

NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



Museum Chronicles



SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Year of...The Art of Niagara

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JUNE 4	Janet Carnochan Day – Official Opening of <i>Inspired Landscapes</i> , 7pm
JUNE 19	Art of Niagara Lecture Series – <i>Photographing the Niagara River</i> by Cosmo Condina, 7:30 pm
JULY 17	Art of Niagara Lecture Series – TBA
AUG. 21	Art of Niagara Lecture Series – <i>The Art of Textiles: A Behind the Scenes Glimpse of the ROM Textile Exhibition</i> by Rita Brown, 7:30 pm
SEPT. 18	Art of Niagara Lecture Series – <i>Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake</i> by Fred Hall, 7:30pm

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

On Wednesday, April 30 we welcomed our volunteers to drop in and receive thanks for their hard work over the past year. Thank you to all of our volunteers who could attend as well as everyone else that couldn't make it. We enjoyed an afternoon of chatting with friends, eating cake and looking at a photo slide show of our volunteers in action. We really could not do what we do without our volunteers!

We would also like to congratulate this year's Ontario Volunteer Service award winners: Lesley Fowler (5 years), Deborah Paine (5 years), Suzanne Hebert (5 years), Ed Tierney (10 years), Terry Mactaggart (10 years), and Dr. Richard Merritt (20 years). Each year, we are able to recognize 6 individuals who have reached a milestone in their volunteer careers.



Pictured above are volunteer Tony Griffiths and Clark Bernat with Barbara Challis (one of our Vault Ladies)

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY



Several of our members received phone calls from our Board members in April in an attempt to get a better sense of our membership's needs. The Board of Directors decided to survey a random sample of our membership and ask them questions about our programs and services, our outreach to the community and our overall performance.

We also asked some of our past members about why they left. Of about 70 calls that were made, we received responses from about 30 members or former members. Thank you to all of you who participated and gave honest constructive responses. The Membership and Development Committee of the Board will examine the data and draw some conclusions about how we are viewed by the membership, what aspects of our operation are important to them and what changes need to be made.

VISIT FROM THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE

On Wednesday, May 21st, the Deputy Minister of Culture for the Province of Ontario, Marg Rappolt and Donna Ratchford, Acting Director, Culture Policy Branch, visited the Museum during their tour of Niagara. Rappolt and Ratchford were meeting with several organizations in order to assess the needs and requirements of the cultural sector. They stopped by for an hour-long tour from Clark Bernat, who was joined by Board Members Neil Rumble, Jim Armstrong and Deborah Paine. Our representatives were able to let them know what we were accomplishing and what are concerns and needs were in the upcoming years.

The visit was very successful and both women were quite interested in Niagara-on-the-Lake's history, in what was going on at the Museum and they were impressed with what we have accomplished thus far.

YEAR OF THE HOME CHILD

Just recently Nova Scotia passed the 3rd reading for declaring 2009 the **Year of the British Home Child**. It will now go before the Federal Government for National approval to honour the group of 100,000 children who helped to shape this country.

From 1869 to 1948, institutions in England and Scotland such as Middlemore Home, Barnardo's, Maria Rye's and others sent children as young as a few months to eighteen years to Canada to work as farmhands or domestics. Industrial cities were overcrowded and Canada needed workers so an agreement was made between the two governments to send children to Canada.

Many of the descendents of these children live in the Niagara Region and are aware of the abuse that ensued within the homes.



Eliza Morris used this box to carry her belongings to Canada to join Miss Rye's institution.

TIN WARE

Recently we received a catalogue of handmade reproduction tinware and lighting from a company in Parry Sound. The merchandise is beautifully crafted, but due to cost we feel it is too much of a niche market to carry in the gift shop. If anyone would like to view the catalogue and order some items, please stop by the Museum and take a look. For anyone who likes period lighting, there are some really great examples for sale.

