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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!

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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 November 11 for Remembrance Day, December 25 for Christmas Day, December 26 for Boxing Day, and January 1st for New Years Day.

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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.

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Town of York
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



TORONTO'S FIRST
Post Office

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October 2019

Newsletter

Vol. XXXV No. 4

NEW FOUNDATIONS FOR A FRESH MARKET

The St. Lawrence North Market is finally under construction. In 2010, the winner of the design competition was announced. By 2013, costs had risen by more than \$15 million, the original design was reduced substantially, and ground had yet to be broken. In fact, the 1968 building was still standing until 2015, when the Saturday Farmer's Market moved into the tent south of the Market.

When demolition began, archaeological investigations and further changes to the design (to incorporate some of the historical discoveries) slowed the process. Work stopped entirely in early 2019 when the construction company declared bankruptcy. Newly re-rendered, the young forest that had grown up during the past near-decade has finally been cleared and drilling has begun. The new completion date is listed in the City's latest progress update as Spring 2022.



Artist rendering of the new North Market.
Image: City of Toronto

Plans for the new St. Lawrence North Market include 250 parking spaces, incubator kitchens, space for the Saturday Farmers Market and a café, court and legal services, admin offices, and a seniors centre.

Meanwhile, more changes are afoot at the St. Lawrence South Market. The Market Complex has retained Phase5 Consulting to collect input on expanding the Market's opening hours. Early in October, a community meeting heard the findings of Phase5's visitor study, conducted over the summer. *Continued on page 2*

150 YEARS OF POSTCARDS

by Toronto's First Post Office Curator, Zoé Delguste-Cincotta



A Correspondenz-Karte. Image: Wiki Commons

Postcards recently celebrated their 150th anniversary on October 1st 2019. Introduced as a way of sending a short message, they quickly evolved beyond the practical purpose of communication, into a universal souvenir that brightens everyone's mailboxes.

The first officially recognized postcard made by a postal operator was sent from Austria-Hungary on October 1st, 1869, following the suggestions of Dr. Emanuel Hermann. He had described the advantages of a "Correspondenz Karte" in an article in the *Neue Freie Presse*, noting that the time and effort involved in writing a letter was out of proportion to the size of the message sent.

Continued on page 6

A FRESH MARKET, *from page 1*

One of these findings was that 84% of neighborhood residents within a 5k radius expressed strong interest in the Market expanding their hours to include Sunday and Monday. Residents in attendance at the meeting echoed another of the study's findings, that 75% of locals desired weeknight shopping.

Though the Market has kept the same hours since the 1970s, the St. Lawrence neighbourhood demographic has changed substantially, especially in the last decade. Many more people live within walking distance and want to shop at the Market. At the same time, more residents are working professionals who are unable to shop during the day, and find it distressingly crowded on Saturdays.

Some merchants, however, are on guard against the possibility of 7-day a week shopping, fearing the impact on the quality of their product and their personal lives. Many businesses, it should be remembered, are family owned and operated. Merchants had suggestions of their own. On Saturdays, opening hours start at 5am, though the crowds don't arrive for another few hours. As one resident remarked: "is anyone alive at 5?" A University of Toronto student suggested opening on Sunday, but closing on Tuesday—this raised cheers from some merchants.

By the end of the evening, there seemed to be some consensus around *optimizing* hours rather than extending them. Merchants suggested management examine Google-collected information on when busy hours occurred, change the Market's hours depending on seasonally busy times, or start by shifting Saturday hours. Could there be a way to meet the needs of the shoppers as well as preserving the work/life balance of merchants?

RAISING THE OCULUS

In July, Park People announced that a team made up of members of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario—Toronto Branch and Giaimo Architects would be the recipients of the 2019 Public Space Incubator grant. The community-led team were tasked with revitalizing and transforming the 1959 Oculus, a shelter in South Humber Park, Etobicoke, and a unique example of space-age, modernist architecture in Toronto.

The Public Space Incubator grant was created to revitalize neglected public spaces, to nurture creative ideas that will invite the community to make use of these places.

