin — with their occupations, traditions and successes, and the use to which the barn was put. There are 23 quilts in all, painted by local artists and two classes of schoolchildren. Visitors who pursue the trail drive between mill pond and ancient mill, cross bustling rivers and thread orchard-flanked lanes. Each sighting provides a little shock of pleasure and excitement as, high on a weathered barn wall, a brilliantly coloured history quilt bears its account of a farmer settler, one of Port Hope's miniature kings and their kingdoms. Not yet the stuff of legend... but perhaps one day." ■

About the author

With a background in teaching and administration, Moya McPhail is a member of Heritage Port Hope, the municipal advisory committee and has served as co-chair for many years. She joined ACO's Port Hope Branch in 1999 and has been a member of the executive for four years. She was co-chair of the Barn Quilt Trail committee which was the recipient of the ACO's Margaret and Nicholas Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Award in 2019.



1 The 1870s Osland barn at 4996 5th Line. The Oslands are direct descendants of the first owner Robert Beggs.

2 ACO Port Hope created a poster and has a website describing the 23 barns with both Interactive and pdf tour maps.

3 The barn at 5249 4th Line. William M. Harris arrived in Port Hope in 1793 as a United Empire Loyalist. The quilt shows the Loyalist flag surrounded by the original log home.

Doon Heritage Village

At the crossroads of tourism and heritage

By Jacob Drung



Although 15 years have passed, I can still remember the scene very vividly. My entire third grade class was bundled up in snowsuits on the bus, feverish with excitement over where we were headed. It was a tradition at the little country school that we attended that before Christmas, the social studies class would visit Doon Heritage Crossroads as a way to investigate pioneer life in Canada. I can still remember trudging through the snow from building to building, passing interpreters bedecked in furs and large wool overcoats riding sleighs as if it were December 1914. The insides of the homes were decorated with traditional garlands and Christmas trees complete with candles and strings of tinsel and popcorn. An orange waited for each of my classmates and me — something we were told that children our age would have seen only at this time of year, a century ago.

This experience is common to many schoolchildren through Waterloo Region and beyond. Visiting a pioneer village seems to be a classic rite-of-passage for children learning about early life in Canada. Doon Pioneer Village, as a part of the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum Complex, is one of the largest and oldest villages of its type in Canada and it has an interesting story. Established as the Ontario Pioneer Community, the village was originally inspired by the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum, a museum in Arnhem with historic Dutch buildings

and staffed by costumed interpreters. Dr. A.E. Broome, a radiologist from Waterloo County, visited the site in 1952 and was struck by the concept, especially as he saw the post-war boom eating up much of Ontario's farmland and historic homesteads. At the same time, both Black Creek and Upper Canada villages were in the planning stages, so Broome lobbied the local governments and historic associations to create an open-air museum like the one he had seen in the Netherlands. Low financial support from the province eventually narrowed the focus from the pioneer experience across the province to life in rural Waterloo County. On June 19, 1957, the village on 43 acres opened with a Waterloo County classic — a barn-raising bee.

The siting of the village is appropriate as it takes up two former farms lots and part of an area known as Cressman's Woods in the Doon area of South Kitchener. Founded around 1800, Doon was first the home of Mennonite settlers and later Scottish immigrants and was an important crossroads. The Huron Road, which linked Guelph with Goderich crossed the Galt-Elmira branch of the Grand Trunk Railway, something noted by Dr. Broome who stated,

“... here where the old stagecoach lines forded the Grand, was the natural point of entry to the western portion of the province for prospective pioneering settlers. This site, at the beginning of the Huron road [leading to all settlements north and west of here], appealed to those of us who were interested in the project, as the natural site for such a museum in Ontario.”

Similar to what occurred at Upper Canada Village, where buildings in the way of the St. Lawrence Seaway were moved in order to preserve them, Doon began to be populated with buildings that were in the way of progress, especially road construction. Due to early budget constraints, the village could not take all of the buildings that were being offered. Today there are more than 22 buildings that include



barns, farmhouses, a village general store, a church, and a fire house. Almost all of these are from Waterloo County, and reflect the Mennonite Georgian architecture prominent in the region during its colonial settlement. A change in management in the 1970s and '80s and increased use by community groups lead to an expansion and re-working of the site, much to what can be seen today.

By 2008, the site had remained much the same for 20 years, but a new regional museum was being built to house some of the collections acquired by the village, and to present stories that were relevant to the history of the region. Opened in 2011, the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum was designed by Moriyama + Teshima Architects and holds over 47,000 square feet of museum, curatorial and community space. It serves as a gateway to the pioneer village and is highly complementary, allowing visitors to gain some background knowledge on the history of the region and the village before their tour. The building has also been hugely successful in hosting many different events from community gatherings to fundraisers and weddings.

While the village still hosts living history programs where visitors are able to take part in live demonstrations, games and the making of historic crafts, it also hosts modern education workshops such as the Waterloo Region Children's Groundwater Festival, aimed at teaching young students about the conservation and use of water in the region. The museum and village are well used and have become a frequently visited attraction, not only because of an interest in a slower, more agricultural way of life, but also because of

the beauty of the site with its structures, both historic and modern. In this way, the museum is perfectly described by the words encoded on its colourful front wall, taken from a speech made by Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier in 1905:

“We do not want, that any individuals should forget the land of their origin or their ancestors. Let them look to the past, but let them also look to the future; let them look to the land of their ancestors, but let them look also to the land of their children.” ■

About the author

Jacob Drung is in his fourth year of study at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture and is currently completing an internship at Hariri Pontarini Architects in Toronto.

1 A historic locomotive with a historic station and farm in the background, signifying the importance of the crossroads, 2011.

2 Christmas in the Village, 2019.

photo Jacob Drung

photo courtesy of the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum



Stratford, Ontario

A national cultural tourism destination

By Jaan Pill

The Stratford Festival began sixty-seven years ago with a suitably spectacular opening performance under a huge theatrical tent, raised at the edge of an impressive park system along the Avon River — populated then as now by swans, ducks, and geese. The Festival has grown to become North America's largest repertory theatre, attracting over 500,000 visitors each year to Stratford.

The story of how the Stratford Festival began at the Festival Theatre on July 13, 1953 — with a stunning evening performance of *Richard III* starring Alec Guinness in the title role — has been frequently told.

In *Fifty Seasons at Stratford* (2002), Robert Cushman describes the moment when the performance ended: “The Canadian response was bemused — but ecstatic. A first-night standing ovation (not the automatic event it is now) lasted five minutes: an eternity in theatre time. Everybody knew that history had been made.”

