

NEWSLETTER

The Town of York Historical Society

July 2019

Vol. XXXV No. 3

HERITAGE IN JEOPARDY



Photo: National Trust for Canada

Every year, the National Trust for Canada releases a list of its Top 10 Endangered Places. The list is meant to shine a light on places of historical significance that are under threat, and the communities trying to save them.

Recently, the Trust released their list for 2019, and it included one item that broke the mould of structures at risk due to inappropriate development, neglect, or lack of funding. This maverick item, simply stated, is “All Future Heritage Designations”. The culprit is the Government of Ontario itself, and specifically Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act. As the National Trust elaborates, this

legislation, which passed on June 6th, “guts municipal ability to protect local heritage and gives final say over designation to appointed tribunals.”

Bill 108 changed many pieces of existing legislation including the Ontario Heritage Act, the Planning Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Many heritage, housing, and environmental groups released statements on the dangers of the new legislation and such a rushed process. In all, the new law amends 13 different statutes. The City of Toronto released a statement that the changes enacted through Bill 108 would affect parks, recreation centres, childcare centres, libraries, subsidized housing, paramedic services, and other community infrastructure. It also changes affordable housing requirements, how heritage buildings are conserved and the manner in which development applications are reviewed. Not all of the changes took immediate effect, with some rolled out in the coming weeks, so stay tuned.

ONTARIO PLACE IN DANGER

by correspondent Catherine Nasmith

How would you feel if your grandparents suddenly disappeared from all your family’s photos? Suddenly, all your memories would be devalued, all the shared experiences you built together would be wiped out.

That is what is happening at Ontario Place. The provincial government is threatening to rob Ontario of part of our history, a landmark whose very name speaks to what we have built together since arriving on the shores of Lake Ontario.

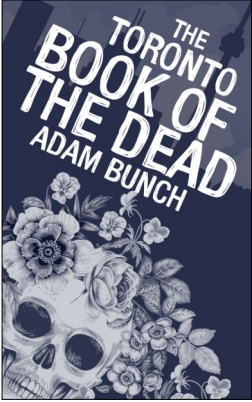


Photo: Ontario Place For All

Make no mistake, Ontario Place is a jewel, albeit a jewel recovering from years of neglect. Located on man-made islands just off shore, Ontario Place is an imaginative metaphor, “a machine in the wilderness”, designed by Eberhard Zeidler and landscape architect Michael Hough. The waterfront park has garnered international recognition and won several design awards.

Continued on page 4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT



The Town of York Historical Society's 36th Annual General Meeting was held in May at the Redwood Theatre at Gerrard and Greenwood. While this may have been the farthest the Society has wandered from Old Town Toronto, those who made the trek were entertained with an illustrated talk by author Adam Bunch.

Though copies of Adam's book were sold out in May and not available at the AGM, *The Toronto Book of the Dead* is now available at Toronto's First Post Office.

During the business meeting, President Kevin Both reported on the Board of Director's activities during the year, including the formation of five new committees. These committees are: Strategic Planning, Financial, Collections, Lease, and Membership. The Board encourages members to ask about getting involved with the committees. If you are interested, please contact board@TOs1stPO.com.

Executive Director Kat Akerfeldt delivered an update on Toronto's First Post Office, and thanked staff and volunteers for their help during the year. She gratefully acknowledged the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, the City of Toronto, Canada Post, and Farrow & Ball for their support in the past year. Volunteer Fin Al-Yousifi was thanked for contributing her skills and many hours in helping us to refresh the TownofYork.com website.

NOW ON AT TORONTO'S FIRST POST OFFICE: Read All About It: The First World War as Front Page News



The crisis of the First World War transformed Toronto's media. Demand for information had never been greater, but newspapers could be shut down by the Chief Censor for war stories deemed too negative. This exhibit explores the challenge of reporting on war while balancing government regulations with a public desperate for news.

Presented by Mackenzie House, and on display at Toronto's First Post Office from June 20-September 12, 2019.