The Oculus project aims to restore and clean the pavilion, install contextual outdoor furniture and lighting, and animate this once-popular meeting place with a series of walking tours, design workshops, and ongoing activities to engage the community.

Stephanie Mah of ACO Toronto says that the project shows "how architectural heritage conservation and community partnerships can create engaging public spaces."

Park People also granted funds and support to projects that would bring a pop-up playground to The Bentway, an Indigenous urban agriculture initiative to Parkdale, programming to the Jane-Finch Mall, and a snack stall to Mabelle Park.



The Campbell House: *Lost & Found* team. Image: Richard Longley/ACO

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY AWARDS: On October 3, the ACO Heritage Awards were distributed at the Berkeley Church. The 33 nominees included craftspeople, advocates, architects, engineers, writers, artists and curators involved in diverse projects across Ontario. Amongst the winners was the firm of George Robb Architect for restoration work at Montgomery's Inn Museum. Also, Campbell House Museum won the ACO Public Education and Engagement Award for their *Lost & Found: Rediscovering Fragments of Old Toronto* exhibit and programming. Congratulations, all!

JARVIS MANSION FIRE: A two alarm fire broke out at 314 Jarvis Street on September 1st. Soon after the fire was extinguished, Toronto's Fire Chief, Matthew Pegg, said that the fire was considered suspicious, but the investigation was initially hampered by the condition of the house, as the ceiling, walls, and floors had collapsed in the fire. The house was built in 1865, as the home of Dr. Charles Sheard, Toronto's first Chief Medical Officer. At the time of the September fire, the building had already sustained damage due to earlier fires, and had no water or electricity supply.



The Sheard Mansion, 1981. Image: Toronto Public Library



An object added to the Design Exchange permanent collection in 2017. Image: Instagram @designexchange

DESIGN EXCHANGE DISSOLVES COLLECTION: The Design Exchange was established in 1994 as a museum for Canada's industrial design history from 1945 to the present. However, following the inaugural EDIT Festival (Expo for Design, Innovation & Technology), the Board of Directors decided to pivot toward a festival organization. The next EDIT will be in June 2020. Meanwhile, the collection of more than 300 works by Canadian designers have been deaccessioned and gifted to other museums and institutions in Canada, with the majority going to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau. With the closure of the DX collection, there is no longer a museum dedicated to Canadian design.

DANFORTH MUSIC HALL TURNS 100: On August 18th, 1919, Allan's Danforth opened as a movie theatre with a showing of the Goldwyn comedy-romance *Through the Wrong Door*. Publicized as "Canada's First Super-Suburban Photo-Play Palace." Suburban? The Prince Edward Viaduct had only just opened months earlier, connecting Bloor Street to the previously slower pace of Danforth Avenue. The building functioned as a movie theatre until 1978, when it became a live music venue. In 1985, the building was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Danforth Music Hall celebrated its 100th anniversary weekend with a concert by The New Pornographers.



Allan's Theatre. Image: City of Toronto Archives

SPADINA HOUSE IS TORONTO'S NEWEST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE: In July, Spadina House became the most recent Toronto site to be designated a site of national historic importance. Renowned as a rare example of an lavish Edwardian residence with a predominantly Second Empire style, the current structure is the third on the property. It was built in 1866 for James Austin, a Toronto businessman, who founded the Dominion Bank and served as president of Consumers Gas. Between 1897 and 1913, extensive changes were made to the home by architect W.C. Vaux Chadwick, the firm Carrere and Hastings with Eustace G. Bird, and painter Gustav Hahn.



