

North Toronto Town Hall

NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY *NEWSLETTER*

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Group on bobsled, Don Flats, 1910

CTA

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1944 blizzard

CTA

On 12 December 1944 a record 22 inches of snow fell on Toronto. A street car turned over at Queen and Mutual Streets, killing one passenger and injuring 43. The storm was blamed for thirteen city deaths.

Winter Programme

Join us at 7:10 for refreshments.



Wednesday, 29 January, 7:30 p.m.

HISTORY OF WESTON

A comprehensive and entertaining summary of the first five hundred years of Weston illustrated by stories and pictures. Presented by **Cherri Hurst** and **Mary Louise Ashbourne** of the Weston Historical Society.

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

"THIS POOR WOMAN'S HUSBAND DIED A PRISONER" **PERSONAL STORIES OF THE COLOURED CORPS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE WAR OF 1812**

Using contemporary documents and eye-witness accounts, historian **Hilary Dawson** will illustrate the impact of the war on members of "Captain Runchey's Company of Coloured Men" and their families.

NOTE: A brief Annual General Meeting will precede this programme.

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

THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF CANADA'S FIRST SUBWAY

A visual documentary of the Yonge subway—events leading to its need, its construction, its opening, and views of it in operation. Presented by **Ted Wickson**, local historian, railway and transit enthusiast, and former TTC archivist.

The Society meets at the Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Boulevard (one block north of Eglinton, just west of Yonge) at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of each month from September to November & January to May. Programmes are free and are open to the public. Our co-sponsor is the Northern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

President's Message

Best wishes for 2014, as the North Toronto Historical Society enters its 39th year.

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

I would like to thank our executive for their contributions during 2013 – Hilary Dawson, newsletter editor; Bill Dawson, treasurer; Alex Grenzebach, membership co-ordinator; Doug Campbell, who was elected as a new director; and Marta O'Brien, and Ken Pon, members-at-large who contributed to programmes, walks and the sale of publications. Special thanks to Janet and Brian Dunfield, and Elizabeth and John Warrener, who helped out with refreshments at our meetings. Librarian Karen Pearce represented Northern District Library and facilitated the arrangements for equipment used by our guest speakers. Bernard Katz contributed to the sleuthing which identified the photograph of Kingsland, the Lawrence House (see NTHS *Newsletter*, Spring & Summer 2013). Thanks also to members who contributed to the work of the Society through their financial donations.

We were saddened by the death in January 2013 of Donald Duncan, a long-time member of the North Toronto Historical Society who served in the positions of Treasurer and Secretary. Marjerie Fritz, another long-time member and active volunteer, died in March in her 96th year. They will be greatly missed.

2013 included many successful programmes and our annual Fall Walk, "The Top of North Toronto," was well attended and blessed with good weather. The city approved designation of Postal Station K under the Ontario Heritage Act, and efforts were made to preserve houses in Lawrence Park.

Looking forward to seeing you at our programmes in 2014.

Lynda Moon, President

Heritage News

Keep in Touch! Get Involved!

Here are some useful websites for keeping up-to-date with the latest heritage news.

Toronto Historical Association

<http://torontohistory.net/index.html>

The THA is an "umbrella" organisation formed in 1998 by volunteer heritage groups across Toronto for mutual support, and to discuss, and act on, heritage issues. (NTHS is a member.)

Built Heritage News

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

Architect Catherine Nasmith's great website for all interested in, and concerned about, our heritage buildings.

Ontario Historical Society

<http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/en/>

The OHS was founded in 1888, and is celebrating 125 years of bringing history-lovers together. One of its significant initiatives is cemetery preservation.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

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

Toronto Architectural Conservancy

<http://www.torarchcons.org/index2.html>

Heritage Toronto

<http://heritagetoronto.org/>

Heritage Toronto is the current version of the Toronto Civic Historical Committee established by council 65 years ago. *Mission:* Heritage Toronto celebrates, interprets, and educates for our City's cultural, architectural, archaeological and natural heritage.

Fall Events

FALL WALK

The Top of North Toronto

On a bright October day, about three dozen members and friends of the NTHS met at Fairlawn Avenue United Church, and headed north to look at the early twentieth century residential developments of Melrose Park (on the west of Yonge Street) and Teddington Park (to the west).