Inspired Landscapes



Robert Reginald Whale
The Canada Southern Railway at Niagara
From the Collection of Don & Norine Plato

Our summer exhibition is now on display and the official launch will be held on June 4th (Janet Carnochan Day) at 7:00 pm. All members are welcome to come enjoy the exhibition and watch some plein aire artists in action.

On display are 24 original works in oil, watercolour or pastel, which depict the Niagara River from Niagara Falls to Fort Mississauga at Lake Ontario. The exhibition showcases how the beauty of the river and how Niagara's landscapes have inspired artists for centuries. These artists captured the wonder of Niagara in their art, attracting others to the area as a travel destination.

The paintings are dated from 1830 to 1917 and are taken from the Museum's collection and from private collections, as well as one on loan from the RiverBrink Art Museum and one from the Niagara Parks Commission. The display includes the work of such artists as Francis Hincks Granger, John Herbert Caddy, and Robert Whale. *Inspired Landscapes* takes a historical look at why these artists were here and what was significant about the landscapes they painted.

Inspired Landscapes is generously sponsored by Geoffrey and Lorraine Joyner and will be on display until October 6th.



Washington F. Friend
Village of Queenston with Brock's Monument
in the foreground
From the Collection of Geoffrey & Lorraine Joyner

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are very pleased with the success of our interesting lectures and recent presentation to our members and non-members. To date, we have received excellent feedback regarding our lecture series and feel that our remaining Spring/Summer events will be met with the same enthusiasm.

The staff and board are committed to offering a variety of experiences at the Museum, in partnership with the Shaw Festival, Niagara Parks Commission and the RiverBrink Art Museum. We plan on continuing to bring you interesting cultural events in the future.

First and foremost, we are a Museum celebrating our past, but are searching continually for a diversity of programmes which we hope will attract your interest and presence in the future.

Sincerely, Neil Rumble

REMINISCENCES

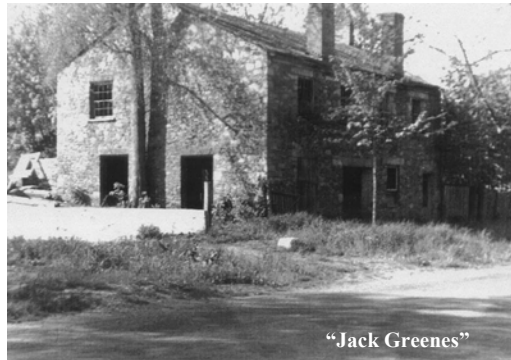
Submitted by Jim Smith

Our town's blacksmiths shops were a favourite place for boys to visit. Kids would pump the bellows and watch the sparks fly from the anvil as the blacksmith shod a horse. At one time there were four blacksmiths in town, Bill Gollop being the last. Bill was in business on Queen Street up to around 1960. The building Bill Gollop used for his trade is still standing and is known as the Blacksmiths shop located next to Maple Leaf Fudge.

Bill moved this building to the opposite side of Queen Street where his shop was at the north corner of Queen and Victoria Streets. There was also a carriage making shop on Johnson Street run by the Platt family and

Tom Monroe had his blacksmith shop on Regent Street near Front. Tom lived with his family over top of his shop, the upper windows adorned with flower boxes.

Before the Kitchen Theatre was built, which is now run by the Shaw Festival as the Royal George Theatre, William Campbell had his blacksmith shop at this location. There was also a blacksmith shop on King Street near the corner of Johnson, which was run by Oliver Taylor. I remember Tom Monroe's building on Regent Street very clearly. From the late 1930s to the mid 1960s the building had been abandoned and was a favourite playground for the many boys in the neighbourhood. This lot and the abandoned lot across the street were known to us kids as Jack Greenes. Jack owned these two lots and ran a livery stable on King Street, which became our fire hall.



