Inside Uncle Tom’s Cabin

In this issue
Hurricane Hazel 50 years after | The heritage of faith | Gifts of nature

www.heritagefdn.on.ca
A message from The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman

Since becoming Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 2004, I have developed an increased awareness of our province’s unique past and our shared heritage. I now look at buildings differently. I notice more commemorative plaques as I tour the province. And I marvel at the indelible beauty of our landscapes. This is our heritage – a precious inheritance that must be preserved and protected.

This commitment, however, must be strengthened. Every day, we hear from concerned citizens – friends and neighbours – who want to know how we can help them preserve heritage in their own communities. Statistics show that 23 per cent of historic buildings across Canada were demolished between 1970 and 2000. This figure is staggering. We are certainly encouraged by the commitment of community groups across Ontario in lending their support to heritage preservation. But, at the critical decision-making level, not all the tools of preservation are being used. And although heritage awareness increases each year – Doors Open Ontario, as one example, showcases hundreds of heritage sites across the province – we must remain vigilant.

We need to find better ways to convey our message to more people and to sing the praises of those who work tirelessly to preserve their own communities. That is why we have decided to change this newsletter. Heritage Matters debuted in 1994 as a newsletter that provided readers with information on the Foundation’s events and programs. Certainly, this new magazine will continue to update you on the Foundation’s activities, but it will also provide you with timely heritage-related stories, engage communities in more meaningful ways and reach a new audience.

I know that you and your family will enjoy this new magazine.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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Aussi disponible en français
Inside Uncle Tom’s Cabin
By Wayne Kelly

At a bend in the Sydenham River near the town of Dresden stands Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site. The museum – built on the site of the Black settlement that Rev. Josiah Henson founded in 1841 – preserves the settlement where Henson and his wife Nancy lived. Today, thousands of people make pilgrimages to Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site to discover more about our past.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site takes its name from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s successful 1852 anti-slavery novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin, featuring a character named Tom (loosely based on Josiah Henson). Henson’s own story is told in his autobiography, first published in 1849.

Josiah Henson was born into slavery on June 15, 1789 near Port Tobacco in Charles County, Maryland. As a slave, Henson experienced horrifying conditions. He was separated from his parents, sold twice and maimed when Henson arrived, the Black community in Upper Canada consisted of Black Loyalists who had fought for the British during the American Revolution, African American refugees from the War of 1812, and others. Henson started his life in Canada working as a farm labourer and a lay preacher in the Waterloo area. In 1834, he moved to Colchester with 12 friends and established a Black settlement on land rented from the government. There, in 1836, Henson met Hiram Wilson, a missionary from the American Anti-Slavery Society who ministered to Black Canadians. Wilson introduced Henson to one of his friends, James Canning Fuller, a Quaker from New York. With financial assistance from Wilson and a silent partner (probably Fuller), Henson purchased 200 acres in Dawn Township to build a self-sufficient community for fugitives from slavery.

The Dawn Settlement, as it was called, centred on the British-American Institute – an all-ages manual school that trained teachers and provided a general education. The school opened in 1842 “to cultivate the entire being, and elicit the fairest and fullest possible development of the physical, intellectual and moral powers,” and to provide Black Canadians with the skills they needed to prosper and to dispel the racist beliefs of proponents of slavery who argued that Blacks were incapable of independent living.

The Dawn Settlement grew to include mills and a brickyard. Settlers cleared their land and grew crops – mainly wheat, corn and tobacco – and exported locally grown black walnut lumber to Britain and the United States. At its peak, about 500 people lived at the Dawn Settlement. Henson purchased 200 acres of land adjacent to the community. He preached in the Dawn Settlement’s community church and served on the executive committee of the institute.

The Dawn Settlement developed administrative problems and in 1849 the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society took over its management. After the school closed in 1868, the Dawn Settlement began to fade. Most residents either returned to the United States where slavery had finally been abolished or moved to other communities in Ontario. Josiah and Nancy Henson, however, continued to live in Dawn for the rest of their lives.

Throughout his life, Henson was an important leader for Canada’s growing Black community. He led a Black militia unit during the Rebellion of 1837, advocated in support of literacy and education for Blacks, toured parts of the United States and Britain to raise funds to support his activities and helped Black Canadians to join the Union Army to fight against slavery during the American Civil War.

