

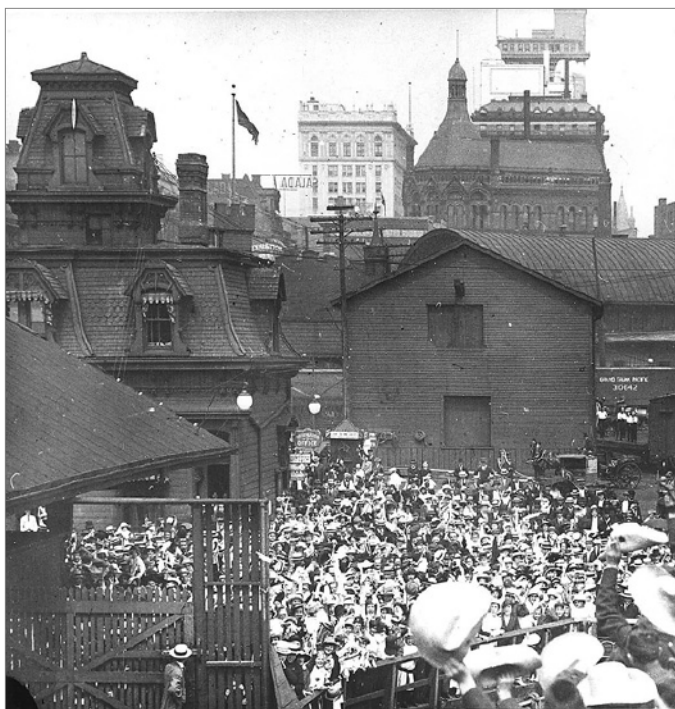
NEWSLETTER

The Town of York Historical Society

April 2015

Vol. XXXI No. 1

FERRY DOCKS TO BE REIMAGINED



Ferry crowd at the foot of Yonge Street, c. 1912, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 2513

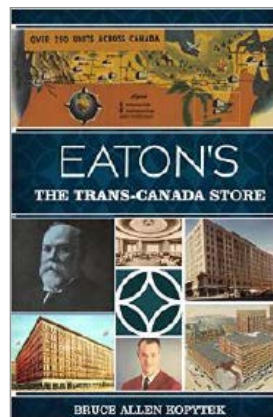
Contemporary Torontonians might be forgiven for thinking that the seemingly endless queues and the unsheltered, overcrowded waiting area at our ferry docks are modern-day phenomena. The capacity of the current terminal, which dates from 1972, was seen to be inadequate during its first season of operation. However, as the photo at left suggests, things were no better a hundred years ago. Herded together under the open sky like sheep, prospective ferry passengers were then expected to traverse, at their peril, the railway tracks along the shoreline in order to board a boat to the island.

In a case of history repeating, the situation is soon about to change. In November of 2014, Waterfront Toronto launched an international design competition for a re-visioning of the terminal. Over 30 submissions were received from around the world and, in March, the five short-listed designs were revealed. Bold and innovative they were. Many were also extremely thoughtful in their consideration of the needs of passengers seeking respite from the heat of Toronto summers at the island's beaches and resorts, as people have done for two centuries.

Continued on page 2

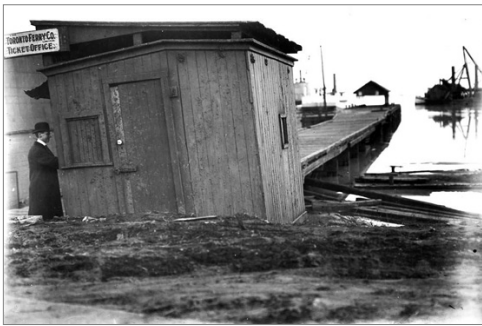
Annual General Meeting: Mark Your Calendars Now!

The Town of York Historical Society will hold its Annual General Meeting on Monday, May 11, at St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club House on Broadview Avenue (see page 6). Following the business meeting, Bruce Kopytek will give a talk based on his recent book, *Eaton's: The Trans-Canada Store*. An architect and author from Michigan, Kopytek has fond memories of car trips as a boy that took him through cities anchored by family department stores. He is the author of two previous books on this topic: *Jacobson's, I Miss it So!* and *Toledo's Three Ls*, and maintains a popular blog called *The Department Store Museum*. Eaton's was at the heart of Canadian history for so long, and Kopytek well appreciates its amazing evolution.