Richard III, along with the season's second play, *All's Well that Ends Well*, starring Irene Worth, was performed on a thrust stage designed by theatrical designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch, in collaboration with artistic director Tyrone Guthrie, who had previously visited Canada to produce and direct a documentary

drama series (1930-1931) for the Canadian National Railway Radio Department. Initially, the amphitheatre — constructed in parkland next to the historic Stratford Normal School — was covered by a theatrical tent. In 1957, a permanent roof, designed by Toronto architect Robert Fairfield, was installed.

“The design was strikingly original,” John Pettigrew and Jamie Portman observe, regarding Fairfield's task, in *Stratford: The First Thirty Years* (1985). “One of the modern world's few round buildings when it was erected, it was patterned not on any other building but on the tent itself. Fairfield aimed strongly at capturing something of the tent's atmosphere, as can be seen in the use of colour and in the fluted roof capped with coronet and flagpole.”

Fairfield also preserved the centrality of the thrust stage by ensuring the stage's centre pillar would be at the very centre of the new building. The thrust stage design, with the audience seated on three sides, fosters intimacy between actors

and audience, requires minimal scenery, and enables quick and effortless scene changes. With good seats available in a wide arc around the stage, the design also maximizes ticket revenue.

Richard III will be performed again in 2020, starring Colm Feore in the title role, at the Festival's new \$100-million Tom Patterson Theatre. *All's Well that Ends Well*, featuring Jessica B. Hill and Seana McKenna, will also be staged again.

Park system

Tom Patterson, a Toronto journalist who grew up in Stratford, was a key player in the founding of the Festival. Thomas Orr (1870-1957), an insurance broker, also played a strong role by helping save the riverside park system that runs through the heart of Stratford. Many others contributed to making Patterson's dream of a festival a reality.

By the early 1900s, land along the Avon River had been turned into industrial wasteland. Thomas Orr, working with Montreal landscape architect Frederick Todd, arranged for existing parks to be joined together and cleaned up, creating a pastoral scene.

Then along came a proposal by the Canadian Pacific Railway to build a railway along the river. All at once, the park system was under threat. Many residents supported the proposal on grounds it would bring prosperity. Orr argued that keeping the parkland intact made better economic sense. A referendum in 1913 saved the parkland by a margin of 127 votes. Patterson and others have noted that, had the park system been destroyed, the Festival would not have happened.

Adjacent to the parkland, inside which two Festival theatres are located, is an eminently walkable neighbourhood of century-old houses, many featuring Architectural Conservancy Ontario historical plaques. The Festival Area Ratepayers Association works to preserve the neighbourhood, with its luxuriant tree canopy, for future generations.

Four theatres

A music festival was also launched in 1953, in connection with the Shakespearean Festival. Given that the acoustics at the Festival Theatre were not ideal for music, an alternative space in the park system was needed. The city's Casino, which later became the Second Stage and subsequently the Tom Patterson Theatre, became the Festival's concert hall.

Initially there wasn't much for visitors to do when not attending plays. In 1953, a women's organization served visitors meals in church basements. Subsequently, a vibrant restaurant scene has emerged.

In the early sixties, when the Festival began staging musical theatre, it took over the lease at the Avon Theatre, which had opened in 1901. The theatre, with a proscenium stage, had served as a music hall, vaudeville house, and movie theatre until the Festival repurposed it again, back into a theatre.

The Festival rented the theatre each summer starting in 1956 for light operas and bought it in 1963. In 1964, the building was substantially renovated. In 1984, the backstage area was enlarged. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Festival, renovations completed in 2002 included the addition at the rear of the building of the Studio Theatre, the Festival's fourth theatre.

This standard version of the history of the Stratford Festival concludes with the story of repurposing of the Avon Theatre. I owe thanks to the Stratford Festival Archives for assistance in



research. For further reading, especially regarding alternative versions of the story of Stratford, good sources include *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* (2002), edited by Diana Brydon and Irena R. Makaryk; and *Shakespeare and Canada: Remembrance of Ourselves* (2017), edited by Irena R. Makaryk and Kathryn Prince. ■

About the author

A retired elementary teacher and writer who recently moved to Stratford, Jaan Pill has helped to preserve a large school property and several century-old houses in Toronto, as documented at his Preserved Stories website, which also features topics such as “How to prepare a five-minute presentation to the Committee of Adjustment.”

1 The Festival Theatre, designed by architect Robert Fairfield in close consultation with the Stratford Festival board of directors and theatre staff, was awarded the Vincent Massey Gold Medal for Architecture in 1958.

2 The Avon Theatre on Downie Street in downtown Stratford. The Studio Theatre is visible on the right to the rear of the original building.

3 Original model of the Festival thrust stage, a new variant on a centuries-old idea, designed by Tanya Moiseiwitsch in consultation with Tyrone Guthrie, 1953.

photo Jaan Pill, 2019

top photo Jaan Pill, 2019; bottom photo Courtesy of Stratford Festival Archives



Ontario Place Yours to Re-Discover

World Monuments Fund puts Ontario Place on its 2020 Watch List

By Richard Longley

“Ontario Place will be a mirror to yourself, your heritage, your land, your work, your creativity and your tomorrow.” That’s what Ontarians were promised two years before opening day, May 22, 1971. In the fall of 1970, Premier John Robarts gave a speech loaded with cannon balls of optimism: “Let our imaginations soar” . . . “this major new recreational complex for the use of the people of Ontario” . . . “a new focal point for our province” . . . “a new attitude to our lakefronts” . . . “a new showcase for our province and people.”

The product of Robarts’ inspiration might have been built by extraterrestrials. Architect Eb Zeidler’s pods soared over Michael Hough’s artificial islands that looked to Zeidler “[a]s if God had been the landscape genius.” And, for the children of the baby boom, there was Eric McMillan’s Children Village, inspired by the bombed-out buildings that were his playgrounds in the aftermath of the Second World War. His slides, punching bag forest, snake tube and Canada’s first

water park were not as dangerous, but they were wild and adventurous. Zeidler, Hough and McMillan’s merger of nature and technology was so startling, it was likened to “a machine in the garden.”

The Expo ‘67 anthem told Ontarians their province was “A Place to Stand, A Place to Grow.” Dolores Claman’s “Theme from Ontario Place” hammered that message home. Ontario Place made its joy tangible, in its visions of this province’s past, present and possible future — all backed up by IMAX movies in the Cinesphere.

Visitors came from all over the province and beyond to explore Ontario Place but, inevitably, its charms faded. During the 1970s annual attendance peaked at three million; it declined thereafter, while the deficit for its operation rose.

photo Richard Longley



In 1994 the beloved Forum was replaced by the hideously non-Zeidler Molson Amphitheatre, now the Budweiser Stage. Gone were memories of open-air concerts where the cheers and jeers of Argos fans wafted across Lakeshore Boulevard to mingle with the cries of seagulls and the cannon that roared when the TSO played Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*.