Spadina House in 1982. Image: Toronto Public Library

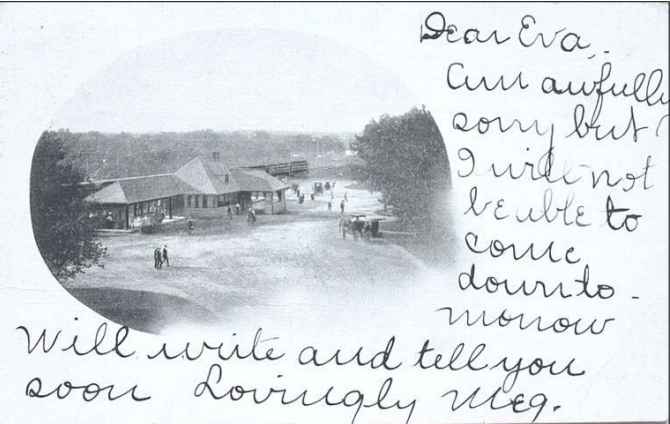


The Oculus with sun-lit bird statue, c. early 1960s. Image: Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary



In 2017. Image: Rick Miller/Flickr

POSTCARDS, *from page 1*

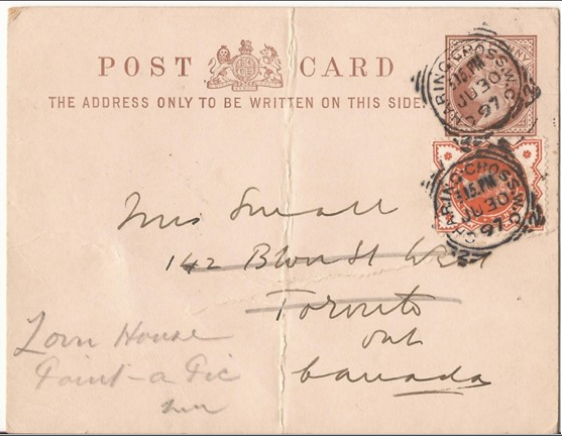


An early photographic postcard. Image: Postcrossing.

is put into the sending of a postcard is what sets them apart in a world of instant communications. Surprise someone with an unexpected postcard and join the #150yearsofpostcards party!

In order to celebrate this special anniversary, Postcrossing, the postcard trading society, has launched a global campaign to encourage everyone to rediscover the joys of dashing off a quick note or receiving a picture postcard. To learn more about the campaign, visit 150yearsofpostcards.com. And to find out more about Postcrossing visit postcrossing.com.

FROM THE COLLECTION



Postcard, dated June 30 1897. (994.6.93)

by Toronto's First Post Office Curator, Zoé Delguste-Cincotta

Though it bears little resemblance to the picture postcards popular in our gift shop today, this 1897 postcard maximizes writing space by leaving both sides for a message and address information.

Similar in appearance to the original "Correspondenz Karte" described on page 1, this postcard from Toronto's First Post Office's collection is a light-beige 11.5 x 9cm card. It is addressed in ink to 142 Bloor St. West, in Toronto, Ontario, now the location of a high-end fashion boutique. However, it was redirected, in pencil, to Lorne House. This is probably Chamard's Lorne House Hotel, in Pointe-au-Pic, Quebec.

Next to the address are featured a brown British Queen Victoria half penny stamp, and an orange British Queen Victoria half penny stamp. These are hammered with a cancellation originating from a post office at the Charing Cross Railway Station in London, in 1897.

The reverse of the postcard features a message from a daughter writing to her mother about her trip to London, England.

DIGITIZING THE COLLECTION



by Toronto's First Post Office Curator, Zoé Delguste-Cincotta

This past summer, Toronto's First Post Office had an extra pair of helping hands in the form of a summer student! With the help of Young Canada Works, we welcomed Zi Huang for a 12 week internship at our museum. Currently entering the second year of her Masters of Museum Studies at the University of Toronto, Zi was looking for an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a small, community museum.

This project offered Zi the opportunity, with ample supervision and support from our Curator and Executive Director, to experience and take responsibility for the creation of digital photographic records of museum objects. After familiarizing herself with our cataloguing procedures, Zi helped accession

objects into our museum's collection, and ensured that files were complete with regards to documentation, cataloging, and numbering objects. Her primary responsibility was to research and collect information on current best practices for the documentation of museum objects, then write a document describing these procedures.