Ferry Terminal, *cont'd*

The earliest regular ferry service to the island dates from 1833. Michael O'Connor, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars, ran a horse ferry from the foot of Church Street to the wharf at his hotel, "The Retreat on the Peninsula," located where the eastern gap is now. This trip was undertaken three times daily and took an unimaginable 30 to 40 minutes, depending on the weather. A decade later, Louis Privat opened his Peninsular Hotel and Pleasure Grounds, to which his brother Peter ferried guests on the Peninsular Packet. By 1849 this 5-horse-power vessel left Maitland's Wharf (at the foot of Church) five times a day, and Privat's amusement park had grown to include a merry-go-round, swings, a bowling alley and a small zoo. There was also unspoiled pasture on offer to visiting livestock, permitted to board the first crossing each day.



Toronto Island Ferry Co. Ticket Office, Foot of Spadina Avenue, 1907 (Discarded 1911), City of Toronto Archives, F1244, I1425 (*Ed. — By its location, this was not the main ticket office, but we couldn't resist including it here.*)

By the time the island had become one in more than just name, horse power had given way to steam. John Quinn – the owner of Michael O'Connor's former hotel – and Captain Bob Moodie tried to one-up each other for a while with increased departures and faster crossing times but, by the summer of 1857, allowed that a season ticket for either line would be honoured by both. The next April, Quinn's hotel was swept away by the violent storm that severed the peninsula from the mainland once and for all.

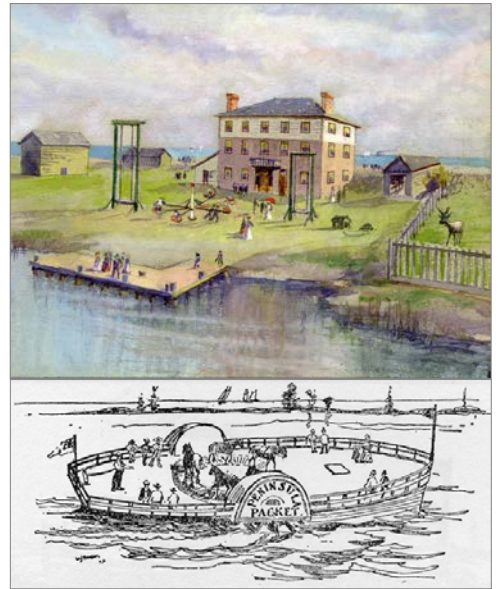
The subsequent proliferation of private ferry services had, by the 1880s, devolved into fewer and fewer hands. A series of mergers and acquisitions led, by 1892, to the monopoly of the Toronto Ferry Company operated by financier E.B. Osler. Double-ended and double-decked paddle steamers – with electric lights! – could carry over



Aerial view of the Toronto ferry docks in 1956. Ferries include the Trillium, the Sam McBride, the Thomas Rennie, the William Inglis and the T.J. Clarke.

a thousand passengers each, and the TFC had a dozen vessels. With Sunday exceptions, ferries ran from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. in peak season. In 1926 the TFC was purchased by the City for \$337,500, and the service was operated

by the Toronto Transportation (later Transit) Commission until 1961, when the Parks department took over. The diesel ferries that we still ride on today were all built during the TTC's tenure, and can be seen in the photograph at left.



Top: Louis Privat's hotel (built in 1839 as a summer house for Lord Sydenham) and amusement park, watercolour by Owen Staples from an ink drawing by W.J. Thomson, Toronto Public Library, JRR 916
Below: The *Peninsula Packet*



Top: Ferry passengers c. 1908, City of Toronto Archives, F1244, I0234. (*Ed. – Baby contest on the island?*)
Below: Crowds waiting to board ferries to the island, 1909, City of Toronto Archives, F1244, I0246

Ferry Terminal, *cont'd*



Jack's got your back: Stronger Together, a bronze sculpture by David Pelletier. Photo: Alex Guibord

In 2012, Toronto City Council determined – by unanimous vote – to rename the ferry terminal in honour of the late Jack Layton, a long-time City Councillor and, more recently, the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in parliament. The renaming was officially celebrated at a ceremony in the summer of 2013, with the unveiling of a bronze statue of Layton donated by the Ontario Federation of Labour. The sculpture depicts the former NDP leader astride the rear seat of a tandem bicycle. Layton and his wife Olivia Chow, who married on the island in 1988, bought such a bicycle as a wedding gift to each other.