Through the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, as well as the demolition of the Forum and the building of the Budweiser Stage, Ontario North Now and Echo Beach, all kinds of life supports for Ontario Place were tried or discussed, to no avail. In 2012 Ontario Place closed and John Tory was commissioned to deliver a new vision for its future. He would make Ontario Place “a new public backyard with venues that amuse and delight” and something new: “an urban waterfront community . . . a live, work, play space with a site for research or an education centre for excellence.”

Tory was praised for opposing a casino and for wanting a new Forum but derided for suggesting that 10 to 15 per cent of the site on the West Island be allocated to residential development and businesses, which would require improved transit if Ontario Place was to be active year-round. Tory’s proposals were nixed by Premier Dalton McGuinty and successor Kathleen Wynne and have not been revived by Premier Doug Ford.

Hostility to Tory’s notion of residential development was ironic. In the 1970 video *Harbour City*, Eb Zeidler proposed a community

of 45-60,000, living in mid-rise, low- and medium-cost housing on reclaimed land between Coronation Park and the Toronto Islands. Two-storey houses, stacked one above the other, would be connected by walkways and canals and protected by a ring of islands that would create 200 acres of new parkland. The front of each house would face inwards, onto community mews and children’s play spaces; their backs would face the water. Houses would be convertible to businesses, interwoven with residences up to nine storeys high.

Jane Jacobs, Canada’s queen of progressive urbanism, swooned at the prospect of Harbour City: “I’d like to live here. . . . This may be the most important advance in city planning that’s been made this century. It shows us what high-density living can be.”

If Harbour City had been built it would have been steps from Ontario Place and, by bike or transit, minutes from downtown. Faster by monorail, faster still, if Robarts’ successor, Bill Davis, had had his way, by introducing magnetic levitation. But Eb Zeidler’s vision would not be realized; Harbour City was relegated, with MagLev, to the attic of technological dreams.

It might have closed in 2012, but in recent years Ontario Place has been far from dormant. In 2017 Trillium Park and the William G. Davis Trail, built in consultation with First Nations, opened on the site of a parking lot. About the same time, the renovated Cinesphere reopened with screenings of *North of Superior*, the giant screen IMAX movie that premiered at the opening of Ontario Place in 1971. In 2017 the Ontario Place Cinesphere and Pods shared with the CN Tower that year’s National Trust for Canada Prix du XXe siècle.

In 2019 there was a Winter Light exhibition of art and sculpture with skating and bonfires and, in the fall, the



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Aurora Winter Festival, Cirque du Soleil's *Alegria* and the Toronto Biennial of Art with J. G. Ballard's prescient *The Drowned World* interpreted in a day-long festival of readings, music and film at the Cinesphere.

Almost a half century after Ontario Place opened, we are living in gloomier, less generous times. John Robarts' vision is replaced by the vision of Jim Ginou, Premier Ford's chair of Ontario Place, who stated on January 6, 2019: "It's disgraceful. Everything is in complete disrepair, there is nothing that can be saved."

On January 18, 2019, the Province's 2014 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for Ontario Place was taken down. On May 28 the Province issued a request for proposals for "Creating a new world-class destination on Toronto's waterfront at the Ontario Place site." Where the former document extolled the architectural, planning and cultural genius that sprang from the collaboration of Zeidler, Hough and McMillan, the latter offers the islands, the pods, and the Cinesphere for redevelopment. Trillium Park is available too, provided any land taken from it is replaced with parkland elsewhere on the site. Casinos are not mentioned but residential uses are excluded. The Budweiser Stage is the only structure protected.

If Ontarians remain enchanted by Ontario Place, or want to be re-enchanted by it, how will we resuscitate it? That question, simmering since 2012, erupted in 2019 in the face of an existential threat to the site. At "Rally Round Ontario Place" at Metro Hall, planner Ken Greenberg recalled Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's promise of "Walks and Gardens" along the Toronto lakefront. He reminded his overflow audience that in great cities, planning, architecture,

parcs and access to nature have economic value. But we must beware of "big bang" proposals that create "world-class" attractions that are bound to fail. One big bang proposal that was applauded, though, was for a version of Kingston's Gord Edgar Downie Pier at Ontario Place, where the lake water is the cleanest in the city.

At "Ontario Place: Building on our Legacy" hosted by Architectural Conservancy Ontario and the Ontario Association of Architects, Michael McClelland, of ERA Architects, told another overflow audience that "The magic of Ontario Place is being by the water; it doesn't need a lot more, but it needs access." He would expand the TTC loop so it circles Exhibition Place and pauses close to Ontario Place.

Architect George Baird looked to the pods, where "the content was always a little undercooked." They might be spaces for artists, live-work spaces, cafés and restaurants, businesses, a museum of the city or for the Mississaugas, whose former Chief, Carolyn King, insisted that, whatever happens, Ontario Place must maintain free and open access to Lake Ontario for all Ontarians.

In November 2019 Bill Greaves, Chair of ACO's Ontario Place Sub-Committee, successfully promoted the inclusion of Ontario Place on the World Monuments Fund 2020 Watch List, which "brings international attention to the site and opens the door to a share of \$1.6 million US in funding for conservation initiatives." The amount would be only a fraction of what would be needed for full restoration, so how to inject new life into Ontario Place that preserves its structure, its environment, its vision and its optimism and makes it economically viable, year-round? That question remains airborne but there are idealists without illusions who are striving to answer it.

On December 10, 2019, Bill Greaves attended a reception at Queen's Park organized by the Ontario Association of Architects. MPPs were invited to name their favourite building in their ridings; 40 responded. Chris Glover (NDP Spadina-Fort York) identified Ontario Place. OAA then chose eight sites to highlight, including Ontario Place. Boards were produced for each and MPPs invited to view them. It was a great event, a reminder to MPPs that architecture matters, in the province and in their ridings.

Architectural Conservancy Ontario has applied to the Getty Foundation's Keeping it Modern (KIM) program for \$200,000 US to support the development of a Conservation Management Plan for Ontario Place. The application has been shortlisted with a final decision later this year. One suggestion is that a Conservation Management Plan might be modelled in part on the plan developed for the Sydney Opera House, another iconic waterfront structure.

On January 13, 2020, Toronto City Planning

photos Richard Longley



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revealed its "Next Place – Exhibition Place: Master Plan strategies for Exhibition Place." When it's not hosting major events, Exhibition Place is desolate. Its vast parking lots are too far from the core to be of much use to commuters. The same is true for Ontario Place parking.