Wayne Kelly is the Plaque Program Coordinator and historian for the Ontario Heritage Foundation.
A provincial plaque marking the 50th anniversary of Hurricane Hazel was unveiled by the Ontario Heritage Foundation and The Humber Heritage Committee on October 16, 2004. The plaque, located in King’s Mill Park in Etobicoke, is part of the Foundation’s Provincial Plaque Program that commemorates significant people, places and events in Ontario’s history. Since 1953, more than 1,160 of these distinctive blue and gold plaques have been unveiled.

There was little warning about Hurricane Hazel – one of the worst storms in Canada’s history. At the time, few Canadians paid attention to tropical storms. But when Hurricane Hazel struck southern Ontario at rush hour on October 15, 1954, that complacency disappeared.

Buffered by winds of up to 110 km/h, over 200 mm of rain fell within 24 hours, causing rivers to overflow and flood communities across southern Ontario. The storm killed 81 people and left thousands homeless. Property damage – with homes and bridges washed out – was estimated at over $180 million. But the legacy of this storm was felt.

“Hurricane Hazel devastated Toronto, and left our city reeling,” said Toronto Mayor David Miller. “Certainly the forces of nature continue to display their awesome powers,” said The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. “But Hurricane Hazel forever changed the way we prepare ourselves for such events.”

The damage from the storm in this area was catastrophic. Floodwaters swept away 14 homes on Raymore Drive on the west side of the river just south of Lawrence Avenue and killed 32 residents in one hour. In areas where floodplains had been drained and developed for housing, the damage to homes was extensive.

Many lessons, however, were learned from Hurricane Hazel. The Province of Ontario established a flood forecasting and warning system, broadened its provincial flood control system, initiated a new system for controlling the flow of rivers and streams, and began work on a new system of urban parks.

In 1958, after the death of the renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the Olmsted Brothers of Massachusetts, who had designed the park system of Toronto, were commissioned to create a park system for the City of Brockville on the banks of the St. Lawrence River. The project took two planting seasons to complete. But before the actual restoration began, historic research into the Olmsteds and a review of the archival records of the Fulford gardens were conducted.

In 1994, Sandy Smallwood received one of the Foundation’s Heritage Community Recognition Program certificates for his work in restoring historic buildings in the Ottawa area. He is a director of Historic Ottawa Development Inc. and the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, and a member of the Rockcliffe Park Lacac.

On September 17, 2004, the Foundation honoured the project’s many donors by hosting a garden party to officially celebrate the completion of the restoration project.

As reported in our last issue of Heritage Matters, restoration of the magnificent Olmsted gardens at the Foundation’s Fulford Place in Brockville is now complete. Fulford Place, a 20,000-square-foot Edwardian mansion on the shores of the St. Lawrence River, was built between 1899-1901 and features gardens designed by the Olmsted Brothers of Massachusetts.

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The restoration of a landscape is fundamentally different from that of a building. A completed garden is truly just the beginning, for it continues to grow and change. The full effect intended by the Olmsteds – or by any garden designer of any era – only becomes evident as time passes. Garden conservancy reminds us that heritage preservation can be a living and growing – even blooming – activity.

Fulford Place is owned and operated by the Foundation and remains a popular venue for tours and special events. For more information, contact Fulford Place at 613-498-3003 or visit www.heritagefdn.on.ca.

WHAT’S HAPPENING AT THE FOUNDATION…

OLMSTED GARDENS CELEBRATED…

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Each year, the Foundation unveils blue and gold provincial plaques around the province. These plaques make Ontario’s history come alive by telling stories of the people, places and events that helped shape our province. In 2004, we commemorated a devastating hurricane that killed over 80 people and left a path of destruction in its wake, and a seasonal parade that continues to delight generations of children. The Provincial Plaque Program remains the Foundation’s oldest and perhaps best-known activity. Here are some of the plaques unveiled recently.

### The Royal York Hotel
**Unveiled:** June 8, 2004  
**Location:** At the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front Street West, Toronto

Built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1928-1929, the Royal York Hotel was part of its coast-to-coast chain of grand hotels. The skyscraper hotel was the largest hotel of its kind in North America and dramatically altered the Toronto skyline.

### Woodmere plaque unveiling
**From left:** Dr. James Angus, Ontario Heritage Foundation Board member; The Honourable James K. Bartleman, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario; Susan Pryke, Mayor; Township of Muskoka Lakes; Susan Goltz, Woodmere Heritage Committee; Norm Miller, MPP; Parry Sound-Muskoka. 