Now, the *Jack Layton Ferry Terminal* is about to be transformed. On April 10, the winner in Waterfront Toronto's competition was announced. A team comprising local firms KPMB and Greenberg Consultants, along with West 8 from Rotterdam, was chosen by an independent jury led by architect Donald Schmitt. "Harbour Landing" (seen in an artist's renderings above) re-appropriates seven acres of underutilized land to create a wide-open ticket-booth and waiting area covered by an undulating and accessible green roof. The latter will serve as a new civic park. Torontonians will have to be patient for a while longer, however. Due to both budget constraints and the fact that the terminal must continue to operate, construction is expected to take ten years to complete.



New Life for the Historic Island Airport Terminal Building



The terminal in 1969. Austin Airways, whose plane this is, was founded in 1934 and based in Timmins, Ontario. In 1987 it joined Air Ontario, now part of Air Canada Jazz.

In December of 2011 we featured an article on the 1939 Toronto Island Airport Terminal. A scant 50 years after it was built, it was designated a National Historic Site – by then already one of very few of its kind left in the world. Decommissioned in 2010, however, it was uprooted and set aside like an unwanted relic of a bygone era. This seemed an undignified future for a terminal whose first commercial passenger flight (on September 8, 1939) brought Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra to Toronto for a two-day engagement at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Fortunately, a group of private investors – including television personalities and celebrity chefs – led by Toronto businessman and pilot Alexander Younger, have come to the building's rescue. Re-moved, restored and repurposed, the old terminal will house a restaurant, a public event space, an aviation museum and an area for private pilots. Designers Tommy Smythe and Sarah Richardson (who is Younger's wife) will design the interior, while chefs Lynn Crawford and Lora Kirk (Ruby Watchco) will help out with food and event management. The new venue is set to open in the spring of 2016, with no public money having been involved. Mr. Younger told the *National Post* that he hopes the redesigned building will become a destination for Torontonians and tourists alike. "Folks that just generally want to go and have a great meal and have one of the best views of the city can go out and enjoy it," he said.

Meet Some *More* of Our Neighbours and Customers



French for the Future (FFTF) is a not-for-profit organization focused on promoting the benefits of bilingualism to Canadian students. Its programs are aimed at students in grades 7 to 12 across Canada from Core French through to French First Language programs. Its goal is to encourage them to continue their education in the French language and to endeavour to excel in it. The organization believes that proficiency in both of this country's official languages will provide immediate and lifelong benefits for youth, both in their personal lives and in their career paths.

By creating linguistic and cultural links among young Canadians, FFTF strives to foster an appreciation of francophone cultures and thereby motivate youth to persevere with their French studies. Through fun and interactive events and gatherings, such as Local Annual Forums in more than 15 cities across Canada, and an annual National Ambassador Youth Forum that brings 30 students from across Canada together in a different city every summer for a week of French-language and leadership training, students learn how French is very much alive in the world outside the classroom. FFTF's National Essay Contest awarded \$215,000 in scholarships this year, allowing students the chance to pursue their postsecondary studies all or partially in French. It's all about celebrating the French language and teaching students the important role it plays in a diverse Canada.

Supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage, French for the Future has been offering free, educational, and quality programs to thousands of youth across the country since 1997. For further information, please visit the FFTF website at www.french-future.org.



Outside of Quebec, the quarterly *Virages* is the only French-language journal of creative writing in Canada. Each edition of 100 or so pages is an anthology of previously unpublished short stories from Canadian and international authors. In fact, the publication often receives submissions from francophone countries in Europe and Africa and, for the section "Et pour les jeunes," from

the even more foreign land of high school. *Virages* welcomes submissions in all genres of short-story writing, although individual issues are often organized around a theme. The artistic mission of the publication is to shine a light on emergent creative writing and thereby enhance our diverse Canadian culture.

