

# NEWSLETTER

## The Town of York Historical Society

January 2019

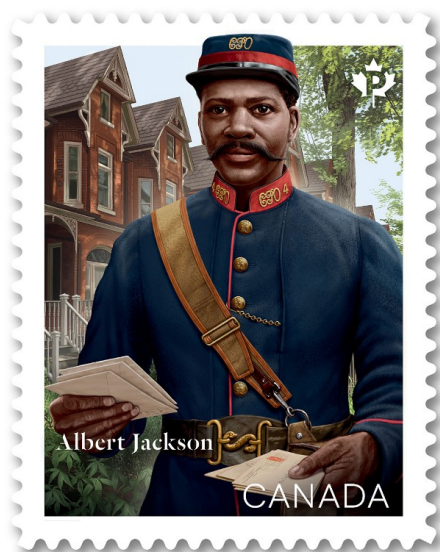
Vol. XXXV No. 1

### TORONTO'S FIRST BLACK MAIL CARRIER HONOURED WITH COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Many descendents of the Jackson family were amongst those gathered in St. Lawrence Hall's Great Hall on January 24th to help Canada Post unveil a new commemorative stamp featuring Albert Jackson, believed to be Canada's first Black letter carrier.

Former Director/Curator of Toronto's First Post Office, Janet Walters, noted that it was fitting to hold the unveiling in St. Lawrence Hall, as the building is festooned with plaques noting the Hall's importance as a meeting place for the Abolitionist movement, and opened in April of 1851 with a lecture on the subject of slavery.

Albert Jackson arrived in Canada as a toddler, along with six siblings and his mother. In Delaware, Ann Maria Jackson's two oldest sons had been sold, causing their father to die "broken-hearted, crazy." When Ann Maria learned that the man who had enslaved her now planned to sell four more of her children, she fled. Ann Maria's story was notable even at the time, as it was unusual for a woman to travel the Underground Railroad on her own, and to manage it successfully with seven children was an incredible feat.



*Continued on page 3*

### YOU'RE INVITED – TORONTO'S 185TH ANNIVERSARY



St. Lawrence Hall, 1885.

On Wednesday, March 6, it will be 185 years since Toronto became a city.

We hope that you will join the Town of York Historical Society to celebrate the occasion with an evening at St. Lawrence Hall, featuring Toronto's first mayor, William Lyon Mackenzie, the Firebrand himself. There will also be live music, Scottish Country

dancing, and tempting food from the vendors of St. Lawrence Market! Of course, it wouldn't be March 6th without the popular Old Town Silent Auction, featuring many of our favourite local businesses!

Tickets are now on sale, with a special price this year for Society members! You can get yours in person at Toronto's First Post Office, online at [TOs185th.eventbrite.ca](https://www.toronto185th.eventbrite.ca), or by phone at 416-865-1833.

# COMING UP

## At Toronto's First Post Office



# Introduction to Soap Making Workshop

*Thursday, February 7, 7:00-8:00 pm, \$30 TYHS members, \$35 non-members*

During this Introduction to Soap Making workshop, you'll learn to make soap from scratch and create naturally luxurious handcrafted soaps. Students will take home approximately 3 oz. of the soap you made in class!

*Pre-registration is required at [introductiontosoap.eventbrite.ca](http://introductiontosoap.eventbrite.ca) or call 416-865-1833.*

## Post-a-Letter Sunday

*Sundays, February 10, March 10, and April 14. 1:00-4:00 pm. Free! Please drop in!*

A free, monthly drop-in for writers, correspondents, journalers, and all those who would like dedicated writing time in good company.

## Toronto's 185th Birthday Celebration

*Wednesday, March 6, 7:00 pm, St. Lawrence Hall, \$25 TYHS members, \$35 non-members*

Always a hot ticket in Old Town Toronto! See page 1 for more details on this year's celebration.

*Tickets are now available at [tos185th.eventbrite.ca](https://tos185th.eventbrite.ca) or call 416-865-1833.*

## Watercolour Workshop: Spring Florals

*Thursday, March 28, 6:30-8:00 pm, \$25 TYHS members, \$30 non-members*

Step by step, artist Jennifer Fryer will guide you through creating a watercolour painting. You'll end the evening with a beautiful painting you can take home, as well as a good filling of watercolour knowledge you can use to experiment and play with your newly mastered medium!

*Pre-registration is required at [watercolourflorals.eventbrite.ca](http://watercolourflorals.eventbrite.ca) or call 416-865-1833.*

## HOT IN THE SHOP: LOVE IS IN THE AIR(MAIL)



Treat your sweetie with something special and locally-made this February 14th!

Pair a decadent, vegan, olive oil soap from Corktown soap with a heavenly steam facial from Gold Apothecary. Don't forget to slip in a billet doux, sealed with a kiss! Lots more, handmade with love, in the shop at Toronto's First Post Office!