Alfred St. Germain, owner of *The Toronto Evening Journal* (Canada's first "One Cent Daily"), retired in 1882 to his 185 acre estate, which reached from Yonge Street to Bathurst, and from today's St. Germain Avenue to the city limits. In the laneway running from St. Germain to Melrose behind the Yonge Street stores, is a house dating from the 1880s that was used by workmen on St. Germain's farm. It once served as the manse for Dewi Sant Welsh United Church around the corner.

After St. Germain's death in 1908, the estate was purchased by Sir William Mulock (Postmaster General under Laurier). In 1910 Mulock established the Melrose Realty Company with H.A. Clark, and subdivided part of the property. Clark chose the street names: St. Germain after the former owner, Old Orchard for his orchard, and Deloraine, Melrose, Jedburgh, Marmion and Falkirk from the works of Sir Walter Scott. (Some of the original names - Arundel, Waverly and Falkirk - have been changed.)



Yonge Street gates to Melrose Park development, Aug. 1922. The house in the background is now 21 Deloraine Ave.

CTA

The unusual house at 21 Deloraine Avenue predates the Melrose Park development. Known as "Treetops," it was built about 1905. During World War 1, it was used by the pilot training programme at the North Toronto Flying Station (Armour Heights airfield, located at Avenue Road and 401). During the Depression and until 1941, the building was used by Norval Waddington for his St. Paul's School for Boys. It was then used as apartments for many years, but is once again a school: the Dunblaine School for children with learning disabilities.

At the former City Limits, we crossed to the east side of Yonge and proceeded to the Rosedale Golf Club. On Teddington Park Avenue, we viewed a number of houses, including the former mansion of Steve Stavro who owned the Toronto Maple Leafs and Knob Hill Farms.

The oldest building on our tour was the grey stucco house that is now 17 Teddington Park Avenue. Beneath its modern façade is a red brick Second Empire residence was built in the 1870s fronting Yonge Street. In the 1890s it was the home of the Charlesworth family. Young Hector Charlesworth would become editor of *Saturday Night* magazine. In 1911 the property was purchased by Nicholas Garland who, along with Robert Dack, subdivided the area and created Teddington Park Avenue. The Yonge Street frontage was sold to a bank, and in 1928 the house was moved back to the site of its stables and turned to face Teddington Park Avenue. Currently, it is an extended-stay hotel.

Walk leaders were Lynda Moon, Doug Campbell, Bill Dawson, Hilary Dawson and Alex Grenzebach.



"Treetops" 21 Deloraine Ave., built c.1905.

HD

SEPTEMBER: Mary Williamson
Home Life in Toronto During World War II

When the intensive World War Two bombing of England began, many English children travelled to Canada, becoming “guests of war.” At the inaugural Fall local history session, Mary Williamson gave us some insight into this time with a discussion of her prize-winning book, *Just a Larger Family*.



In 1940, the Williamson family welcomed two brothers, distant cousins from England, into their home at 118 Hillside Ave. W. in North Toronto. A third brother—the eldest, Bill—stayed with friends of the Williamsons, the Ratcliffes, at 76 Glenview Ave. Mary Williamson was a child of seven when the boys came to stay. Her mother, Marie, kept up a regular correspondence with the boys' mother, Margaret Sharp in England. Margaret retained all of these letters until her death when the trunk containing them passed to her youngest son, Tom.

The three boys came to Canada on the ship, the *Duchess of Bedford*, arriving on July 30, 1940. Being a parent to the two cousins as well as her own two children, Peter and Mary, was a major responsibility for Marie. She had never met the boys. There was also the added expense to the Williamson family budget. The British government did not allow the children to take much money out of the country, so the Williamson family assumed most of the financial burden of keeping the boys clothed and fed.

The three cousins ranged in age from 9 to 13. Thanks to the financial contribution of a generous aunt, the two boys living with the Williamsons, Christopher and Tom Sharp, were able to attend St. Paul's School for Boys at 21 Deloraine Ave. Christopher and Tom quickly settled into the routines of the Williamsons. They enjoyed skiing and skating and became good readers, borrowing books from the nearby St. Clement's Branch of the Toronto Public Library. In 1941, the Williamsons moved to a larger house at 90 Dunvegan Rd. which enjoyed proximity to the Deer Park Library.

The Sharp cousins and Mary and Peter Williamson engaged in a number of activities in Toronto. They

saved recycled string and newspapers and delivered them to their schools. They made contributions to the *Evening Telegram's* British War Victims' Fund, getting their photos in the paper. When the boys became sick with chicken pox, they wrote and distributed a newspaper, *The Monthly War Drum*.

