

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

February 2014

Thonnakona: Returning the ancestors to the land By Beth Hanna

On a calm, clear Saturday in September 2013, 1,760 Huron-Wendat ancestors were reburied at a secluded and peaceful meadow.

Prior to the 17th century, the ancestors of the Huron-Wendat lived in the fertile river valleys north of Lake Ontario and along the St. Lawrence River. In the 17th century, some of them moved north to lands between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay.

They were excellent farmers, hunters, fishers and long-distance traders. By 1650, however, decades of intense conflict between the Iroquois nations allied with warring Europeans, famine and the impact of disease from Europe led to their abandoning what is now Ontario. Some re-established their community in Quebec, while others moved to Michigan, Oklahoma and Kansas. Today, the Huron-Wendat Nation is located at Wendake, Quebec – the only Wendat Nation remaining in Canada.

One of the Huron-Wendat villages was located in what is now Vaughan. Between 1940 and 1980, the ossuary from this village and 11 others across Ontario were excavated by archaeologists from the University of Toronto. The bodies of the ancestors and their funerary objects were removed for study and remained in the care of the university until 2013.

In 2010, the Huron-Wendat Nation, the University of Toronto and the Ontario Heritage Trust began a co-operative process to return these ossuaries in what became the largest reburial of aboriginal ancestors to have been undertaken in North America. First as partners, then as friends and finally as one mind, all were dedicated to the common goal of reconnecting the Huron-Wendat Nation with their ancestors and providing them a final and respectful resting place. The ancestors from 12 communities were to be reburied in one large, new ossuary to be known as Thonnakona, on the site from which 561 of them were removed in 1970. This site is now a significant natural heritage and archaeological preserve owned by the Trust and protected in perpetuity.

On that peaceful September Saturday, more than 100 people attended from Wendake and representatives of 15 First Nations travelled from all over North

America to assist and bear witness. Leaders of the Akiawenrak Longhouse of Wendake led the reburial ceremony of 1,760 of their ancestors. For 40 years, these ancestors had been stored in boxes – their spirits separated from their land, their descendants and from one another. On this sunny day, the boxes were opened and the ancestors returned to the earth where they will lay for eternity. It was a private, serene, sacred ceremony.

The day ended with a banquet to commemorate the ancestors and to celebrate together. Food was shared. Gifts of thanks and friendship were exchanged with honour and respect.

The Wendat, the Trust and the University of Toronto set out in a spirit of goodwill, friendship and harmony to facilitate a respectful reconnection with the Huron-Wendat ancestors and to ensure that their resting place will be conserved as a tranquil natural landscape and sacred site in perpetuity. We are now discussing how best to share what we have learned; further information and analysis of this collaboration will be published. It is our sincere hope that the partnership forged will inspire others to follow in our footsteps.

Beth Hanna is the Executive Director of the Ontario Heritage Trust.

One hundred years of entertainment

By Janet Gates



Everything Old is New Again, October 7, 2013. (Photo: Kim Lovell)

Birthdays are about celebration and, in the case of Toronto's Elgin and Winter Garden theatres, a toast to 100 years of entertainment history. In 2013, we reflected on the theatres' storied past and the 50 million people who have been part of this story – from actors and audiences to stagehands and volunteers.

Commemorative activities have built on this legacy, starting with six film shorts filmed and screened at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre (EWG). Created by up-and-coming Canadian talent and supported by the Ontario Heritage Trust, bravoFACT, OptixToronto and PS: Production Services, several of these films have been recognized at the Toronto International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Canadian International Television Festival and National Screening Institute.

No birthday is complete, however, without a party – and what a party it was! Starting with a choice of dinner options – from the elegant Gatsby-themed dinner on the stage of the Winter Garden to the speakeasy-style cocktail supper in the EWG's cascading lobbies.

Anchoring the evening was the production of *Everything Old is New Again*. Led by producer Marlene Smith, over 100 artists participated in this rollicking review of theatrical genres that have graced the stages of the EWG over the past century. In addition to the partners, supporters, donors and theatre enthusiasts who were part of the audience that evening, 600 students had the opportunity to experience live theatre, thanks to a private donation supporting this worthwhile initiative.

The EWG volunteers also launched a beautiful new souvenir booklet for the anniversary year and replaced and refurbished lobby chairs and tables. These same volunteers also organized ever-popular tours throughout the commemorative period during Doors Open Toronto, Heritage Week 2013 and EWG Celebration Week.

Legacy is not just about what's left behind, but also about what we take with us into the future. These theatres are more than just performance venues. The story of this National Historic Site should be widely shared. To keep the EWG active and relevant, the Trust is creating new opportunities to open the theatres during the day, inviting new audiences to share the experience.