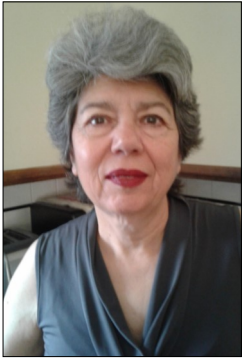
ICE CREAM SOCIAL



As a special thank you for your help and support, you are invited to Toronto's First Post Office for an extra special treat. We hope that you will join us for an old-fashioned ice cream social. Help make ice cream with a manual ice cream maker and then taste the product of your labour. Relax in our courtyard as you enjoy a sweet treat and socialize with others. There will also be crafts and games for kids. Everyone is welcome, so bring friends and family.

This event is free, but please RSVP at [icecreamsocial.eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) to confirm your attendance.

NEW FACES ON THE BOARD



At the Annual General Meeting, the membership of the Town of York Historical Society held their elections, and sent two members to sit on the Board of Directors.

This marks Luisa Giacometti's return to the Board of Directors after an absence of four years. Luisa brings her vast and valuable management and volunteer experience. She has been a Chair of ROMwalks, on the Board of Spadina House, Mackenzie House, and Colborne Lodge, Chair and Past Chair of the Culinary Historians of Canada, and many other non-profit organizations. Luisa has spent most of her career in leadership positions working on strategy, training, and change management.



John Jones joins us as a graduate from the University of Toronto with a major in History. He is passionate about the development of Toronto, and is particularly interested in the city's policy direction. John is a multi-location Operations Manager for The Beer Store and a Beer Store Charity Coordinator, from which he has earned experience in operational fundamentals, employment standards, and fundraising. John is currently pursuing a post-graduate certificate in Human Resource Management.

We are also very pleased to welcome back the rest of the Board of Directors in the following roles: Kevin Both as President, Martin Rainbow as Vice-President, Shirley Farrar as Treasurer, Valerie Bayers as Secretary, and Anthony Colvin, Katherine Dennis, Geoffrey Milos, and Corinna Prior as Members-At-Large.

... AND IN THE POST OFFICE



Staff and customers recently bid farewell to our weekend Postal Clerk Katie Merriman. Katie matriculated with a Masters from the University of Toronto, and was immediately recruited into a full-time library position. We wish her the best of luck in her career.

Meanwhile, we are delighted to welcome Kristina Brown onto the staff at Toronto's First Post Office. Kristina is pursuing her degree in Advertising at OCAD University, and is an accomplished photographer. She has also worked with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and at the CN Tower. Welcome Kristina!

... AND IN THE MUSEUM!



This summer, we are excited to welcome Zi Lun Huang. Zi is currently a Master's candidate in the Museum Studies program at the University of Toronto, and already holds a Master's in Philosophy from the University of Alberta.

Thanks to a grant from the Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations Program, Zi will spend the next two months making the museum's archives and collection accessible in a digital format. Witnessing the enthusiasm Zi has brought to working with the historic objects in the museum's collection, staff have recognized her as a kindred spirit.

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@tos1stp.com.

ONTARIO PLACE, *from page 1*

Don't be fooled by the government's assertion that it wants Ontario Place to be an "iconic cultural and tourism destination." It has systematically laid the groundwork for the wholesale destruction of the waterfront park. First, in an Orwellian move, the government removed Ontario Place's *Statement of Cultural Heritage Value* from their own website, because it undercut what the government was planning to do. That statement said, among other things "Ontario Place, a cultural heritage landscape, remains a rare and intact Modernist expression of integrated architecture, engineering and landscape that honours and incorporates the natural setting of Lake Ontario. It was a remarkable and ambitious achievement of late twentieth century architecture, and holds an enduring influence in Toronto, the province and internationally."

Then, in its Development Proposal released this spring, the government told developers they didn't need to keep any of the current attractions at Ontario Place, including Trillium Park, and the iconic Cinesphere and Pods. It also said developers could bar the public and privatize the entire site.