Canada was affected by the war much less than England, of course. Still, Canadians did experience changes because of the war. By June 1942, there was a shortage of meat and meatless meals became a common feature of newspaper articles. Butter was rationed and there was voluntary rationing of coffee and tea. Ration books for sugar were introduced in July 1942. Dried fruit and nuts were unavailable because transatlantic shipping ceased.

Starting in 1942, blackouts were practised in Canada. Blackout methods were demonstrated on the 5th floor of Simpson's department store at Yonge and Queen in downtown Toronto.

As the war progressed, there were changes in the lives of the Sharp cousins and the Williamsons. Christopher and Tom attended Brown Public School after the move to Dunvegan Rd. In 1943, Christopher went to stay with his godparents in Washington. Both Christopher and Tom returned to England in 1944. Bill remained in North America to attend the University of Toronto. The Williamson and Sharp families maintained their friendships on a lifelong basis.

Mary Williamson's reminiscences provided a fascinating glimpse into the day-to-day life of a Canadian family and their war guests.

Elizabeth Warrenner

MORE ABOUT WORLD WAR II EVACUEES

Just a Larger Family. Letters of Marie Williamson from the Canadian Home Front, 1940-1944, edited by Mary F. Williamson and Tom Sharp (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011)

At an Awkward Age. A Teenager's Transatlantic Wartime Saga, by Joan Zilva

<http://www.2ndwwvac.co.uk/index.htm>

A 14-year-old's account of her evacuation to Toronto. After an unpleasant beginning, Joan moved to join the Bartlett family at 126 St. Leonard's Ave.

Oceans Apart: Stories of Children Evacuated Overseas

<http://www.historyextra.com/gallery/oceans-apart>
Online version of a 2011 exhibit in Manchester.

OCTOBER: Jon Tobin, Bruce Lumsden &
Karl Griffiths-Fulton
Of Bread Wagons and Street Cars

Toronto, Toronto, a chapbook of paintings and poems, was introduced by its designer, and described more fully by its two creators.

Karl Griffiths-Fulton is a photographer and designer. The chapbook, he explained, was an inexpensive booklet sold by peddlers (“chapmen”) from the early 17th century. Content might be stories, poetry, or political propaganda. By the 19th century chapbooks had fallen out of fashion, except for children’s stories and the occasional poet. Today, chapbooks are seeing a revival as an art form, allowing creators to produce small runs of their works. Stonegarden Studios, a small non-profit press in Waterloo, pairs writers and visual artists to produce their distinctive chapbooks.

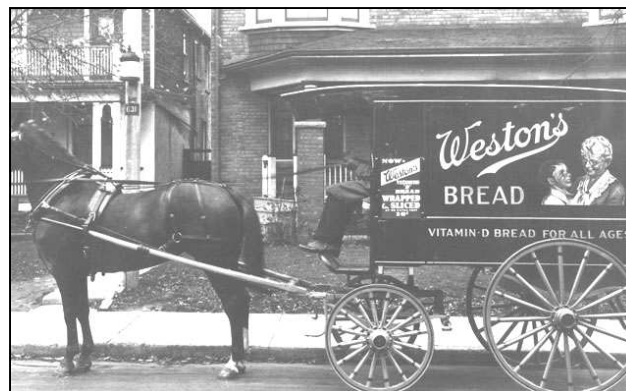
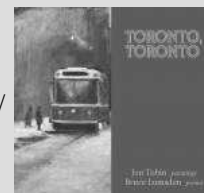


**Winter Boarding Street Car by Jon Tobin,
in *Toronto, Toronto***

Artist Jon Tobin paints *en plein air* (“in the open air”), braving all weather to capture the mood he seeks, and completing his works in his studio. His atmospheric paintings are reminiscent of the Impressionist period, when the *plein air* technique was popular. Jon is also a musician, and described his paintings in terms of dynamics, tone and mood. He assembles the composition in his head, selecting the important components of his scene from the confusion of city life, and incorporating or rejecting details like garbage, signs and the like. His completed paintings are effectively evocative of a time and place: a red streetcar in a snowstorm could be nowhere but Toronto!

Toronto, Toronto, by Jon Tobin
and Bruce Lumsden
(Waterloo: Stone Garden Studios)
<http://www.stonegardenstudios.ca/>

Jon Tobin’s website:
<http://www.jontobin.com/>



*Warm yeasty smells,
The heavy lead anchor
I can't lift,
The wet horse blanket,
smell of animal and damp...*

**From “The Bread Wagon” by Bruce
Lumsden, in *Toronto, Toronto***

Bruce Lumsden grew up on Latimer Avenue in the 1940s and '50s, and attended Allenby Public School. His blank verse reminiscences are evocative of Toronto in a different way. His memories of riding in the bread wagon, tobogganing in Pears Park, and delivering newspapers struck familiar chords with many in the audience.