Since 1998, *Virages* has been helmed by the award-winning author and educator Marguerite Andersen. A short-story writer herself, Andersen has published some twenty literary works including novels, plays, poetry collections and memoirs. Born in Germany, she immigrated to Canada in 1958. She also went to live and work in France, Tunisia, Austria, Ethiopia and the United States. Andersen studied at the Sorbonne and the Free University of Berlin, and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Montreal. She has taught 20th-century French literature at Concordia, Mount St. Vincent and the University of Guelph, as well as at the Toronto Linden School.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Photo: David Van Dyck, *Metro*

Valentine Busy Bees

Leo Hepler and Anya Craig show off the far-from-traditional cards they created during the Valentine Bee at Toronto's First Post Office on February 8.

Pop-up Post Office

Christina Crook invited us to host a pop-up post office at the February 11 launch of her latest book, *The Joy of Missing Out: Finding Balance in a Wired World*. This recent book further explores the territory Crook entered when, for 31 days in 2012, she took a complete break from the internet.



Each day of her fast she wrote a letter on a typewriter and "snail-mailed" it to friend. That project, which eventually evolved from blog to book, was called *Letters from a Luddite*. It received international attention – and it certainly caught ours!



Top right: Christina Crook and TFPO's Kat Akerfeldt. Above: Christina's daughter Madeleine proves adept with a quill pen. Photos: Leemarc Lao

"The Postman" Delivered



As we do every year, the Town of York Historical Society celebrated Toronto's birthday in high style on March 6th at St. Lawrence Hall. Over 150 people turned out for our preview of *The Postman*, a tribute to the life of Albert Jackson that will be performed on a dozen porches in the Annex during the PanAm Games in July. The music was spectacular, and so was actor Dean Ifill's faux moustache!



We were especially gratified to have in the audience a significant number of Albert Jackson's descendants, including Albert's only surviving grandson, Lawrence Jackson of Brantford, Ontario.

We are grateful to the corporate sponsors who made this performance possible, including Taylor Hazell Architects, Allied Properties REIT, Alterra Post-House Condominium and the TD Bank. We are also very thankful to the Canadian Hospitality Foundation, Mill Street Brewery and Scheffler's Delicatessen & Cheese for making everything that much more yummy.



Photos: Jim Littlefair (top) and Kat Akerfeldt

Breaking the Silence about British Home Children



British children from Dr. Barnardo's homes on the landing stage in St. John, NB, photo by Isaac Erb, n.d., LAC, PA-041785

Between Confederation and the Second World War, over 115,000 British “orphans” were sent to Canada by various charitable organizations to be used as indentured farm workers and domestics. Many of these children came from previously intact families who had simply fallen on hard times in an era without any social security net. Emigration was seen as a brilliant solution to overcrowded workhouses.

Robert Joyce was one such child, arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax in 1925 at the age of 15 with a younger brother he would never see again. On April 13 at Campbell House Museum, author Sandra Joyce told us of discovering her father's untold story by accident, and how she came to learn that one in ten Canadians is descended from a British home child. Joyce is determined that people become aware of this heritage, and that these children's stories be told.



Above left: Chadwick Sandles, English immigrant travelling alone, photo by William James Lopley, LAC, 010234. Above right: Sandra Joyce with copies of her books *The Street Arab* and *Belonging*.

Toronto's Sporting History Plaque Unveiling



Heritage Toronto, along with the Riverdale Historical Society, recently unveiled a plaque commemorating St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club. Founded in 1890, the Club was named for the Anglican Church on First Avenue that was its founding patron. When



the Club became a ward of the City of Toronto in 1906, architect Robert McCallum designed the Arts and Crafts clubhouse built for it in Riverdale Park. Lawn bowling would eventually fall out of favour, and the Club was disbanded in 2007. The clubhouse, however, was uprooted and moved to

Broadview Avenue, and is now home to the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation. The unveiling included a pop-up museum, hosted by City of Toronto Museums, featuring trophies won by the St. Matthews Club and the sweet set of lawn-bowling balls seen above.