Sharing this vision, the Royal Bank of Canada, along with Ryerson and OCAD universities, have joined with the EWG to offer a space for developing artists to showcase their work. On January 30, 2014, the RBC Emerging Artist Project premiered a collaboration between Ryerson Image Arts students and Metrolinx, exploring how people interact with transportation in the Greater Toronto Area.

It was a celebration that exceeded our expectations. The EWG enters the next 100 years on a wave of excitement and with a sense of renewal, built on its enduring legacy.

Janet Gates is the Director of Corporate Businesses and Services with the Trust.

Heritage Matters 2.0

By Gordon Pim



For back issues of *Heritage Matters*, and to explore our new web-only content, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca/hm.

What happened to *Heritage Matters*?! Starting with this issue, the Ontario Heritage Trust is redesigning its signature magazine, while still providing heritage-related stories that resonate with readers. Each issue will continue to pursue a specific theme, and then offer various perspectives on that theme to tell more of Ontario's stories. In future issues, familiar sections – News from the Trust and In the coming months event listings – will become only available on the Trust's website, thereby freeing valuable space in the magazine as well as bringing you the most current information on events and activities.

The Trust will also be developing more online-only content for *Heritage Matters*. For instance, this issue features an interview with Laura Brandon from the Canadian War Museum. Given the limitations of the printed word, we are making the full interview available online at www.heritagetrust.on.ca/hm. Bookmark this web page or visit it often to see more of our online-only content as it's developed.

Heritage Matters has become a touch point to our shared past. Over the last several years, we have explored a wide variety of topics that have enhanced

our understanding of Ontario's heritage – from Black history and francophone heritage to discussions on conservation districts and adaptive reuse of heritage properties to the popular "green" issue and the expanded issue on Ontario's places of worship. Together, we have visited eastern Ontario, explored the southwestern part of the province, wandered through the Kawarthas and reached into Ontario's north – in each instance, with the same goal: to understand how our heritage defines and shapes us as a province, no matter what part we come from. We have reported on provincial plaque unveilings across Ontario, given tips on conducting genealogical research, explored some of the Trust's more unique collections of artifacts, and taken you underground with the latest technology to explore archaeological treasures.

We hope that you continue to enjoy our publication. The stories that we have to tell are stories about Ontario, a rich past that helps us build a strong future – together.

Gordon Pim is the Editor of Heritage Matters.

In the coming months

Here are some of the events and activities occurring over the next few months. Visit our website at www.heritagetrust.on.ca for more event listings and details!



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Royal Wood (Photo: Malcolm Craig)

April 5, 2014 at 8 p.m. – Amanda Martinez, Winter Garden Theatre, Toronto. Amanda Martinez's Mexican and South African roots get equal play in her music, a marvellous mash-up of both cultures and flamenco soul. A cherished presence on the Toronto scene, Martinez has garnered praise for her remarkable voice, as well as her philanthropy with local and international organizations. Her new album, *Mañana*, is produced by acclaimed Grammy Award-winner Javier Limón (Mariza, Buika).

April 26 to May 3, 2014 – Persée, presented by Opera Atelier, Elgin Theatre, Toronto. *Persée* – Lully's thrilling saga – was recognized in its day as the crowning achievement of French lyric theatre. It is the moving story of a man's ascension from his questionable beginnings to his rightful place as a god – the retelling of the classical Greek Perseus myth.

May 3, 2014 – Doors Open Ontario 2014 begins with a series of perennial favourites – Doors Open Guelph, Hamilton, Peterborough and Whitby! Come and explore Ontario's heritage and discover the story behind every door. Doors Open Ontario runs until October 31, with many heritage sites being featured that follow the theme of Remembering the First World War: Ontario in transition. For more information, visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca.

May 3, 2014 – Antiques appraisal event, Fulford Place, Brockville. Sotheby's-trained appraiser Janet Carlile of the *Canadian Antiques Roadshow* returns to Fulford Place to lead this fascinating exploration of local collectors' heirlooms. Members of the public are invited to bring one object for identification.

May 17, 2014 – Opening day at Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, Dresden. Join us on opening day 2014. Explore this fascinating site and learn about the unique heritage of Ontario's Black community.

May 17, 2014 at 8 p.m. – Royal Wood, Winter Garden Theatre, Toronto. Canada's most dapper troubadour isn't wasting any time. Having spent the better part of the past year touring North America and Europe in support of his JUNO-nominated album *We Were Born to Glory*, Royal Wood is hard at work on a follow-up record, slated for release in the spring of 2014. More sublime songwriting and heart-tugging melodies are a sure bet.

May 24-25, 2014 – Doors Open Brockville-Thousand Islands and Doors Open Toronto. These popular annual events always draw huge crowds of locals and visitors alike to explore heritage sites in these two diverse communities. For more information, visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/brockville and www.doorsopenontario.on.ca/toronto.