Toronto, Toronto is a lovely addition to the nostalgic Torontonians’ library.

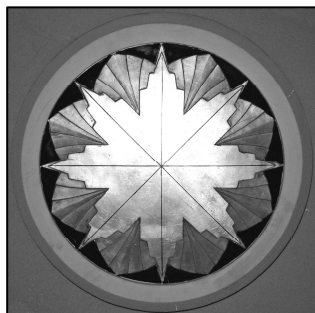
Receive the *NTHS UPDATER* by email!

Would you like us to remind you of upcoming meetings and heritage events with an electronic newsletter?

Email me at alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca and I will add you to the distribution list. *We will not give out your email address.*

Alex. Grenzebach

Art Deco Architecture Across Canada



Medallion from Snowdon Theatre, Montreal

Tim Morawetz's presentation was a preview of his forthcoming book, *Art Deco Architecture Across Canada*. The style's introduction to North America came after the trade show

"L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes," held

in Paris in 1925, although elements of the style had been in use in Europe for several years. (The term "Art Deco" was not used until the 1960s.)

Tall Art Deco buildings "reach for the sky," but with a characteristic step back. This is the result of a 1916 New York City bylaw, which regulated the height of the street wall of new buildings, but not the finished height of the structure. This became a feature of tall Art Deco buildings, wherever they were constructed. Art Deco architecture is often symmetrical, with multiple vertical planes, and made use of new materials like glass block and vitriolite. Decorative elements are eclectic, and may include geometric, natural and classical motifs.

Tim's tour of Art Deco cross Canada grouped styles under three headings: *Jazz Era Deco* of the 1920s; *Streamlined Moderne*, 1930s to '50s; *Stepped Classical*, throughout the period. While Art Deco was most popular 1925 to 1930, in some parts of Canada it was still being built years later.

In his new book, Tim groups buildings by function: chapters will include Life at Work, Life in the Country, Life at Home, Life as a Shopper, And Life of Enjoyment. We eagerly await its publication!

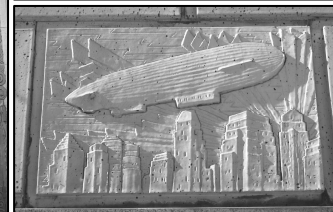
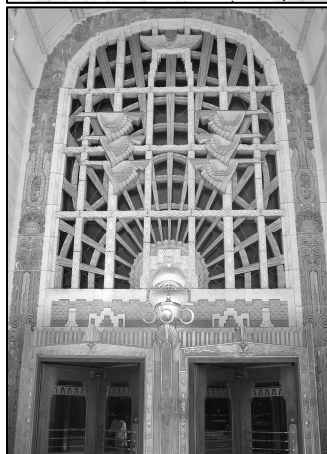
MORE ABOUT ART DECO

Art Deco Architecture in Toronto: A guide to the buildings from the Roaring Twenties and the Depression, by Tim Morawetz (Toronto: Glue Inc., 2009)

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

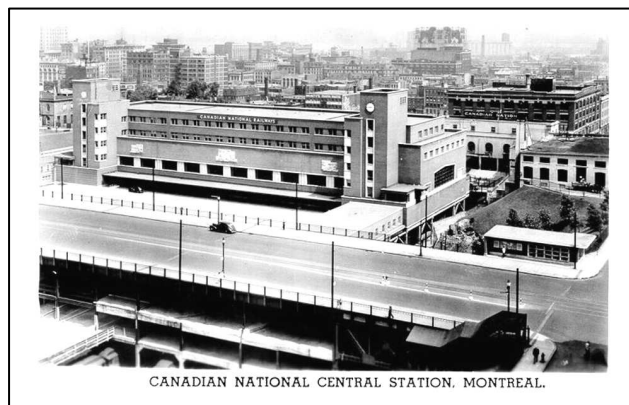
Art Deco Montreal

<http://artdecomontreal.com>



The Marine Building, 355 Burrard St., Vancouver, designed by McCarter & Nairne, 1930.

Considered by Tim to be the best Art Deco building in Canada, its ornamentation includes Canadian fish, flora and fauna, and the history of transportation. Look for it in movies, like *Timecop* and *Fantastic Four*!