By the end of the summer, Zi had not only created a new policy and procedure manual for our Digitization but had successfully scanned or photographed our entire archival collection and 30% of the artifact collection. According to Zi, this internship "was a meaningful experience because more than any particular skill, I was able to build professional confidence." Not only did she discover what it's like to work in the context of a specialized museum but she was grateful for the "supportive atmosphere where I'm able to develop a sense of ownership over my work." We are also grateful for her diligent work and meticulous attention to detail. Thank you, Zi!



NEW FACE IN THE POST OFFICE



Sherilyn Bell recently joined us as our weekday Postal Clerk. Sherilyn comes to Toronto's First Post Office with behind-the-counter postal experience. Prior to this, she retired from a 25-year career as a research lab technician at The Hospital for Sick Children to care for a family member.

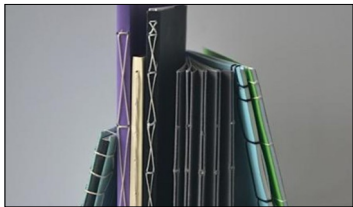
Sherilyn acquired an interest in genetics while growing up as one of dizygotic triplets in Mississauga, Ontario, receiving a B.Sc. from the University of Toronto. She and her husband are ardent genealogists and amateur historians, having met in the Archives of Toronto and honeymooning at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sherilyn hosts a Beatles Trivial Pursuit group and periodically gives presentations about genealogy/genetic genealogy for various genealogical societies. Welcome, Sherilyn!

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

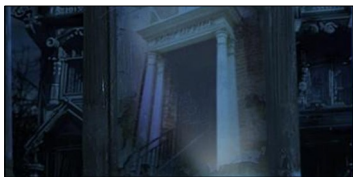
Members are encouraged to submit articles concerning the history of the Town of York and early Toronto, built heritage, postal history, or other items of interest to the Town of York Historical Society.

Please contact the Editor at info@tos1stpo.com.

COMING UP AT TORONTO'S FIRST POST OFFICE



Bookbinding Sampler Workshop
November 3, 10:00 am—2:00 pm
In this beginner bookbinding class, students will learn the tools of the trade and 3 easy, soft-cover bookbinding techniques. Everyone will leave with 3 finished notebooks using these newly acquired techniques. This workshop will be led by Carolyn Eady, owner/artist of Sprouts Press.
\$55 Town of York Historical Society members, \$65 non-members.
Register by calling Toronto's First Post Office at 416-865-1833 ext. 4 or at bookbindingatthepo.eventbrite.ca



Ghostly Walk of the Town of York
Thursday, October 24 and Friday, October 25, 7:00pm—8:30 pm
Brave the darkness as we head into the city to explore the ghostly haunts of the Old Town of York, and hear tales of dread and mystery of those who walked Toronto's streets before us. The walk will proceed rain or (moon) shine!
\$10 Town of York Historical Society members, \$15 non-members.
Register by calling Toronto's First Post Office at 416-865-1833 ext. 4 or at townofyorkghostwalk.eventbrite.ca



Letter Writing Socials
Upcoming dates: November 10 and December 8, 1:00 pm—4:00 pm
A free, monthly drop-in for letter-writers, bullet journallers, and all those who would like dedicated writing time in good company. Hosted by the Toronto Letter Writers Society, which the second Sunday of every month for Letter Writing Socials at Toronto's First Post Office. Bring your own supplies or use ours.
Free! All are welcome to attend. No registration necessary.

YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP



by Toronto's First Post Office Executive Director, Kat Akerfeldt
If you received this edition of the Town of York Historical Society Newsletter delivered directly to your mailbox, then you are already a supporter of the Historical Society and Toronto's First Post Office. You may be a member because you enjoy browsing the made-in-Toronto products in the museum shop and enjoy getting 10% off every purchase. You may appreciate receiving advance notice on workshops and events, and special members-only pricing for those events. You may even look forward to receiving this quarterly newsletter with news about Toronto heritage, postal history, and the Old Town neighbourhood. Or perhaps you were gifted a membership from someone who wanted to share our mission and activities with you.