**Woodmere**  
**Unveiled:** July 14, 2004  
**Location:** At the former village of Woodmere municipal building, 2496 Woodmere Road, Woodmere

Originally an agricultural settlement, by the 1870s people had begun visiting Woodmere for restorative wilderness holidays. The Woodmere House resort developed in the 1880s, serving as the focal point for Woodmere’s evolution into a well-loved vacation destination.

### The Santa Claus Parade
**Unveiled:** November 19, 2004  
**Location:** At the corner of Queen Street West and James Street, Toronto

In 1905, Timothy Eaton’s department store began the tradition of the Santa Claus Parade. In 1982, a local volunteer group assumed responsibility for the parade. Over the years, the parade has grown in size and splendour. One of Canada’s longest-running traditions, the parade remains focussed on bringing joy to children and continues to enchant and entertain people of all ages.

### Reid Mill
**Unveiled:** August 24, 2004  
**Location:** At 27 Reid Drive, Mississauga

This flour mill was built on the Credit River southeast of the village of Streetsville in the mid-1830s by John Beatty. The original mill, hidden inside the milling complex, and the mill dam, which survives, played an important role in Ontario’s commercial and industrial history.

### Hurricane Hazel
**Unveiled:** October 16, 2004  
**Location:** In King’s Mill Park on the Humber River, Toronto

Hurricane Hazel hit southern Ontario on October 15, 1954 flooding rivers in much of southern Ontario. The storm killed 81 people, left 1,868 families homeless, and caused extensive property damage. Hurricane Hazel’s legacy was the development of a sophisticated weather warning system for the province, measures to conserve the watersheds of major rivers, and an evolving system of flood warning and control.

### Waterford County
**Unveiled:** October 12, 2004  
**Location:** At the corner of Queen Street North and Weber Street, Kitchener

Waterford County held its first council meeting on January 24, 1853. With the establishment of Waterloo County, emerged a series of enduring institutions, including roads and bridges, a judiciary and jail, grammar (or high) schools, a House of Industry and Refuge, agricultural societies and local markets. On January 1, 1973 the Waterford County area became the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

For more information – including full text – about these and other plaques, visit the Foundation’s website (www.heritagefdn.on.ca) and consult the Online Plaque Guide and the Featured Plaques of the Month.
Adventures in archaeology!
A summer day camp program at the Spadina Museum

Since 2001, the Foundation has partnered with the Spadina Museum in Toronto to provide a summer day camp experience for children. In 2004, the children – ranging in age from 10 to 13 years old – once more dug into Spadina’s historic past. Each day, the children learned the tools and techniques used by professional archaeologists, uncovered artifacts and enjoyed workshops. Highlights of the 2004 program included: finding additional structural evidence of a drain in the east end of the site and continuation of the cinder driveway that Spadina’s Austin family had in the west end of the dig. No matter what they uncovered, the children were fascinated by their discoveries and what those discoveries might tell them about the families who came before them. A total of 1,675 artifacts were recovered during the 2004 program. Since the launch of the program, children in this program have recovered over 7,000 artifacts. Another program is scheduled for July 2005. Look for details in the City of Toronto’s Fun Guide in the spring.

Doors Open Ontario
“A cultural phenomenon . . .”

The Foundation’s Doors Open Ontario program continues to generate outstanding response from the public. In 2004, the Canadian Press branded the program a “cultural phenomenon” in an article that was published in Ontario newspapers.

Last year, over 180 communities – in 34 events – participated by opening hidden, secret and forgotten places and spaces throughout Ontario. When the final numbers were counted, close to 450,000 visits were made by residents and tourists to over 800 heritage sites.

Doors Open Ontario will be expanding in 2005 with 44 events – 14 of which will be first-time participants, including: Bayfield, Belleville, Brantford, Cobourg, Collingwood, Comfort Country (Tweed-Stirling-Madoc area), Goderich, Greater Napanee, Muskoka-Bracebridge, Muskoka-Huntsville, Newmarket, Orillia, Port Perry-Scoop-Usharid and Seaforth.

Be sure to order your Doors Open Ontario 2005 Guide from 1-800-ONTARIO (available in April). Or visit: www.doorsopenontario.on.ca for up-to-the-minute information about each community event.

STARTING FROM THE GROUND UP

Prior to repeating the leaky 150-year-old foundations at the Ontario Heritage Foundation’s Workers’ Cottage in Williamstown, archaeologists excavated along the foundation walls until they found undisturbed soil. The uncovered artifacts were used to determine the date of construction. A backhoe was used to finish the excavation under the guidance of the archaeologist.