CANADIAN NATIONAL CENTRAL STATION, MONTREAL.



Montreal Central Station, designed by J. Campbell Merrett, 1938. Classical motifs.

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1963, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



118 DAYS OF TALK. Canada's 26th Parliament, called to an end for Christmas and New Year's, is down on record as the most unproductive in history. It was also the most expensive, since the MPs pay raise from \$10,000 to \$18,000 makes Canada's parliamentarians the best paid in the world. Because of the five-party split and the minority government, prospects for 1964 look little better.



MADE IN CANADA. The first Studebakers made in Canada for U.S. consumption are seen as they are about to be rolled down the highways to American sales outlets. Studebaker Co. recently moved its auto production plant from South Bend, Ind., to Hamilton, Ont., and now all its cars are made in Canada.

The city planning board "approved a staff report stating that a subway extension route directly beneath Yonge Street would cause the least disturbance in the area." Four stations were contemplated for the proposed extension – at the City Limits, at Lawrence Avenue and two between Eglinton and Lawrence. Later, the City's development committee shelved the extension "until the TTC tells it exactly where it will go."



Under the headline "A School Crusade That Spells Victory," it was reported that Grade 1 and 2 students at St. Clement's were able to read easily from a Grade 3 reader. St. Clement's was teaching reading using phonics which had been abandoned by the public school system.



The Board of Control approved the construction of a sports arena at Eglinton Memorial Park. Ward 9 Alderman Richard Horkins estimated that the cost would exceed \$600,000.

November 1963 saw the deaths of both JFK and Donald Summerville. Mayor Summerville had been elected mayor in 1962 and died of a severe heart attack while playing in a charity hockey game. The Herald eulogized "It is this suggestion of power underlying a warm human nature that gives Donald Summerville his huge stature among the sons of Toronto."



Heritage Calendar

Toronto's Residential Architecture: a History University of Toronto, 8 sessions, non-credit

Join architectural historian **Marta O'Brien** for an exploration of 200 years of residential architecture in Toronto. We'll examine the characteristics of the major architectural styles and when each was seen in Toronto. Hundreds of slides will showcase homes from workers' cottages to mansions, and from converted factories to 50-storey condo towers. One class is a walking tour of Rosedale.

LOCATION: Rm 141, Ramsay Wright Zoology Labs, 25 Harbord St. (across from Robarts Library)
DATES: Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, Feb. 4 - Mar. 25, 2014
FEE: \$325
COURSE CODE: SCS 2033-005
INFO: www.learn.utoronto.ca or phone 416-978-2400

To Preserve & Promote Black History: Celebrating 35 years of the Ontario Black History Society

Market Gallery exhibit

For 35 years, the OBHS has expanded the public's awareness and appreciation of black history. In 1979, the society successfully petitioned the City of Toronto for recognition of February as Black History Month, which the City continues to proclaim annually. This exhibition will tell the story of black history in Ontario and the continued efforts by the OBHS to study, preserve and promote this important heritage with its local, regional and international connections.

LOCATION: Market Gallery, South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front Street East
DATES: 1 February to 19 April, 2014.
INFO: http://www.toronto.ca/culture/market_gallery
416-392-7604

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



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

Henry Enchin's Toronto Moments in Time

<http://www.torontomomentsintime.com>

Enchin's work melds archival black-and-white photos with modern colour images to give a time-travelling effect.

See at **The Artist Project**, the contemporary art fair

LOCATION: Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place

DATES: 20-23 Feb 2014.

INFO: <http://www.theartistproject.com/>



Yonge & Cranbrooke 1930/2012
from *Toronto Moments in Time* by Harry Enchin

Nine Rivers City. Toronto's Extraordinary Waterways.

Harbourfront free outdoor exhibit

From west to east, nine rivers feed into Lake Ontario. Harbourfront Centre has commissioned six contemporary visual artists to capture the complexities of each of these waterways that run throughout our urban landscape.

LOCATION: In the new Exhibition Common, next to Ontario and Canada Squares at Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West.

DATES: To 1 June 2014, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

INFO: <http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/visualarts/nineriverscity/>



Rosedale Ski Club, Rosedale Ravine, 1920 CTA

North Toronto Historical Society

An affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society, and a non-profit charitable organization.

% 129 Blythwood Road, Toronto, Ontario M4N 1A5

www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

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

2013 Executive (*Directors)

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Members-at-large: *Doug Campbell, Ken Pon

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Walks: *Bill Ramsay