Next Place would soften those parking lot deserts by burying part of them underground and turning much of the rest into "flexible hardscaped open space." There would be more green space and a green roof over the Coliseum, the Horse Palace and the Food Building. And, crucially, access would be improved. "Gateways" would be built over the tracks between Exhibition Place and Liberty Village and over Lakeshore Boulevard to Ontario Place — canopy bridges so broad the connection between the two places and Liberty Village would be practically seamless. With these connections to tens of thousands of people who live near them, Exhibition Place and Ontario Place might be able to remain open year-round with no need for residences in order for businesses to thrive. Think of the Distillery. Nobody lives there, but thousands live in its district and it booms. With or without residents on their sites, Ontario Place and Exhibition Place need to be active 24/7/365, if extending Doug Ford's Ontario Line into them is to make economic sense.

The deadline for the provincial government's call for proposals for "creating a new vision" at Ontario Place was last September, but we've heard nothing yet. Rumour is that the proposals received have ignited no fires, which might not be a bad thing. When the first design for a new Toronto City Hall was adopted there was outrage; rejection of that design led to the international design competition that gave us the City Hall we have today.

In his 2012 study, John Tory proposed that Ontario Place become, among other things, a science hub. The same has been proposed for Next Place. Science and hi-tech industry are vigorous drivers of the economy. Might there be a home for them, with art, design and innovation in the heart of what could be again the world's most stimulating urban playground — in a park on the shore of Lake Ontario that is sacred to First

Nations? That's a dazzling prospect and a tall order. Revitalization through scitech is only part of the huge potential of Ontario Place.

It would be a shame to lose that potential, to degrade it or destroy it. Almost 50 years after it opened, Ontario Place remains ours to discover — or re-discover. Ours to be open for business by injecting it with the lifeblood of imagination. ■

About the author

Richard Longley has been a member of ACO for 15 years and was president from 2013 to 2015. Richard has continued an annual update of ACO's summary of conservation efforts, "Interventions to Protect." Since 2015, when he photographed the demolition of Stollery's art deco men's clothing store, he has written about city architecture and history for NOW Magazine.

1 Ontario Place in Toronto opened in May 1971. Architect Eb Zeidler's pods soared over Michael Hough's artificial islands.

2 In November 2017 the renovated IMAX Cinesphere reopened. It now has a regular schedule of weekend showings.

3 "The magic of Ontario Place is being by the water; it doesn't need a lot more, but it needs access," says Michael McClelland of ERA Architects.

4 The third annual Winter Light Exhibition on the West Island took place on weekends from February 8 to March 29, 2020.

5 ACO has applied to the Getty Foundation's Keeping it Modern program for funding to support the development of a Conservation Management Plan for Ontario Place.

Lights, Camera, Action!

Cambridge is ready for its close-up

By Marilyn Scott

The red-cloaked handmaids advance in a ceremonial procession across it, and after the executions, bodies hang from it as a warning to others. Double agents have been shot and tumbled off it into the dark waters below. A boy races across it in his attempt to win the marathon. The police detective and his new bride, astride a horse, gallop off across it from their wedding ceremony to solve the latest crime. The Main Street Bridge — the “it” in these descriptions — is real.

You can stroll across it and stare into the Grand River, glance across to Queen’s Square in one direction, and Main Street Heritage Conservation District in the other. But the reality of it jostles with the realm of the imagination. Magic is created here and visitors are coming to Cambridge to see firsthand how and where that magic happens.

The distinctive arched bridge has featured prominently not only in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, but also in *Designated Survivor*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Saint Ralph*, and *Guardians*, among others. And the bridge is not the only one of Cambridge’s unique heritage assets to have caught the eye of location scouts and film companies.

“Plenty of other communities have lost their heritage architecture,” says Devon Hogue, Business Information Officer at the city’s Economic Development Division. “We still have the advantage here of retaining our heritage buildings and streetscapes, and film companies want to include — to even highlight — these settings. When you see your own community through others’ eyes, it’s an amazing feeling”.

The Handmaid’s Tale television series, based on Margaret Atwood’s 1985 bestseller, is having a moment. The series has been aired around the world, and recently, Lisa Mahoney, a native of Cambridge who now lives in Brisbane, Australia, overheard her work colleagues enthusing about the beautiful settings they’d seen. She quickly realized they were discussing not just Canada, not just her hometown, but the very neighbourhood she had once worked in. They were discussing Gilead.

The Handmaid’s production company has taken advantage of many of Cambridge’s freely accessible heritage districts



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for filming the series, including the Cambridge Farmers’ Market building (Acorn, Spring 2016), Queen’s Square (Acorn, Spring 2017) and Mill Race Park (Acorn, Spring 2018). All of these sites are steeped in history and each is a destination in its own right.

Tourism has trends just like other activities. Some people head to a sandy beach, a snow-packed slope, or a floating city. The heritage tourist focuses on the past, and travels through time by visiting historic sites and attractions.

“They’ll drive miles,” notes Jeanette Mahoney, Visitor Services Supervisor at the Cambridge Visitor Information Centre. Movies, television series, music videos, and commercials have all been filmed at various locations throughout the city. As a result of this exposure, tourists are coming to experience the filmmaking as it happens, or are on a quest to visit the sites they’ve seen on television or at the movies.

“Most of our visitors are from Ontario, but we certainly get calls from further afield” says Mahoney. She invites people to explore the wide variety of filming sites and notes that it’s because of the heritage look and feel that the three core communities of Galt, Preston, and Hespeler attract filming, which in turn attracts sightseers.

When the settings are off-limits for filming, spectators — locals and tourists alike — stand transfixed by the storytelling being created right in front of them.

Hogue knows from her research that film tourism “is huge.” In the first few weeks of 2020, she’s already fielded seven inquiries from production companies, and anticipates a very busy filming year. These inquiries have grown from 25 in 2015 to 75 in 2019, which resulted in 68 days of filming. She says it’s because of word

photo Devon Hogue



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of mouth within the film industry that Cambridge’s heritage assets and picturesque vistas, especially the Grand River valley, are a major draw.

Both Hogue and Mahoney are enthusiastic promoters of the city’s online interactive map which is a useful tool for fans to check out the cast and crew photos plus filming locations.

Cambridge’s retail and service industries, as well as churches, high schools, and whole neighbourhoods are benefitting from the influx of the actors, film crews, and tourists. Reids Chocolate, Candy & Nut Shop, which closed for a full week, was the filming location for the TV movie, *The Magical Christmas Shoes*. The writers did not disguise the local landmark, but adapted the script and actually used the family-owned business name and packaging. Brenda Kemp, General Manager of Reids notes that “the widespread exposure made up for the interruption of business.”

Monigram Coffee Roasters, one of several popular coffee hubs in the heritage cores, has also made an onscreen appearance. Monica Braun, co-owner has noted that as well as curious locals, some of the cast and crew return after filming wraps up. In her view “they’re tourists too!”

Cambridge’s city-wide preserved heritage reinforces the direct link to the community’s ability to attract film companies, which attracts tourists, which attracts economic prosperity.