To us kids the abandoned lots, thick with overgrowth, were an extension of our backyards. There were a number of old carriages strewn behind the field stone building and no shortage of wood for us to build forts and tree houses. We often made a camp fire and surrounded it with loose bricks stacked two or three high. One day, two teenagers, one of them being John Harris, came to Jack Greenes with a hack saw. They had plans from the magazine *Popular Mechanics* to make a cross bow and

they needed a piece of spring steel, which they planned on getting from one of the old carriages. Hard as they tried they could not cut the hardened steel in the carriage springs and they went away empty handed. John became a nuclear physicist later in life.

A large black walnut tree, in which Del McMillan and I built a tree house, still stands on the property. Close to the walnut tree was a fairly deep well half filled with junk, which we were careful to avoid. In the many years of abandonment the lot became overgrown with Norwegian Maple and a variety of weeds such as burdock, which grew to an unusually large size. More often than not, we carried burrs from these plants home on our socks. When a storm brought down a tree, it was cut up fairly soon by neighbours for firewood. Around 1964, shortly after Jack Greene had died, the property was purchased and the old field stone building was demolished. A lovely new residential home was built on the property. When I walk past this new home I can still see the big old black walnut tree in which we built out tree house in the backyard, showing no signs of its nostalgic past.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Busy as always, the Society and Museum is attempting to make your involvement interesting and stimulating. I hope that we have been successful with this in the past and that we can continue this in the future. I would like to discuss a few projects that hopefully you find worth your membership dues.

I am very excited about our new exhibition, "Inspired Landscapes". This wonderful collection of paintings from private, public and our own collection provides an interesting perspective on how artists have come to Niagara over the centuries and attempted to capture the power of Niagara Falls, the beauty of the River and the development around Niagara-on-the-Lake. 24 original works of art, dating from 1830 until 1917, provide a wonderful point of view on the quality of artists and the inspiration that they found in Niagara.

Another project that I hope our Members took advantage of from May 2007 until May 2008, was free admission to many area museums. MONA (Museums of Niagara Association) has extended this offer and improved it by adding some rewards for those who take advantage of all the things Niagara museums have to offer. You will be notified by us in the near future about this advantage to your membership.

Enough about you, what have I been

working on, on your behalf? Well, for over a year I have sat on the 2012 Niagara-on-the-Lake Bicentennial Committee, representing the Society, Museum, the membership and the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We are determined to make 2012-2015 something to remember. Within this committee I act as their secretary, and also sit on the Legacy, Finance and Education and Research Committees. Each of these committees has a direct connection to the previous work of the Society and our future. I will keep you up to date with activities as they become available.

I have also been elected to the Council of the Ontario Museum Association (OMA). This organization acts as an advocacy group for museums and their professional staff to further the public's knowledge of the work that goes into museums to collect and preserve the collective identity of the community, province and nation. It has been an interesting couple of months on council. The benefits to the Society come from the opportunity to meet directly with government officials at many levels on behalf of the OMA and our Society. We are definitely the smallest museum represented on council, but that is to our benefit as the organization has to be made aware of the limitations of many museums throughout the province.

Clark

NIAGARA FOUNDATION HOUSE TOUR

The Niagara Foundation is holding their annual house tour on September 6th at 10 am until 5 pm. The tour will showcase 6 unique homes of architectural and historical significance and a winery. The Museum is also part of the tour each year. Tickets are

\$20 each and can be purchased through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce by calling 905-468-1950. If you would like to volunteer at the Museum during the house tour, please contact Amy about your availability.

2012 CELEBRATIONS



The plans for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 are in development and over the next few months the Society will be setting out our 5 year plan for what we want to accomplish with this milestone. We welcome any input from our members about

the direction you would like to see us take, events you would like to see happen or any other ideas you may have. Additionally, if you would like to get involved in the planning and execution of any of the 2012 projects and events at the Museum, please let us know and we would be happy to have your skills and talents on our team.

SUMMER PROJECTS

It is that time of year again, when we welcome our summer students for a three month term that will hopefully help them gain the skills they will need to pursue a career in the cultural sector. This year, we applied for assistance from two different federal granting organizations: *Canada Summer Jobs* and *Young Canada Works*.