This is not going to happen without a fight. A new group, Ontario Place for All has been organizing opponents, and this month brought in noted park expert John Alschuler to talk to supporters. The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario is lending the group its support. The City of Toronto is also opposed to the wanton destruction of Ontario Place. Toronto City Council has unanimously called on the province to, among other things:



Photo: Archives of Ontario, I0005848

- restore the purpose of Ontario Place as a showcase and destination for Ontario;
- enhance public access to the full-length of the Ontario Place shoreline, and protect its natural heritage features;
- include Ontario Place on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register; and
- consult with Indigenous peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation;

This is one of those defining moments in the history of our city and our province. We have a once in a lifetime chance to preserve Ontario Place, and build on what has been accomplished. Talk to your politicians, consider joining Ontario

Place For All, visit Ontario Place and see its attractions for yourself. The future is up to you. We have one chance to get this right.



WISH YOU WERE HERE?

Join our email list and have details on our upcoming events delivered to your email inbox every month.

Subscribe at <http://eepurl.com/bBFeu1>, or at TownofYork.com. Of course, you may unsubscribe at any time. Members receive their email two weeks early with special offers and early access to events!

You can also get up-to-the-minute news from Toronto's First Post Office via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Follow us @TOs1stPO.

GET YOUR MAIL IN A MUSEUM

A Limited Number of P.O. Box Rentals are Available



A limited number of Post Office boxes have become available at Toronto's First Post Office, including some very desirable box numbers. These box rentals help keep the museum's doors open, and offer a unique service to modern Torontonians.

Would you benefit from a P.O. box? Consider the advantages of collecting your mail and packages from a permanent, private address in downtown Toronto. Unlike most post office boxes, we accept deliveries from couriers and hand-delivered mail. The Post Office is open and your mail is available for pick-up seven days a week.

Did you know: boxes at Toronto's First Post Office are as large as you require! No need to choose your

box based on future needs that may fluctuate. If your parcel doesn't fit in your box, we'll keep it safe until you are ready to collect it.

Customer service at Toronto's First Post Office is consistently rated at the top of Canada Post locations in the city. Our postal staff are friendly, responsible, and knowledgeable.

Amongst our current box holders, we are proud to be of service to home-based businesses who want a professional address while maintaining personal privacy, to boards and foundations whose directors change from year to year, but require a permanent address, and to students or those who move often and want to avoid the cost of forwarding mail from old addresses to new addresses.

Boxes at Toronto's First Post Office are very reasonably priced at \$185 per year, which includes tax and membership in the Town of York Historical Society.

THE TORONTO STATIONERY SHOW

This one-day event will feature beautiful paper goods and stationery accessories.



Toronto's First Post Office is proud to be a sponsor. Come say hello at our Pop Up Post Office at the Toronto Stationery Show! A list of vendors and more information can be found at qandaletterbox.com.

August 25, 11:00 am—5:00 pm

*The Great Hall, 1087 Queen Street West
Free admission!*



COMING UP at Toronto's First Post Office



My Body, My Art

Thursday, July 18, 6:30—8:30 pm

Tell your story through visual imagery. Create an empowering version of an ink and paper self-portrait. With illustrator Natalie Very B.'s help, you'll look at yourself with a newly found kindness.

Members: \$15, Non-members: \$20

Register at mybodymyart.eventbrite.ca



Letter Writing Social

A free, monthly drop-in for letter-writers, journallers, and all those who would like DEDICATED WRITING TIME in good company! The Toronto Letter Writers Society meets the second Sunday of every month for Letter Writing Socials at Toronto's First Post Office. Bring your own supplies or use ours. Upcoming meetups:

- Sunday, August 11, 1:00 pm—4:00 pm
- Sunday, September 8, 1:00 pm—4:00 pm
- Sunday, October 6, 1:00 pm—4:00 pm

No registration required. Free!