It’s a wrap. ■

About the author

Marilyn Scott is a member of ACO Cambridge & North Dumfries (formerly Heritage Cambridge), and a former board member. She would like to thank the staff at the City of Cambridge and Cambridge Visitor Information Centre, and local residents for their assistance with research and firsthand accounts.

- 1 The distinctive Main Street Bridge across the Grand River is just one of Cambridge’s heritage assets to have caught the eye of location scouts and film companies.
- 2 Tourists catch glimpses of the cast of *The Handmaid’s Tale* between scenes.
- 3 Whole neighbourhoods are benefitting from the influx of actors, film crews, and tourists.

right photo Brian Rodnick; left photo Devon Hogue



3

i Anyone can subscribe to News and Public Notices for the latest on filming, the schedules, and how that affects travel around the city. Filming notifications are posted on the City of Cambridge’s website.

City of Cambridge News and Public Notices:
<https://www.investcambridge.ca/Modules/News/search.aspx?FeedId=8939c84b-5f00-4059-9b7b-280a67d3a43a#pageHeading>

City of Cambridge Interactive Map All projects:
<https://cityofcambridge.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Shortlist/index.html?appid=9c95090c8eb54736a24719c03153d2ca>

City of Cambridge Interactive Map – Handmaid’s Tale:
<https://cityofcambridge.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Shortlist/index.html?appid=cdc3cfc4f3e942598a50281ba1b71b73>

<https://www.investcambridge.ca/Modules/News/search.aspx?FeedId=8939c84b-5f00-4059-9b7b-280a67d3a43a#pageHeading>

Cambridge Visitor Information Centre
<http://www.visitcambridgeontario.com/Filming-in-Cambridge.htm>

Idea Exchange: Filmed in Cambridge
<https://ideaexchange.org/reading/booklist/filmed-cambridge>

Idea Exchange: Hollywood at Home
<https://ideaexchange.org/reading/idea/hollywood-home>

A sample of the productions filmed throughout Cambridge

October Faction	Silent Hill: Revelation (2012)
The Queen’s Gambit	State Like Sleep
The Handmaid’s Tale	Terrific Trucks Save Christmas (Nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award)
Designated Survivor	Between
Murdoch Mysteries	Silent Hill 2
American Gods	Red
11/22/63 (Stephen King mini-series)	Heroes Reborn
In the Dark	12 Monkeys
Frankie Drake Mysteries	V-Wars
Flatliners (2017 remake)	Cold Creek Manor
The Magical Christmas Shoes	The In-Laws

A Taste of Niagara Heritage Tourism

Three destinations in one of Ontario's most scenic and historic districts

The Niagara Region is blessed with a micro-climate that is ideally suited to viticulture and tender fruit growing. With its diverse culinary and artistic scene, the peninsula has become a popular weekend “wine country” destination. Perhaps even more importantly, though, the heritage and cultural diversity of Niagara are well-known and they form the basis of the region's sustainable tourism activities.

The three articles that follow reflect the lively and enduring centuries-old tradition of place-making and storytelling that sustain Niagara's historic landscape and its protected places. In Niagara, we learn about an enriching architectural heritage, the biotic and cultural significance of the UNESCO-designated Niagara Escarpment, and the thoughtful intercultural dialogue of its memorial landscape. Together, these places invite visitors and residents to appreciate our shared past and collective future, to revisit favourite sites and to discover new ones.

The John Brown House: Reviving a spirit of place

By Brian K. Narhi

The settlement of the Niagara area commenced immediately following the American Revolutionary War, when men who served in Butler's Rangers and other Loyalist American provincial corps sought refuge, along with their families, at Fort Niagara. These people primarily hailed from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Mohawk Valley region of New York State.

In 1784, the British government purchased much of the land within the peninsula from the Mississauga people with a view towards Loyalist resettlement. A number of townships were laid out in 1788-89. Land grants were issued to prospective settlers who cleared farms, raised families and prospered despite setbacks such as the “Hungry Year” in 1787-88 and the vicissitudes of the War of 1812. Descendants of these early settlers still live in the region and are proud of the contributions which their ancestors made to this province.

One of the Loyalist families that settled in Niagara was that of John Brown (1740-1804). The Brown family (formerly Braun) formed part of the Palatine German migration to upstate New York in 1710. They settled near Schoharie, where



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John — the fourth child of Adam and Anna Eva (Freymeyer) Brown — was born.

John was married to Magdalena Zeh in May 1770, and they raised a family of eight children. John retained his loyalty to the British Crown, and served as a private in Capt. Lewis Genevay's Company in Butler's Rangers between 1781 and 1783. John was at Niagara with his family by 1783, and named in 1784 in a list of men who intended to cultivate lands “opposite [Fort] Niagara.” By 1787, John had cleared six acres (2.4 ha) and planted four acres of wheat (1.6 ha.) He was eventually granted 900 acres of land (364 ha) in Thorold, Pelham, and Louth Townships, given to him partly due to his military services, but also as compensation for lands confiscated in the state of New York.

During the 1790s, John began construction of a house at what is now 1317 Pelham Road, St. Catharines, on the south-east corner of Lot 3 Concession 8 in Louth. The erection of a permanent dwelling was a requirement for every settler before a land patent could be granted. The one-and-a-half storey structure was built out of local limestone. Measuring 18 by 24 feet (5.4 x 7.3 m), it consisted of a single main floor

photo Courtesy John Brown Heritage Foundation



room and fireplace with bake oven, and an overhead loft with a small fireplace. This is the rear kitchen wing of the present house. Completed by 1796, Brown obtained his land patent in March 1797.

Around 1802, Brown began construction on the front portion of the present house, which faces Pelham Road, then part of the old Queenston-Grimsby Road. It is a two storey, five-bay, Loyalist Georgian style limestone structure. It is similar in design to the Upper House at Allanburg, and the nearby DeCew house which was burned in 1950.

The house contains a centre hall, with a dining room and front parlour on either side. The parlour served as a barroom when the site was a tavern and inn during the early nineteenth century. It features a restored bird-cage bar, mid-Victorian mouldings, cornices, fireplace and other period details. The dining room contains a fireplace and bears traces of the original stencilling. The second floor is accessed by the original black walnut staircase, and contains bedrooms and a ballroom. The house has a full attic and basement, original oak flooring, five fireplaces and the kitchen hearth. Outdoors, there are a brick smokehouse and dairy added during the nineteenth century.