And we appreciate your support! The number of our members and visitors is very important when we are asking for grants to maintain or improve our facilities, and to continue to offer programming and services. We couldn't survive without the proceeds from those shop sales, and Canada Post helps us maintain the 1833 post office's original purpose only because you buy postage at our counter. And your donations are essential to keeping our doors open.

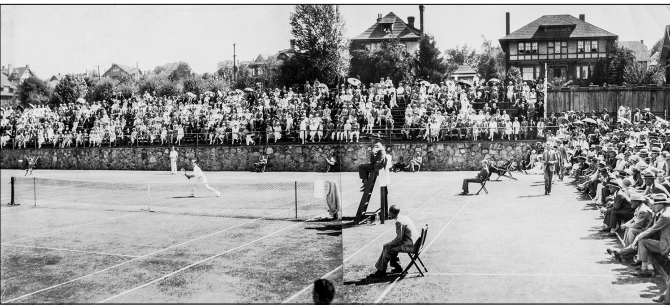
In the coming days, you will receive a letter from the Board of Directors of the Town of York Historical Society, asking that you continue your support with a contribution towards our end-of-year campaign. The Society and the Museum rely on the support from the community it serves, and there are many ways that you can help ensure that we can continue to offer these services. To learn how, visit townofyork.com/donations/ or contact us directly. Please consider supporting the Town of York Historical Society today.

EVENTS IN HERITAGE AND IN THE COMMUNITY



Master and Commander: A Weekend in Nelson's Navy
October 18-20, 2019
Multiple locations including Montgomery's Inn, Etobicoke
Spend the weekend immersing yourself in the world of the Royal Navy of 200 years ago. Learn to write with quill pens, enjoy historic dancing, or try a cutlass drill. Take a lake cruise aboard a tall ship; enjoy historical meals by firelight, daily rations of grog; and more!
Pay-as-you-go or register for the full weekend at JaneAustenDancing.ca

York Pioneer Historical Society's Annual Dinner
5:30pm, Saturday, November 9, 2019.
The Toronto Lawn Tennis Club, 44 Price St, Rosedale
Enjoy a delicious buffet dinner and an engaging speaker as the York Pioneers celebrate their annual dinner in their 150th year.
\$80 members, \$90 non-members.
More information at yorkpioneers.com/online_store/



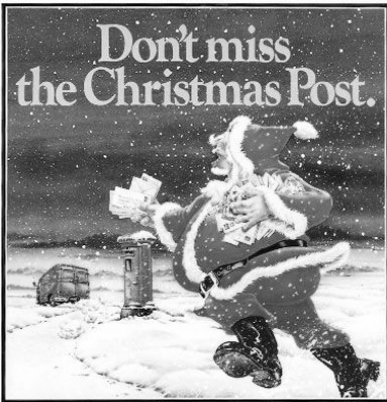
Still from *Our Dance of Revolution*.
Image: Regent Park Film Festival

Regent Park Film Festival
November 20-23, 2019
Daniels Spectrum, 585 Dundas St E, Toronto
Toronto's longest running free community film festival, dedicated to showcasing local and international independent works relevant to people from all walks of life, with a focus on inviting those of us from low income and public housing communities. As Regent Park undergoes a fifteen-year re-development, the Festival works to bring together the many diverse communities that exist in the neighbourhood to enjoy and engage with film as a means of artistic expression and a catalyst for change.
More information at regentparkfilmfestival.com

HOLIDAY MAIL-BY DATES

Ask us about Canada Post's delivery times for sending packages, and keep these dates in mind when preparing and sending your holiday letter mail!

- To Africa: **November 25**
- To the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Central and South America, and the Caribbean: **December 2**
- To the United States: **December 9**
- Outside of Ontario: **December 18**
- Outside of Toronto: **December 19**
- For local delivery: **December 20**



We will be sending out reminders of these important dates on social media @TOs1stPO. If you need to stock up, all cards will be "Buy 4, Get 1 Free" starting November 12, until December 31, 2019.