Members of the St. Matthews Lawn Bowling Club team of 1917 who won both the Ontario Cup and the Butt Trophy.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND BEYOND



TORONTO OBSERVED THROUGH THREE GENERATIONS: The Photographs of Harry Joy, Doug Hemmy and Andy Brooks Until May 9, 2015

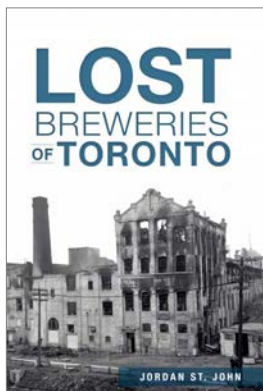
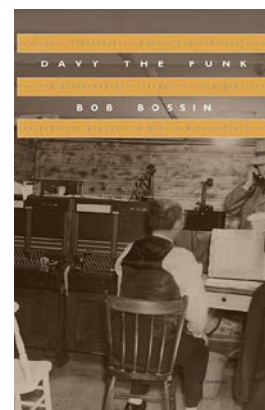
This exhibition features close to 80 black and white photographs representing three generations of photographers whose work documents the city at different times and in different ways. These accomplished photographers were brought together through their long-standing personal friendships and their shared interest, albeit from different perspectives, in the city of Toronto as a subject.

The Market Gallery, 95 Front St. E., Tuesday to Friday 10–4, Saturday 9–4.

DAVY THE PUNK – A Story about Bookies, the Mob and Toronto the Good Monday, April 27, 8:00 – 10:00 pm

Bob Bossin – author, folk singer and bon vivant – brings his award-winning one-person musical show based on his best-selling book, to Hugh's Room. The show is about his father's life in Toronto's gambling underworld of the 1930s and '40s. Davy Bossin's story is, according to CBC's Michael Enright, "fascinating... amazing and sometimes hilarious." It is, "so outrageous," says Andreas Schroeder, "it's worthy of a Mordecai Richler novel."

Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas Street West, \$25/\$27.50 at the door, 416-531-6604.



ENOCH TURNER SCHOOLHOUSE FOUNDATION:

Annual General Meeting and Special Lecture

Tuesday, April 28, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Recent research has brought to light new information about Enoch Turner's life and character. Join Jordan St. John, author of *Lost Breweries of Toronto*, as he places brewer and philanthropist Turner in the context of mid-19th century Toronto. A book sale and signing will follow. Jordan St. John is a beer historian, brewer and blogger. He is also the co-author of *Ontario Beer: A Heady History from the Great Lakes to Hudson's Bay*.

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 106 Trinity Street. Free for Foundation members, \$12 for guests. More information: dkeffer@enochturnerschoolhouse.ca or 416-327-6997.

CABBAGETOWN FORSYTHIA FESTIVAL

Sunday, May 3, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Every May since 1971, Cabbagetown residents have gathered at Wellesley Park to celebrate the coming of spring. The fun starts with a parade departing from the corner of Sumach and Winchester Streets. Everyone is encouraged to wear yellow! The parade is followed by a fun-filled afternoon in the park with something for everyone to enjoy.

Wellesley Park, Wellesley Avenue east of Sumach Street.



AH, WHAT AN EXCELLENT THING IS AN ENGLISH PUDDING!!

Sunday, May 10, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm

Sweet or savoury, baked, boiled or fried – discover the diverse array of 18th and 19th century puddings and cookery methods using cloths, pans, basins or plates in the 1826 Officers' Mess Kitchen. The title for this historic cooking class is taken from a quote by Monsieur Misson de Valbourg, who visited England in the late 17th century. He went on to say: "Give an English man a pudding, and he shall think it a noble treat in any part of the world." Lunch and recipe package included.

Fort York, 250 Fort York Blvd. \$75 + HST, pre-registration required: 416-392-7503.

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Lifetime Memberships	\$250

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260 Adelaide Street East
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Telephone: 416-865-1833
Facsimile: 416-865-9414
E-mail: tfpo@total.net
Charitable Reg. No. 108101627RT0001
Newsletter Editor: Janet Walters
ISSN 1481-8922

Hours of operation:

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**The Post Office will close May 17-18 for Victoria Day and
July 1 for Canada Day.**

8