This house was inherited by Adam Brown and sold to Joseph Chellew in 1858. In 1902, Lafontaine B. Powers bought the property, and Jon Jouppien became owner in 1979. The property remained a working farm for more than 180 years. Parts of the house were renovated by Jouppien, and in the 1990s he transported the circa 1817 John Norton log cabin to the site. The property was acquired by the John Brown

photos Brian Narhi



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Heritage Foundation in 2015. [For more about John Norton, *Teyoninhokarawen*, see “Landscape of Nations, Queenston Heights,” Fall 2017]. The property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The John Brown Heritage Foundation is headed by Andrew and Jennifer Humeniuk, a gracious and affable couple, who have undertaken restoration work anew. Their love of the house is understandable, since Andrew is a direct descendant of the original builder.

Part of the JBHF mission statement is to “preserve and maintain significant heritage buildings and sites,” because “heritage sites reach their full potential when they are vibrant community spaces that nurture a growing passion for learning.” The directors of the JBHF envision that this site will become a living, hands-on museum, a historical-genealogical research centre, an education venue and community space. Architectural elements have been salvaged from local heritage buildings and they will be incorporated into the site. The house hosted more than 800 visitors during Doors Open in 2017, and is now open for tours by appointment. To plan a visit, and to learn how to get involved, please visit jbhf.ca. ■



Morningstar Mill and Decew Generating Station 1

By Carla Mackie

Morningstar Mill is located in the southwest corner of St. Catharines at Decew Falls, which is one of the most beautiful falls along the Niagara Escarpment. The rural industrial heritage site is owned by the City of St. Catharines and operated in partnership with the Friends of Morningstar Mill. It features a working gristmill built in 1872, the restored home and collection of the Morningstar family, and a spectacular view of Decew Falls. The site also provides access to the Laura Secord Legacy and Bruce Trails which connect to the Niagara Escarpment and follow the Beaver Dams Creek Gorge to the Twelve Mill Creek Valley to the base of Canada's first power generation plant.

Wilson and Emma Morningstar purchased the property at Decew Falls in 1883. They raised a family in a self-sufficient farm household, and Wilson's small, water-powered mills produced flour, animal feed, apple cider and lumber up until 1933. Wilson also maintained a blacksmith and carpentry shop for custom manufacturing and repair.

When the gristmill was built in 1872, it was outfitted with a modern turbine. Turbines had replaced waterwheels as a power system by the 1850s. With respect to size, cost, efficiency and operating characteristics, turbines represented a marked advancement over the best traditional waterwheels. They also cleared the way for the age of hydroelectricity.

The gristmill's turbine is located at the bottom of a 40-foot pit which had been blasted out of solid rock beside the falls. A stone dam constructed across the creek that ran beside the mill formed a millpond, and an iron pipe directed a steady flow of water from the millpond to the turbine. Water flowing through the turbine set the machinery inside the mill into motion.

In the mid-1890s, the Cataract Power Company of Hamilton (now Ontario Power Generation) purchased the property one kilometre northeast of Morningstar Mill. The Morningstar's new neighbours began building Decew Generating Station 1. The massive infrastructure project included con-

structing a powerhouse, creating power canals and reservoirs, and transporting and installing equipment. A transmission line was built from St. Catharines to Hamilton. At 56 kilometres, it was the longest transmission of electricity in Canada, and the second longest in the world. When the power was switched on in 1898, Hamilton proudly became Canada's premier "Electric City."

Wilson, a do-it-yourselfer, adapted quickly to this new technology. He connected a small generator to his turbine and produced his own electricity for lighting from the early 1900s until 1914 when the St. Catharines Public Utility Commission began distributing electrical power. Wilson's daughter, Jessie, wrote that her father "wired the house and mill himself... he would turn the generator on at dusk and off when he went to bed at night!"

The Morningstars were interested in the construction project on the property behind them. Photographs and glass negatives in the Mill's collection include the site under construction, the horse-drawn delivery of a generator and the interior of the powerhouse. They also have personal connections to the Decew Plant. In 1911, Wilson and Emma's daughter Nora married David Robson, who would become Chief Operator of the Decew Plant under Ontario Hydro. They lived with Wilson and Emma until 1920 when they purchased a home in Power Glen.

The objects in the Mill's collection reveal working conditions and other day-to-day activities at the Decew Plant. The Morningstars all had passes to the "Power Station and Grounds." Donald Robson, Wilson and Emma's grandson,

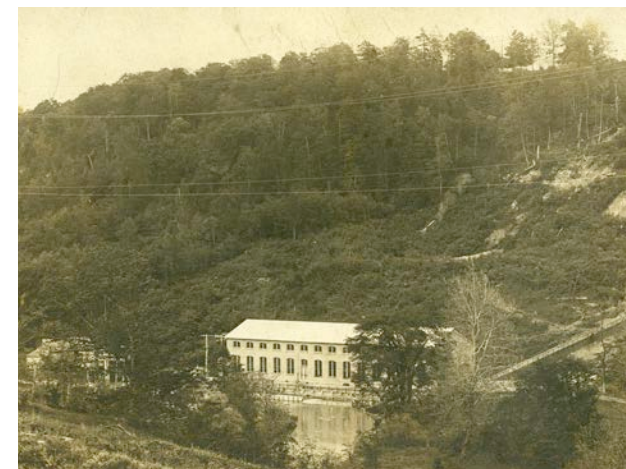


photo Carla Mackie

top photo Carla Mackie; bottom photo St. Catharines Museum F1998.44279

A Place for Reconciliation: The First Nations Peace Monument at Decew Park

By Gail Benjafield

Douglas Cardinal is one of the most renowned and celebrated Indigenous architects in Canada. From large centennial projects to Prairie architecture, Cardinal's works share a cultural sensitivity and a sense of engaging with the earth. Whether the powerful Canadian Museum of History near Ottawa, Washington DC's National Museum of the Indian, or Indigenous schools and churches in Northwest Canada — each design explores a spectrum of cultural and geographic references.¹

Cardinal's most recent project is the First Nations Peace Monument in Decew Park, Thorold. This small, curving monument invites people to reflect on the history of its place. Cardinal said at the opening ceremony that the "circle brings people together" and honours both the earth and the matrilineal society of Indigenous peoples.²

During the War of 1812, Laura Secord brought notice of the American troops' incursion into Niagara to the Decew House on this site. First Nations peoples played a large part in this moment in history.

There has been much mythologizing of the War of 1812 over the past 200 years. Older histories focus on Laura Secord's famous walk to inform the British of approaching American troops, a walk during which Indigenous people are said to have assisted. The late respected local historian Alun Hughes was a lead hand in deciphering the route Secord actually took.³ Historians still dispute whether the arrival of Secord and Indigenous warriors was coincident. While Secord did arrive at the Decew House on June 22, 1813, native warriors may have already alerted General Fitzgibbon to the approaching American troops. In order to understand the deeper meaning of this monument we must first recognize that without the Indigenous warriors, our nation would not have won the Battle of Beaver Dams two days later and we would simply not be the nation we are today.

