



DESTRUCTION OF DOMINION FOUNDRY DELAYED

On January 14, 2021, community members noticed a demolition crew at the Dominion Wheel and Foundries Ltd. Site at 153 Eastern Avenue.

The four existing buildings are the last remaining of a larger complex, and were built between 1917 and 1929. The Dominion Wheel and Foundries manufactured rolling stock, parts and equipment for the railway industry, which was predominant in the area at that time. The four structures were added to Toronto's heritage properties list in 2004 to ensure the preservation of the architectural and historical significance to life in the city during the WWI and post-war eras.

After noticing the bulldozers, a group of residents rapidly raised the alarm and gained the support of local representatives City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, MP Suze Morrison, and MPP Chris Glover. A "Friends of the Foundry" group was formed with the help of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, who began court proceedings.

On January 29, Justice David Corbett halted the demolition, ruling that the destruction was in contravention of both the Ontario Heritage Act, and an agreement between the City of Toronto and the Province. He noted that the agreement stated that a heritage assessment report should have been delivered to the Heritage Building Manager of the City.

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The Foundry Buildings as demolition begins. Image courtesy of @KrystenWongTam

PROVINCE PAUSES FIRST PARLIAMENT PROJECT

Just around the corner from the Foundry buildings, another battle is brewing between the Province and the community. Here, at Front and Berkeley, a multi-year community consultation and revitalization master plan has been placed on hold as notice was served that the Province intends to expropriate City of Toronto properties that are the site of Upper Canada's first parliament buildings, built in 1797.

Though those buildings no longer stand—they were razed during the Battle of York during the War of 1812—the site has long been recognized for its national historic significance. We have written about the site in the past, and noted that many, including the late City Councillor Pam McConnell and heritage advocate Rollo Myers, tirelessly pursued and proved its archeological heritage. From 2012-2014, the Ontario Heritage Trust mounted a museum on part of the site.



The City plan, which was still in development, included recommendations that included a new district library branch, green space, and installations that would interpret the site's historic significance, including early indigenous use of the land.

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NEW FACE ON THE BOARD



We are thrilled to welcome Thomas Granofsky to the Town of York Historical Society. Thomas was elected at the Annual General Meeting in December.

Thomas is a public policy researcher and consultant primarily focused on social policy projects. He recently co-authored a report on social assistance reform for Ontario360 at the Munk School of Global Affairs. He has previously worked in the Ontario government at several ministries, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Prior to working in government, he was a Policy Associate at the Mowat Centre. He holds an MPhil in Comparative Social Policy from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor of Social Work from Ryerson University.

NOT YET A MEMBER?

Join the Society for only \$30 per year!
Or \$50 per household.

You'll receive the newsletter delivered to your mailbox, get our monthly events e-newsletter before non-members, and always save on events and in the shop at Toronto's First Post Office.
Join up online at TownofYork.com.

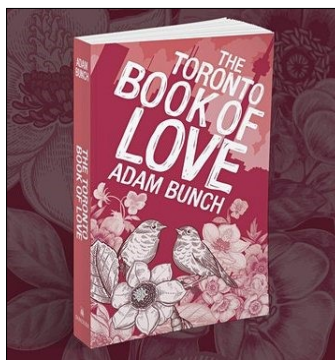
MEMBERS' UPDATE

The Town of York Historical Society's Annual General Meeting was held on December 3rd, 2020, after being postponed due to the COVID crisis. At this meeting, members voted in favour of a proposed update to the Society's bylaws.

The changes to the bylaws primarily dealt with definitions of terms, and also addressed the roles of Directors and how elections to the Board of Directors would be held at future AGMs. The new bylaws, along with the 2019 audited financial statement, can still be found at TownofYork.com/annual-general-meeting/.

Following the Annual General Meeting, the Board re-elected Kevin Both to serve as President, Corinna Prior was elected to the role of Vice-President, Alex Zisman was elected Treasurer, and Katherine Dennis returns as Secretary. Ruth Cameron, Thomas Granofsky, and John Jones all returned as Directors-at-Large.