Collingwood Federal Building

Most buildings begin with a solid foundation. Understanding how that foundation functions will determine how successful the project will be. Heritage structures are no different. Preserving and strengthening the foundation will lead to greater success in overall heritage conservation. Find out more about structural conservation techniques in Well-Preserved.

Well-Preserved can be purchased by calling the Ontario Heritage Foundation at 416-325-5000. Or visit www.heritagefnot.on.ca and click on About us/Merchandise.

Most historic buildings . . . Working with superstructures: The framework for Ontario’s heritage buildings.

Foundations and building systems

Every building is a system – each part is connected. Thanks to gravity, the foundation is at the bottom (literally) of almost every building problem. Most buildings move, shift and settle in the few years after construction as the ground gets used to the new weights placed on it. Even foundations on bedrock may move as compressive forces squeeze their materials against the rock. In general, old-building foundations are thus far more stable and secure than those of new buildings. Over time they have attained equilibrium.

Earth movements and ground water can unsettle this equilibrium. Several parts of Ontario, especially in the east, are potential earthquake zones, but there are no seismic retrofit requirements for buildings in the province, as there are, for instance, in California. Man-made earth movements are far more serious concerns, especially in the mining areas of northern Ontario and near gravel quarries and heavy industries. Adjacent construction and excavation may also unsettle once stable foundations. Vibration makes loose soil act like a liquid, and foundations have been known to settle unevenly under such conditions, long after they should have stabilized.

Variations in ground water are far more widespread than ground movements; all but the largest buildings are founded on soil whose load-carrying capacities change with moisture content. As urban and agricultural areas expand, and forests shrink, the water table tends to drop, soil dries out, and the ground compresses under the weight of the building. Installation of storm sewers in small towns has often led to sudden foundation settlement in century-old buildings.

With such external influences, it is almost impossible to take corrective action until the environment itself stabilizes. In many cases, settlement will be uniform and will not cause much harm, apart from small cracks and misalignment of doors and windows. The flexibility inherent in small frame structures allows them to remain sturdy, even though some of their finishes may suffer.

Changes in the use of a building can also destabilize both structure and foundation, especially when loads exceed the capacity of the original design. There is always a large “safety” factor in any structure, and old buildings may have far more generous margins than closely calculated new construction, but even these have limits. When left undisturbed by major renovations or changes of use, foundations should remain stable. But they may require reinforce ment or underpinning if loading is to be changed dramatically.
The Ricenberg acquisition
In October 2004, Ricenberg Developments
Limited donated to the Ontario Heritage
Foundation an important nine-hectare (22-acre)
parcel of land located on the Niagara Escarpment
in the Town of Grimsby.

This is a significant donation as it assists in
protecting a corridor of relatively undisturbed
natural area, located in a section of the most
heavily urbanized stretch of the Escarpment. The
property provides a portion of the permanent
route for the Bruce Trail – Ontario’s longest and
oldest hiking trail. The Trail extends 725 km from
Queenston in Niagara to Tobermory at the tip of
the Bruce Peninsula.

The property stretches from the toes of the
 Escarpment almost to the brow. Its dominant
geophysical features are steep ridges and asso-
ciated valleys with four seasonal streams emerg-
ing from the Escarpment and flowing down the
valleys to a small plateau. The property is domi-
nated by a sugar maple forest with American
beech and bittersweet hickory as subdominant
species. Less abundant species include: black
cherry, ironwood, shagbark hickory and black
walnut. Several of these tree species are repre-
sentative of the Deciduous Forest Region, known
as the Carolinian zone, for its abundance of flora
and fauna species with southern affinities. There
is also suitable habitat available for wildlife.

Protection of the Escarpment’s natural areas
through the Niagara Peninsula is particularly
important because of the intensive urban and
agricultural presence there. Through this gener-
ous donation of land and an additional cash
donation to assist with property management,
Ricenberg has recognized both the importance
of maintaining natural areas on the Escarpment,
while also supporting a permanent route for the
Bruce Trail. Together with adjoining lands already
owned by the Foundation, the acquisition of the
Ricenberg property will protect 26 hectares (63
acres) of land and provide access to .85 km of
the Bruce Trail through the Town of Grimsby.

Along the trail at the Ricenberg property. Ricenberg
Developments Limited has been an active land and
residential subdivision developer in the Grimsby area
for over 20 years.