Summer Walking Tour Series

This summer, join us for a series of walking tours as we explore the Town of York, and the issues that faced the early city of Toronto in the 1830s.

- The Battle of York, 1813: Terror in the Town, July 21, 11:30 am—1:00 pm
- Death, Violence, and Justice in the Queen City, August 18, 11:30 am—1:00 pm

Tours start and end at Toronto's First Post Office. Tours run rain or shine, and may cover rough ground, so please dress accordingly. All ages are welcome. Dogs and bicycles are welcome as we walk, though portions of some tours may include indoor areas where they are restricted.

No registration required. By donation.

SAVE IN THE SHOP THIS SUMMER!

Snail-Mail Summer!





**JULY 15
TO
OCTOBER 12
2019**

This coupon is good for 25% off one transaction at Toronto's First Post Office., 260 Adelaide St. East.

The discount will be taken off the total of one transaction made between July 15 and October 12, 2019. Cannot be applied in addition to any other offer (ex. member discount). Cannot be applied towards Canada Post product, postage, or services. Cannot be applied towards Post Office box rentals or programming. Coupon must be surrendered at time of purchase. Previous purchases cannot be adjusted. One coupon per customer.

We've got a special treat in the shop this summer for members and newsletter subscribers!



Save 25% on your entire purchase in the Toronto's First Post Office Shop with this coupon. This is a great time to stock up on cards, gifts, and more locally-made goodies!

And because we're hoping for a long summer, this coupon is good until Thanksgiving weekend, October 12.

COMING UP Elsewhere



Toronto Brews at the Market Gallery

Opens Saturday, July 13th and continues to December 28, 2019.

Gallery hours: Tuesday—Friday 10am to 4pm, Saturday 9am to 4pm.

Market Gallery, 95 Front Street East, 2nd Floor

Discover tiny breweries established in the early 1800s, industry growth in the Victorian Era, Prohibition, the rise of Canada's macro-brewers, the microbrewery movement & contemporary craft-beer culture. During the exhibit, the Gallery is also offering special companion events such as guided tours of the exhibit, beer tastings, walking tours, and classes on cooking with beer.

Regular admission applies. Tickets to special programming are available at themarketgallery.streamintickets.com.



Film Screening: *The Experimental City*

Wednesday, July 24, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. West

At a moment when Toronto is considering numerous "smart city" projects, including the Quayside neighborhood being designed by Google's Sidewalk Labs, *The Experimental City* couldn't be more relevant. This is a fascinating film about the Minnesota Experimental City, a futuristic effort to solve urban problems by creating a full-size city from scratch in the isolated woods of northern Minnesota. Following the screening, journalist John Lorinc will moderate a Q&A with tech entrepreneur Saadia Muzaffar, founder of Tech Girls Canada and co-founder of Tech Reset Canada, and Ken Greenberg, author of *Toronto Reborn*, and adviser to Sidewalk Labs Toronto.

Tickets available at hotdocscinema.ca.



Eagle Drum Girl at Wigwam Chi-Chemung

Monday, August 5, 2019, 1:00—3:00 pm, Trillium Park, 955 Lake Shore Blvd W.

Inspired by the teachings of Elder Dr. Duke Redbird, Young People's Theatre will perform staged reading excerpts from Duke's play *Eagle Drum Girl*. Following the performance, Duke will lead a talk on the original spirit of engagement and treaties between Indigenous nations and the Government of Canada.



Cabbagetown Walks: The Necropolis—Off the Beaten Path

Thursday, September 5 or Thursday, September 26, 6:30 pm, 200 Winchester St.

On this tour of the Toronto Necropolis, we highlight the stories of extraordinary women and people of colour, whose stories are seldom told. Though it is now known as the resting place for the giants of Toronto history, this cemetery was established to be non-denominational and inclusive.

Offered free of charge by the Cabbagetown Preservation Association



Remnants & Relics: Campbell House to Guild Park

Sunday, September 22, 10:00 am—3:00 pm, Campbell House, Queen St. West.