The First Nations Peace Monument is anything but majestic or flamboyant. 'Peace' is the focal term here. The curving interior features two wampum belts inscribed to reflect the joint forces that galvanized the rout of American forces and peace among the five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy and the Crown. A seating area is located within the curvilinear form and it is set near a stream flowing between Lakes Gibson and Moodie. Both tourists and locals



About the authors

Brian Narhi was born and raised in St. Catharines. Following a BA at Brock, and MA at the University of Toronto, he completed all but the dissertation in the doctoral program at U of T. He is chair of the St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee, co-chair of the city's Heritage Permits Advisory Committee and has published a number of articles.

Carla Mackie is Historical Services Co-ordinator for the City of St. Catharines.

Gail Benjafield is a librarian, local history writer, and board member of both the Historical Society of St. Catharines and St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee. She is a member of ACO.

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Morningstar Mill: Planning your visit

2020 Milling Dates: May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17
Milling takes place between 11 am – 1pm. Please note that milling is dependent on having an adequate water flow. For additional information visit the Mill's facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/morningstar.mill>

- 1 John Brown started construction on his home during the 1790s. Now located at 1317 Pelham Road, St. Catharines, the site hosted more than 800 visitors during Doors Open in 2017.
- 2 The front facade of the 1802 addition, looking south towards Pelham Road.
- 3 Original interior door and lock hardware of the 1802 wing.
- 4 The Morningstar Mill is one of the few mills in Ontario that houses all of its original equipment and operates its millstones using the original water source.
- 5 Morningstar Mill in 2019.
- 6 Decew Generating Station 1 circa 1900.
- 7 The First Nations Peace Monument, Decew Park, 2350 Decew Road in Thorold.

¹ Lam, E., and G. Livesay, eds. *Canadian Modern Architecture*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2019. p. 124.

² First Nations Peace Monument Opening. Retrieved from <https://www.friendsoflaurasecord.com/2017/10/07/first-nations-peace-monument/>

³ Hughes, A. *History Made in Niagara*. Elbow Island Publishers, 2019.



Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site

Where storytelling and life intersect

By Shannon Kyles

“Is this the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war?” Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said when meeting Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1862.

The reader's reaction to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was, and indeed is, visceral. It surpasses intelligence and touches that part of humanity where right and wrong are locked in an eternal altercation. These feelings take on a much finer focus when you visit Dresden, Ontario and walk into the house where the family on whom the fictional Uncle Tom account was based, actually lived. Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, owned and operated by the Ontario Heritage Trust, commemorates a remarkable story of the fight against slavery.

When it comes to good storytelling, there are several periods in recent history that are almost guaranteed to provide enough raw material for

a good saga. The First and Second World Wars, the Irish potato famine, the colonization of any number of countries or peoples, and the issue of slavery — all provide a backdrop around which a touching tale can be spun. Why people need to be reminded of the full range of human cruelty is anyone's guess, but there is no doubt that many a good and worthy soul likes to be brought to the verge of tears by the suffering of one group of people at the hands of another. A smattering of unexpected kindness is necessary both to create a balance and to reassure the reader that, while there are monsters among us, there are also angels.

Uncle Tom's Cabin is a story that has all of the necessary components. A black slave family in Kentucky is in service to a relatively benevolent family. They and other slave families within the household are treated respectfully, but are nonetheless subjected to the prevalent laws and customs. Financial difficulties cause complications for the slave owners which result in separations within the slave families. A menagerie of illnesses, betrayals, late night escapades,

visit the Decew House foundations, sit quietly in Cardinal's monument, wander over to the steam, and find serenity and healing in this peaceful space.

The Friends of Laura Secord, a volunteer group, hold annual fundraising walks along the Secord trails. Their president, Caroline McCormack, is a direct descendant of Laura Secord. *The Friends* worked with Tim Johnson, a Mohawk and former executive director of the Smithsonian National Museum of the Indian, and Johnson approached and engaged Douglas Cardinal to create this small but powerful monument.

October 2017 saw the official opening ceremony of the First Nations Peace Monument attended by dignitaries including Ontario's Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Douglas Cardinal, and representatives from the local Indigenous community. This remarkable monument invites people to reflect on the history established here for all Canadians, and, importantly, for the First Nations of our land. ■

and calamities culminate in the destruction of some families and the liberation of others. Each aspect of the melodrama — the cruelty, the anguish, the religious devotion, the horrific treatment of people, and the improbable reunions that carry the narrative forward — is taken from real life. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1852, was one of the most shocking and disturbing books I have ever read. I highly recommend it.

The central inspiration for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the diary of Josiah Henson, a slave who escaped from a tobacco farm in Maryland to find safety in Upper Canada. The published accounts of Henson and the verbal accounts of many others who escaped slavery became the content of the book. Henson is the central character. In essence, he is Uncle Tom.

Uncle Tom's story is extraordinary. Perhaps more riveting, however, is what happened as a result of the book. Stowe's insightful account of both the slaves and the slave owners created an unprecedented trigger for change. As one commentator of the day noted, the novel "had given birth to a horror against slavery in the Northern mind which all the politicians could never have created." It is not an exaggeration to say that this book was the catalyst in America for the end of slavery.

Uncle Tom's house is one of many restored buildings in the Dawn Settlement just outside Dresden, Ontario. It is a simple Georgian home with a clapboard exterior. There are sash windows, well-proportioned trim, and a generous front porch. The Information Center provides a comprehensive picture of the settlement that Josiah Henson and his colleagues built. The



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focus was on providing schooling in the industrial arts to build a skill set that could allow escaped slaves to become self-sufficient. The settlement was a success. Many descendants of the original settlement still live and work in the area.

The North American concept of slavery is generally limited to the white colonials being the masters and the Africans being the slaves. While in the North American context this is largely true, the story of the exploitation of one set of people by another is universal. Within a large cupboard in the Information Center are drawer after drawer of translations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Books in Farsi, Japanese, Russian, French, Italian and other languages, along with letters and cards from all over the globe arrive in the Dawn Settlement Museum. The story of the victory of the underdog, the triumph of good over evil, has a global appeal.

The story does not end here. About 40 kilometres to the south is the museum complex of the Elgin Settlement in Buxton. This was one of the final stops on the Underground Railroad. Within a pastoral setting sits a charming gable-fronted, one-room school with Picturesque castellation on the front porch. The Elgin Mission School is in pristine condition. Inside you learn how the founder Reverend William King ran the school so efficiently and with such enthusiasm that the students achieved marks far in excess of many of the surrounding white schools. The entirely black student body gained a reputation for quality education to the point where local white families petitioned to have their own children attend.

Walking out of the school by the front door, facing due south, you get the urge to scream at the top of your lungs to all the lingering smudges of evil, the shadows and spectres of the age of slavery: "You see? You [add your own expletive]! See what kind of people you were repressing with your filthy greed?"