Mr. Boothby died before the agreements were
completed, but his estate has proceeded as he
wished. The property, now owned by the
Ontario Heritage Foundation, will be managed
by The Lake of Bays Heritage Foundation – a
locally based charitable not-for-profit corpora-
tion with a mandate to protect, conserve and
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The Ricenberg acquisition has enabled
the Ontario Heritage Foundation to add to its
portfolio of lands held in trust for the people of
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the Bruce Trail. A longstanding partnership
with the Bruce Trail Association (BTA) enables
the Foundation to hold title to lands for the
Bruce Trail. The BTA continues to focus its
attention on the expansion and management
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Donations Preserve our Natural Heritage
Mr. Boothby’s legacy lives on.

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From Natural Heritage Books (www.naturalheritagebooks.com). The Canada Company – with its base in England – was responsible for settling over two million acres of land in Upper Canada. Author Robert C. Lee focuses on the Huron Tract and the dominant personalities, ranging from John Galt and Tiger Dunlop to the bishops Macdonell and Strachan, who impacted the company’s operations. The founding of towns – Guelph, Goderich, Stratford, St. Marys and others in the area – is one of the legacies of the company. Lee’s extensive research reveals a significant heritage of the Huron Tract, 1826-1853 (other spectacular memories of Toronto. Filey’s column, The Way We Were, has a devoted readership and he has written more than a dozen books about Toronto. From Dundurn Press (www.dundurn.com). Toronto Sun columnist Mike Filey returns with his latest in a series that captures the people, politics and architecture of Toronto’s past with its base in England – was responsible for settling over two million acres of land in Upper Canada. Author Robert C. Lee focuses on the Huron Tract and the dominant personalities, ranging from John Galt and Tiger Dunlop to the bishops Macdonell and Strachan, who impacted the company’s operations. The founding of towns – Guelph, Goderich, Stratford, St. Marys and others in the area – is one of the legacies of the company. Lee’s extensive research reveals a significant period in Ontario’s history.

While most of Canada celebrates Heritage Day on the third Monday in February, Ontario celebrates Heritage Week. The theme developed for Ontario Heritage Week 2005 is Ontario’s Heritage: Our Shared Legacy. Heritage Day 2005 in Canada celebrates the Heritage of Faith: Spiritual and Sacred Places. Although the Ontario Heritage Foundation holds easements on many such places, as well as having plaques erected to over 60 churches and sacred spaces across the province, one site stands out for its unique architecture – an architecture that was largely determined by the congregation’s faith.

Located in the quiet hamlet of Sharon in York Region, north of Toronto, is one of Canada’s greatest heritage landmarks – the Sharon Temple. This architectural gem is associated with the Children of Peace – a breakaway sect of the Society of Friends, or Quakers – founded in the early 19th century by radical thinker David Willson. In 1801, Willson and his wife emigrated from New York to join the Quaker community in Upper Canada. Increasingly frustrated with Quaker practices and beliefs, and an outspoken critic, Willson was dismissed from the Society of Friends by 1812. With several other former Quakers, he established a new religious sect incorporating some Quaker doctrines, elements of mysticism as well as Jewish ceremony, and an emphasis on music in worship.

Our Agricultural Past” will be launched this year by the Archives to celebrate Ontario’s agricultural heritage.

The Archives of Ontario has been creating virtual exhibits since 1998. Over the last four years, the Archives’ online exhibits program has introduced the public to their holdings in an interesting and interactive way. Viewed annually by tens of thousands of people from around the world, over 30 exhibits on the Archives’ website cover aspects of Ontario’s history from “Travelers with Elizabeth Simcoe” and the “War of 1812” to “Stories from Ontario Movie Theatres” and “Black History in Ontario.” Explore these exhibits – with more in development – at the Archives of Ontario’s website at www.archives.gov.on.ca.

Heritage Day 2005 was celebrated by the Ontario Heritage Foundation at the Sharon Temple. Sean Fraser is the Administrator for Easements at the Ontario Heritage Foundation. The Temple – a National Historic Site – is owned and operated by the Sharon Temple Museum Society. The Sharon Temple is also protected by an Ontario Heritage Foundation conservation easement. For more information on the Temple, visit www.sharontemple.ca.
Heritage resources cannot be replaced. They are a priceless gift to our own and future generations.

Your support is critical. Please give generously to the Ontario Heritage Foundation by contacting us at 416-325-5025 or www.heritagefdn.on.ca.

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The Challenge Continues!