Learn about the impact of the 1960s high-rise development on Toronto's heritage and what remains from the demolition of several buildings. This tour includes a visit to Campbell House, and a bus trip to Guild Park. On the way, the bus will stop at many other examples of threatened historic properties.

\$63 for Heritage Toronto members, \$90 for non-members. Register at heritagetoronto.org.

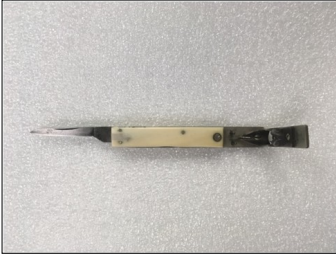
FROM THE COLLECTION



Ivory and brass quill cutter, c. 1840. (2006.1.44)

by TFPO Curator, Zoé Delguste-Cincotta

Before the development of metal nib pens, quill feathers were the writing tool of choice. If a letter was riddled with ink spatters, or the writing was ragged, it was most likely a sign of a quill with a dull tip. Getting a quill ready for use was a time-consuming process, consisting of cutting, trimming, and sharpening using penknives. The invention of the quill cutter would greatly facilitate this frequent chore. Resembling a tool we would now use to trim our nails, a quill cutter clips quill tip into a new point.



This particular cutter is rectangular with brass fittings. A quill would be inserted into the hole in the top of the tool and pressed into a point. This tool contained extra features, such as a fold-out steel blade used for removing the barbs, refining the point's shape, and cutting a split into the new nib so that it releases the ink in a smooth line.



The blade is marked "RODGRS CUTLERS TO HER MAJESTY PATENT" and a "VR" with crown hallmark. Founded in 1724, Joseph Rodgers & Sons was one of the largest and most prolific cutlery manufacturers of the nineteenth-century, based in Sheffield, England. Their trademark was a Star and Maltese Cross (which can also be seen on the blade of the cutter). In 1821 the company was granted the title "Cutlers to the Royal Family and gained worldwide acclaim." This cutter is in excellent condition, though the blade is dull. Overall length is 12.7 cm when extended.

RESEARCHER'S CORNER



Nina writes: "I am an engineering historian currently looking at the life and work of a woman born in Lonsdale Road, York, Ontario. **Elsie Joy Muntz (later Davison)** became one of the early female commercial pilot/engineers in the UK but was killed in 1940 while training to become a pilot. I know

almost nothing about her background in Canada."

Do you know Elsie? Please forward any information to Nina directly at nina.baker1@btinternet.com and visit her blog at womenengineerssite.wordpress.com.

Do you have a research request to put to our knowledgeable readers? Forward to info@TOs1stPO.com, care of Researcher's Corner.

NEW EXHIBIT TAKES OFF

Catapult Ships and Flying Boats: Air Mail in the South Atlantic

Curated by Andrew Selbie

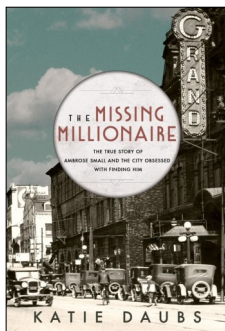
By the 1930s aircrafts had undergone considerable development, but they were not yet powerful enough to fly non-stop across the oceans.

This new exhibit, opening in September, examines the experiments by various countries to bridge the gap between South America and Africa via a direct air mail route, achieved by mounting an aircraft on the decks of passenger liners, and dispatching them by catapult several hundred kilometres, in order to hasten the delivery of mail.

On display at Toronto's First Post Office, September 12th 2019 – Jan 15th 2020.



HERITAGE NEWS IN BRIEF



NEW BOOK ON THE MISSING MILLIONAIRE: In December 1919, Ambrose Small, the owner of the Grand Opera House in Toronto, sold his network of Ontario theatres, deposited a million-dollar cheque in his bank account, and was never seen again. In *The Missing Millionaire*, Katie Daubs tells the story, weaving together a gripping narrative with the social and cultural history of a city undergoing immense change. *The Missing Millionaire* will be released September 10th.