The successful establishment of a significant black population in Chatham-Kent is the kind of uplifting story that makes the drive along the beautiful north shore of Lake Erie even more magical. I might just do it again soon. ■

About the author

Shannon Kyles taught History of Architecture at Mohawk College for 25 years. She conceived and created the website www.ontarioarchitecture.com and writes for various periodicals. She is a Director of the ACO Board and a member of the Executive.

1 Josiah Henson escaped slavery with his wife and four children. The Hensons lived in this house at the Dawn Settlement later in life.

2 The Pioneer Church, circa 1850, houses the organ and pulpit from the church where Reverend Henson preached in Dresden, Ontario.

3 North Buxton School built in 1861.

photos Shannon Kyles, 2019

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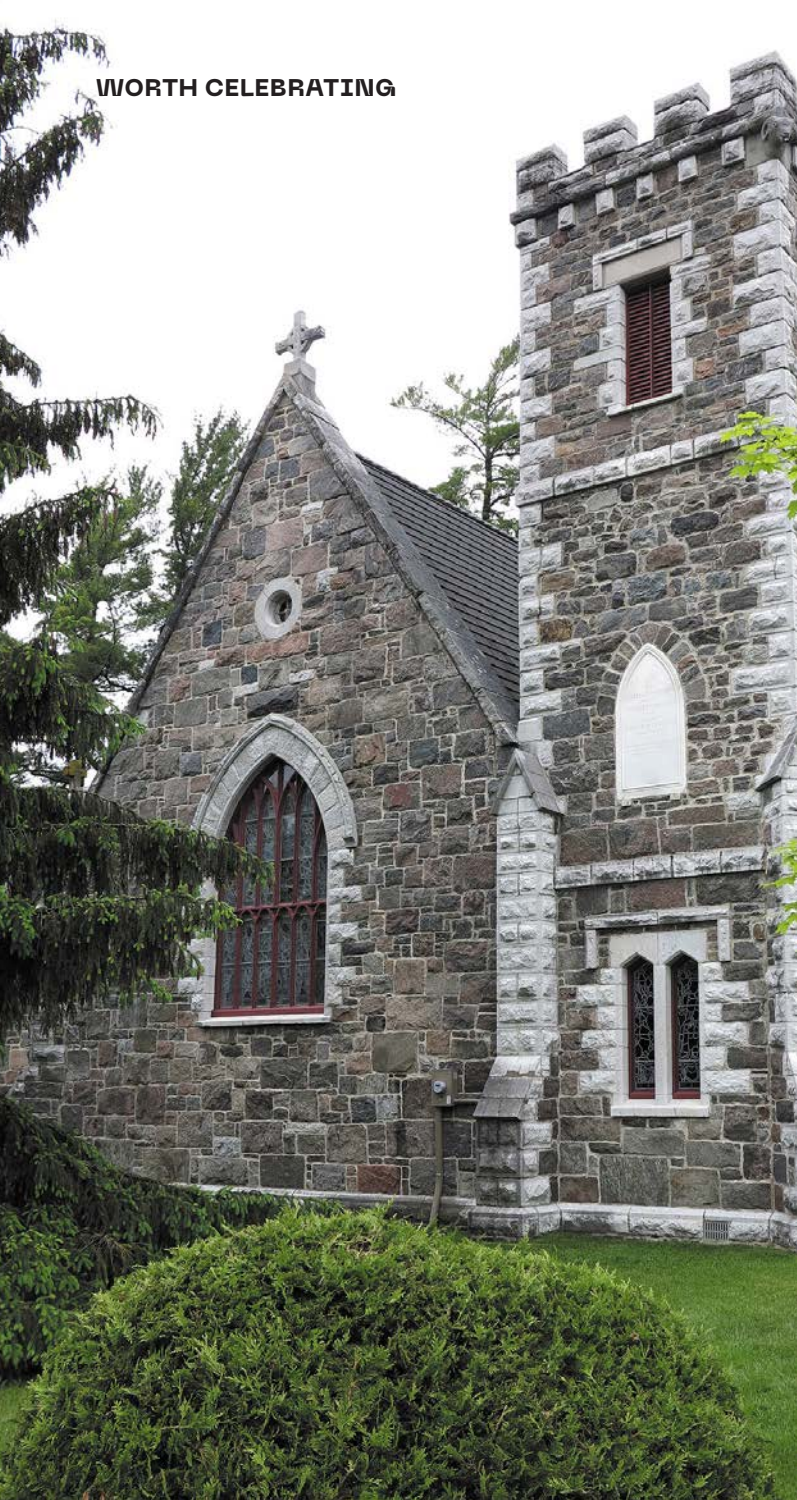
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St. George's Anglican Church

Beloved church on the shores of Lake Simcoe

The Sibbald Memorial St. George's Anglican Church is a neo-Gothic church, designed by Gaviller & Thomson Architects and built in 1877 as a memorial to the pioneering gentry woman Susan Mein Sibbald. It was recently restored under the direction of architect Ian McGillivray and glass expert John Wilcox.

Amongst its many distinctions, St. George's houses Canada's oldest stained-glass window designed by the artist, diarist, and ecclesiastical designer Elizabeth Simcoe (wife of General John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada), and made in 1844 by her daughters who were stained-glass artisans.

The 1839 lakeside cemetery surrounding the church, bordered by majestic pines and 160-year-old hedges, contains the graves of many distinguished Canadians including writers Stephen Leacock and Mazo de la Roche, memorialist Susan Mein Sibbald, the celebrated Beaux-Arts architect Alfred Chapman, and his son the modernist architect Howard Chapman.

Many writers including Peter Gzowski, Timothy Findley and Stuart McLean have spoken fondly of this historic sacred place. Peter has written, "Our history is here in this lovely setting, not only of the province but of the nation itself. We should treasure it, and enjoy its tranquility, remembering some of the voices that made us who we are."

St. George's Sibbald Point, on Lake Simcoe, may be visited daily by donation from springtime until autumn. ■

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Building:
St. George's Anglican Church,
Anglican Parish of Georgina

Location:
408 Hedge Road,
Sibbald Point

Completion Date:
1877

Submitted By:
Peter Sibbald Brown

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First World War Memorial Baptistery, St. Thomas's Anglican Church, Toronto

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photo Peter Sibbald Brown, 2017

ULTIMATE CONSTRUCTION INC.

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The Woodland Cultural Centre and former Mohawk Institute Residential School, Brantford, Ontario



At The Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, a former Residential School founded in 1828 and one of the few surviving examples in Canada, Ultimate Construction is proud to be both the general and multi-trade contractor working for Six Nations on the long term rehabilitation, restoration and conservation of this highly significant heritage building, being funded by all levels of government under the "Save the Evidence" program.



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