Canada Summer Jobs is helping to fund our **Research and Collections Assistant** and Miriam Cunningham, a Sociology student at Sir Wilfrid Laurier, will be filling this role. Her main task will be to work in the new research room and make sure that people are using it properly and effectively. She will also be responsible for cataloguing and accessioning tasks, uploading the Society's 44 publications onto www.ourontario.ca, mounting new exhibitions for the upper floor of Memorial Hall and preparing an accessibility guide for the upper gallery so that people who are unable to navigate the stairs will have an idea of what displays are

up there. Miriam will also work with our other summer student compiling resource materials for the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

Young Canada Works has provided a grant for our **1812 Bicentennial Coordinator**. Lindsay Ulrich, who studied Anthropology and Visual Arts at the University of Toronto, will be going through our 1812 collection, photographing each item and researching to see if it is in fact 1812 related. She will begin to look for possible exhibition themes and event ideas for the bicentennial. Lindsay will also be responsible for creating an 1812 walking tour of the town and, if time and resources permit, she will do a cultural mapping project using GPS technology.

We welcome both Miriam and Lindsay and are excited to have them with us for the summer!

CONTINUING BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The participating sites from the Museums of Niagara Association (MONA) have decided to continue their agreement and offer complimentary admission to members of other Museums. Please take advantage of this offer and present your membership card at participating sites. We will let you know shortly which sites have agreed to continue this promotion. Please contact us for further details.

THE YEAR OF “THE ART OF NIAGARA”

Fredric Waistell Jopling
(1860 – 1945)

The most contemporary painting on display in “Inspired Landscapes” is by an artist named Fredric Waistell Jopling. He is a relatively unknown artist who had a very prolific career. Jopling studied under Lucius O’Brien and John Fraser here in Canada and went on to the Arts Student League, New York where he studied under Walter Shirlaw, William Sartain and William Chase in his early 20s. He sold work to the New York Herald, Harper’s Weekly, Colliers, the Toronto Globe and Buffalo Express and did photo engraving for the American Bank Note Company.

He had come to Canada at the age of 14 and returned in 1912 to live in Toronto. His paintings show his fascination with history as many of his etchings are romantic scenes set in a former time. We must assume he thought highly of the Niagara Historical Society Museum, as he donated some of his sketches to the Society in 1937 and 1938. These range from historic scenes (Fort York c1803, Champlain en route to contemporary etchings of Frontier House in Lewiston, Fort George and Mackenzie’s House). In total, the museum has 8 of his drawings, etchings and prints.

His work won recognition from George V at an exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and his work can be found in many Canadian collections. The Toronto Public Library has 12 works by the artist and the Niagara Parks Commission has 23. The Toronto collection includes many interesting drawings of buildings such as the Granite Club and the Rosedale Golf Club (<http://digitalcollections.torontopubliclibrary.ca/webDC/index.jsp>).

In “A Dictionary of Canadian Artists” Pearl McCarthy noted, “F.W. Jopling has spent a lifetime etching the romance of history and of scenes. Hundreds and hundreds of copper plates keep, in lasting form, this record of a world which the artist has found fascinating... He did an extensive series of pictures of the Royal tour last year, having been accorded special facilities for his work, and these etchings include Washington and the President's Hyde Park home as well as Canadian scenes. The outstanding point in his historical pieces is his ability to suggest the glamour in the fact. ”

No doubt he found the buildings and landscape of Niagara fascinating, leaving us with his impressions of our natural and built environment.



“Mackenzie House”



“Drawbridge at Fort Niagara”



“Old Cottage at Fort George”

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Amy Klassen – Society Administrator

**Niagara Historical Society &
Museum Hours**

The Museum is open daily, except for New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

May-October: 10 am to 5 pm
November-April: 1 pm to 5pm

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