CAMH WALL: The short stretch of wall at Shaw and Queen St. West at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is the last remaining part of a wall that once partially enclosed the 1851 Provincial Lunatic Asylum. The wall was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1997 and is the only surviving built element of the original asylum on site. The wall was built by patients who were not paid for their labour, as a kind of work therapy. CAMH is currently redeveloping the site, which includes removing part of the surviving wall on the east side of the property. CAMH reports that bricks removed will be used to replace crumbling bricks in the remaining wall.



FOOL'S PARADISE: The Ontario Heritage Trust is calling for applications to the Artist-in-Residence program at Fool's Paradise, the artist Doris McCarthy's former home and studio. Residencies are available for artists in any discipline, for terms in 2020 from one to three months. The deadline to apply is September 30, 2019. More details and applications are available at heritagetrust.on.ca/dmair.



Fool's Paradise on the Scarborough Bluffs. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid



Photo credit: Larco Investments

CHATEAU LAURIER RENOVATION:

Controversy over a planned addition onto the Château Laurier in Ottawa is heating up. The Château is operated by Fairmont, who want to add another 127 rooms onto the historic hotel. Last year, Ottawa City Council agreed to grant a permit to alter the building if the addition was changed to be more 'visually compatible' with the old hotel. A design approved in early July was the fifth design submitted. However, Heritage Ottawa says the proposed addition's "angular, blocky massing and style... remains

intrinsically incompatible with the romantic sensibility of the historic Château." Changes to the building, as a registered heritage building, must be approved by council, but council cannot order a certain design. Opponents of the latest design have indicated that they may challenge the permit in court.

SCHOOL FIRES IN TORONTO: In May, the roof and interior of York Memorial Collegiate Institute at Eglinton and Keele Streets partially collapsed during two fires on May 8, ironically on the school's 90th birthday. The building, built in honour of Canadians lost to war, was designated of heritage importance in 1985. Though the Toronto District School Board hopes that the structure will be saved, important elements such as stonework and stained glass were lost in the fires, and teams are now trying to preserve the art and architecture that remain.



The Royal York in 1929. Photo credit: Toronto Star Archives



York Memorial C.I. Photo credit: Tijana Martin/The Canadian Press

FAIRMONT ROYAL YORK BIRTHDAY: Another Fairmont property, and another 90th birthday. On June 11, the erstwhile landmark of Toronto's skyline celebrated its anniversary by unveiling a renovated lobby and restaurant.

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

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.

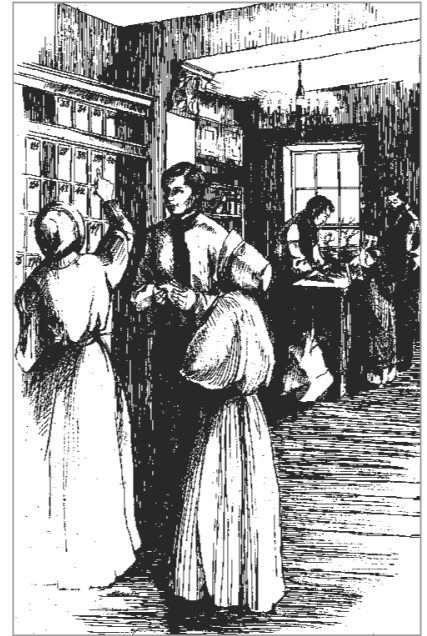
Get Your Mail at a Museum.

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 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 August 4-5 for Simcoe Day, September 1-2 for Labour Day, and October 13-14 for Thanksgiving.

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Charitable Reg. No. 10810 1627 RT 0001
Newsletter Editor: Kat Akerfeldt
ISSN 1481-8922

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, Luisa Giacommeti, John Jones, 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.