THE TORONTO BOOK OF LOVE



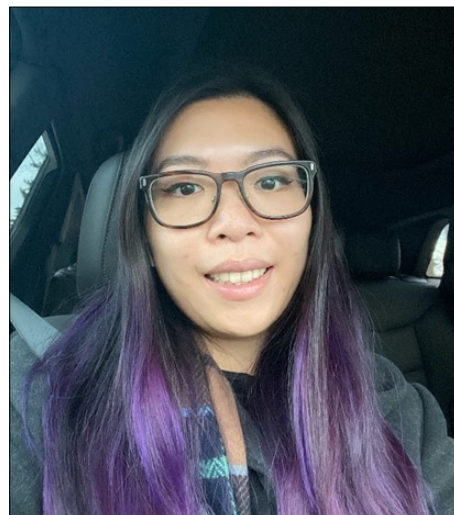
The guest speaker at the Town of York Historical Society's Annual General Meeting was Adam Bunch, who previewed his latest book, *The Toronto Book of Love*. This was the second AGM where we were treated to Adam's entertaining illustrated talks. His previous book, *The Toronto Book of Death*, was featured at our 2019 AGM.

The Toronto Book of Love brings the history of the city to life with fascinating true tales of romance, marriage and passion — from the scandalous love affairs of the city's early settlers to the Prime Minister's wife partying with rock stars on her anniversary.

The Toronto Book of Love is now available in the shop and online at TownofYork.com. And, if you missed it last year, *The Toronto Book of Death* has also been restocked.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: MEET FLORA

Flora has been volunteering with us for two years. As a Fleming College "Museum Management and Curatorship" graduate and an historic interpreter at Montgomery's Inn, her passion is community museums. She began as a transcription volunteer while also lending her skills as a collections volunteer. More recently, Flora has started creating social media content for us. Here she answers some questions about what it's like volunteering with us:



What made you want to volunteer at the Town of York Historical Society?

I think my biggest motive to volunteer at the museum was to gain experience. As an emerging museum professional, there aren't a ton of museum opportunities for recent graduates. Toronto's First Post Office and the Town of York Historical Society not only offered a variety of volunteer positions, but it also allowed me the chance to explore my interests, which was something I wasn't able to in school.

What is the biggest challenge you've encountered while volunteering?

So far, my biggest challenge was when I decided to also volunteer as a social media content creator. I've never created content for an organization or institution before and in the beginning, I didn't know where to begin. But after I got into the groove of things, I began to feel more confident in the position.

What do you find the most rewarding about your volunteer task?

The people at Toronto's First Post Office have been so sweet and welcoming, ever since I started volunteering here last year. They definitely made volunteering here rewarding.

If you are interested in volunteering opportunities at the Town of York Historical Society, find out more about volunteer opportunities at www.TownofYork.com/jobs-volunteering/

WHAT'S HOT IN THE SHOP?



Valentines Day is a lovely reason to send a card, but do you really need an excuse at all? Sprinkle love, kindness, and good vibes everywhere, all day, every day!

Love notes are now featured in the gift shop, as are chocolates, bath salts, and all kinds of gifts to sweeten someone's day.



Members always get 10% off in the shop at Toronto's First Post Office and now online, too! Use code IM.A.MEMBER for your 2021 discount in the shop at TownofYork.com! Shop online and have your goodies shipped directly to your door, or pick-up in the P.O. for free!

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.

CELEBRATING MARCH SIXTH

Toronto became the first city in Upper Canada on March 6, 1834. With a population just over 9,000, royal assent was given to "An act to extend the limits of the town of York, to erect the said town into a city and to incorporate it under the name of the City of Toronto".

Every year on March 6, the Town of York Historical Society marks the last day of the town of York, and the first day of the city of Toronto, with an event that highlights Toronto's rich history.

For the first time, our annual fundraiser will be a virtual gathering, allowing viewers and performers to join remotely and take part in the celebration from their homes. While we regret that we cannot celebrate together, we can guarantee that you'll have the best seat in the house!

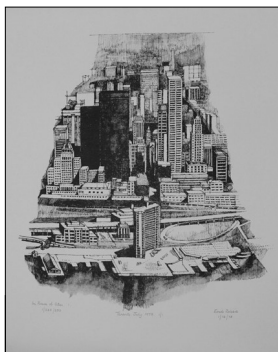
The aim of the event is to fundraise for the Town of York Historical Society and Toronto's First Post Office whose purpose is to research, interpret, and promote the history of the Town of York and early Toronto, and to advocate on behalf of the preservation of the Town of York's surviving built environment. 100% of the evening's proceeds go directly to support the work of the Town of York Historical Society.