On sale this month: made-in-Toronto calendars! Months are paired, so you can see what's coming. Each page features Toronto watercolours on luxuriously rich paper. Remember, Town of York Historical Society members get an *extra* 10% off on sales in the shop.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ISSUE *from page 1*

Years later, Albert Jackson, now grown, applied for and was awarded the position of mail carrier in the General Post Office on Adelaide, at the head of Toronto Street. However, when he reported for duty, every other carrier refused to train him, and he was demoted to the position of hall porter. But Toronto's Black community put pressure on the government to intervene on Jackson's behalf. 1882 was an election year, and the issue was taken up and hotly debated by Toronto's newspapers. It became a national issue, with both Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and the Liberal candidate putting their support behind Jackson. By June, Jackson was delivering the mail, and carried on doing so until his death in 1918.

The stamp depicts Jackson in his blue Canada Post Office Department uniform. Quoted in Canada Post's Details magazine, illustrator Ron Dollekamp said "I wanted to show him performing his duty with a slight smile and a spring in his step, as if he has stepped out of history to hand you your mail."

As Walters pointed out to the crowd in St. Lawrence Hall, when Jackson reported for duty in May of 1882, he had already been given the job. So why were his employers so surprised by the colour of his skin? There is only one possible explanation. Mr. Jackson had applied by mail.

*To coincide with the release of the Albert Jackson stamp, Toronto's First Post Office has mounted an exhibit on Jackson's story. Admission to Toronto's First Post Office and the exhibit is by donation.*

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## PERKS OF MEMBERSHIP

A strong, active membership benefits the Town of York Historical Society, and we want membership to benefit you, too! The Society has been examining its membership program and is adding benefits.

As always, members receive:

- This quarterly newsletter, delivered by hand or by mail.
- 10% off in Toronto's First Post Office shop, even on top of sale prices!

But now you'll also enjoy:

- Special members' rates for all of our pre-registered events and workshops.
- Advance notice for events. If you included your email address on your membership enrollment form, you will receive a special advance e-newsletter each month. If you aren't already receiving the e-newsletter, let us know at [info@tos1stpo.com](mailto:info@tos1stpo.com).
- Invitations to special events, exclusive to members.



We want to hear from you! Have ideas for other ways we can show our appreciation? We welcome your comments and suggestions at [info@tos1stpo.com](mailto:info@tos1stpo.com).

## CALL FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles concerning the history of the Town of York and early Toronto, built heritage, postal history, or other items of interest to the Town of York Historical Society.

Please contact the Editor at [info@tos1stpo.com](mailto:info@tos1stpo.com).

# GET INVOLVED

## Become a Member.

Show your support for history in Old Town Toronto, get 10% off in the shop, and receive the Newsletter right in your mailbox.

**Individual Memberships: \$30      Family Memberships: \$50**

Mail-in membership forms can be found at [townofyork.com/membership.html](http://townofyork.com/membership.html)

## Donate.

All donations and memberships come with a tax receipt!

Cheques may be sent to Toronto's First Post Office, 260 Adelaide St. East, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1N1. Many other ways to donate, including by credit card or PayPal, can be found at [townofyork.com/support.html](http://townofyork.com/support.html).

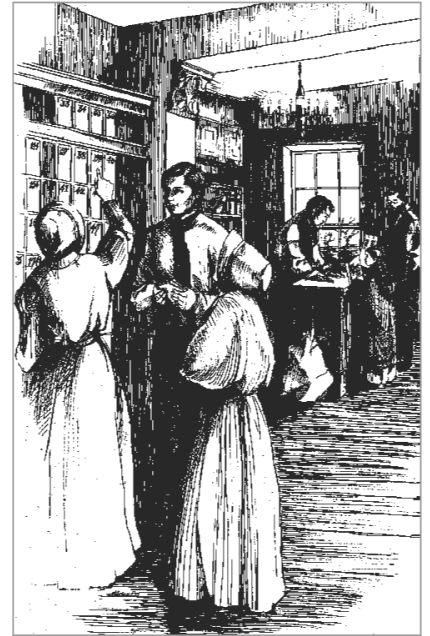
## Get Your Mail at a Museum.

*A limited number of P.O. boxes have become available!*

Only \$185 per year, tax and membership included. Enjoy value and security, outstanding and responsive customer service, and courier deliveries. All within a National Historic Site. And yes, we're open on weekends!

## Be Social.

We post regularly on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @TOs1stPO. Join us!



## Toronto's First Post Office is administered by the Town of York Historical Society

260 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, ON M5A 1N1

The Post Office will be closed February 17 and 18 for Family Day,  
and April 19, 21, and 22nd for the Easter long weekend.

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Hours of operation:  
Monday to Friday: 9:00 – 5:30  
Saturdays: 10:00 – 4:00  
Sundays: 12:00 – 4:00  
Closed on holiday Mondays and Sundays preceding.

The Town of York Historical Society Board of Directors: Valerie Bayers, Kevin Both, Anthony Colvin, Katherine Dennis, Shirley Farrar, Michael Kaspro, Geoffrey Milos, Corinna Prior, and Martin Rainbow.

The Town of York Historical Society is a legally incorporated non-profit organization and registered charity.  
Toronto's First Post Office is a museum, National Historic Site and Canada Post outlet.

Gratefully acknowledged is the support of the City of Toronto; the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport, our members, donors and customers, and Canada Post Corporation.

**Town of York**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**TORONTO'S FIRST**  
**Post Office**