Old Town Revue: A Love Letter to Toronto

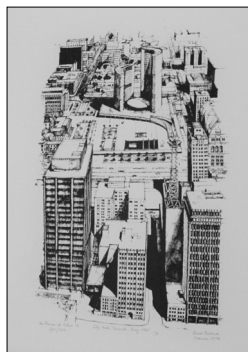
The evening will be emceed by Bruce Bell, popular local historian, leading a revue with a top-notch array of entertainers coming together to celebrate Toronto's birthday.

This year we will gather online, joined by friends from Toronto and across Canada, too. Join us for the chance to win prizes, test your Toronto trivia knowledge, and to celebrate the city we love with music, storytelling, and shared experiences. Follow along to create a custom cocktail, tap your toes along with award-winning fiddler Rosemary Lawton. Hear love letters to Toronto written by children from the community, and ghostly stories from our friends at the Haunted Walk.

Join in and win fabulous prizes by taking part in Toronto-based trivia throughout the evening, or enter in a raffle for a chance to win a getaway at the Holiday Inn Express in the heart of Old Town Toronto.



Two signed and numbered "In Praise of Cities" prints, featuring Toronto, by artist Enid Robbie.



The popular Old Town Silent Auction returns, showcasing items and experiences donated by St. Lawrence neighbourhood businesses. This year, the auction includes a beautiful pair of diamond and pearl earrings from Kimberfire, and two rare silk-screened prints by artist Enid Robbie, selections of Kozlik's famous mustard, a gift pack from Toronto's own Gotamago, and more! This year's auction will be online, and will begin on March 1st and end with our celebration.



Diamond and pearl earrings from @Kimberfire.

You'll even get a chance to share what you love the most about our city as part of a piece of collaborative art that we will create together on the night. A true love letter to Toronto!

JOIN US FOR TORONTO'S 187TH BIRTHDAY!

Tickets are only \$8 for members, or \$10 for non-members, and available at TOs187th.eventbrite.ca.

Visit TownofYork.com for the latest on performers and auction items, and follow our social media channels @TOs1stPO. Don't hesitate to share, and include the hashtag #TOs187th so we'll see it, too! As a bonus, your ticket confirmation will include an exclusive discount code for 25% off at TownofYork.com.

MARCH 6TH | 7:30 PM

The Old Town Revue: *A Love Letter To Toronto*

Join us for a VIRTUAL fundraiser in celebration of Toronto's 187th Birthday! All proceeds benefit the Town of York Historical Society and Toronto's First Post Office.

Music, Comedy, Trivia,
Old Town Silent Auction,
& much more!



Purchase tickets at:
tos187th.eventbrite.ca

#TOs187th

FROM THE COLLECTION: SEALING WAFERS



Usually when we think of sealing letters in the 1830s, we often conjure up images of sealing wax melting over a hot flame and slowly dripping on a letter flap before being gently pressed with a seal into the wax. But, have you ever heard of wafers, the alternate method of sealing?

Wafer seals consist of a thin disk of paste that becomes sticky when moistened. The wafer adheres to both pieces of paper and, when it dries, unites them the same way as glue would. To use, one would lick the wafer, stick it to the letter flap, and fold it closed. A cross-hatched seal could be pressed into the paper to help stick and create a distinct pattern. When purchasing the seal, it was often provided with a “proof” impression of the design in a box.

Although recipes varied, sealing wafers were made using fine flour, egg whites, isinglass, and yeast. Though usually white in shade, colour could be added by mixing Lamp Black, Gamboge, Indigo, Vermilion (Mercury Sulfide), and Red Lead. The batter would be spread out thinly on iron or tin plates, left to dry on the stovetop, and then stamped out by hand. They could be produced in a multitude of shapes: circles, shields, ovals.

Though very practical and portable when compared to sealing wax, wafers could also have many nuisances. They were prone to mould, very fragile, and could be brittle. Surprisingly, while we now know that many of the minerals added to provide colour are toxic and the scraps of vermilion coloured wafers were used as vermin repellent, it does not appear to have deterred folks from licking and using these wafers!



2006.1.103 - Seal with maple turned handle; brass marker with cross-hatch design; circa 1835.



993.1.85 (obverse and reverse)



Examples of wafer seal impressions and boxes from Toronto's First Post Office's collection.

DESTRUCTION FOUNDRY DELAYED, *continued from page 1*

Though it appears that such a document was prepared by an employee of Infrastructure Ontario, it wasn't shared with anyone outside of that office. Further, there were no public consultations, no coordination with the City, and no other notifications of the demolition before crews arrived at the site and started operating their heavy machinery.

The judge's decision will delay the destruction until the next court hearing between the City of Toronto and the Province on February 26. The SLNA was cited in the decision. Justice Corbett wrote: "Had it not been for the swift action of this group, there is every chance that these buildings would have been destroyed before legal proceedings were brought to identify the issues that will be decided in this application."



The Town of York Historical Society encourages readers to follow and support the Friends of the Foundry at twitter.com/FoundryFriends and RespectLocalPlanning.com. Planning decisions such as these, made secretly, without community consultation, and without accountability, threaten all communities in Ontario.

FIRST PARLIAMENT PROJECT PAUSED, *continued from page 1*



The First Parliament site, currently a car wash, car dealership, and parking lot.

According to the Province, the site is essential for Metrolinx's Ontario Line, and they intend to place a Corktown station on the site with construction beginning as early as August. Local Councillors Joe Cressy and Kristyn Wong-Tam have noted their objections, saying that this is another example of the Province overstepping and misusing its power to take over municipal planning.

Though it seems as though the West Don Lands and Corktown neighbourhood have been especially targeted by the Province lately, this is just the latest in a series of Minister's Zoning Orders that have been used to bypass municipal planning procedures. MZO's are meant to be used sparingly as they do not allow for consultations with cities or groups such as residents or heritage advocates. There were more than 35 MZO's in 2020 alone, more than the previous government issued over the course of a decade.

SHOP 2 WIN IN OLD TOWN RETURNS

SHOP OLD TOWN TORONTO 2WIN

Support Local for a Chance to
Win \$1000 Weekly

\$500 to keep and \$500 to give to an Old Town TO business

plus

1 Grand Prize* of \$2000

\$1000 to keep and \$1000 to give to an Old Town TO business

February 8 - April 5, 2021

The Old Town BIA's "Shop Old Town Toronto 2 Win" contest has returned! From February 8 to April 5, when you spend \$25 or more at TownofYork.com or Toronto's First Post Office, you can enter for your weekly chance to win \$500, or one grand prize of \$1000! If you win, a matching amount is donated to the museum. It's win-win!

To enter and for complete contest rules visit ShopOTT2Win.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

Sign up online at townofyork.com/membership-box-rental

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/donations

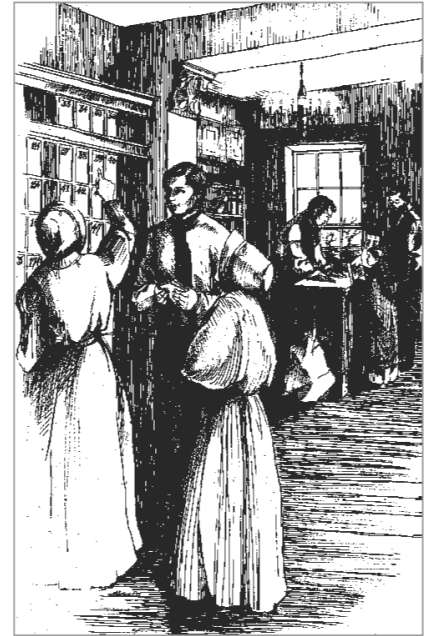
Get Your Mail at a Museum.

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

Only \$195 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 February 14-15 for Family Day,
and April 2, 4, and 5 for the Easter holiday weekend.

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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: Kevin Both, Ruth Cameron, Katherine Dennis, Thomas Granofsky, John Jones, Corinna Prior, and Alex Zisman.

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