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Heritage Matters

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Ontario's heritage tells the stories of the people, places and events that have shaped our province. At the Ontario Heritage Trust, we not only restore and preserve heritage properties, but we also delve into the lives of the people who lived at these sites, thereby giving these buildings greater meaning.

We each have a unique ancestry. For instance, my mother was from Jamaica and my father St. Vincent. They came to Canada – like so many others – seeking a future for their children in this great land. Through their perseverance and hard work, I was able to achieve goals they never dreamed of. I am proud of my heritage – both the Caribbean and the Canadian. It's wonderful to be able to trace these roots and pass that information along to my grandchildren. It is an inheritance to celebrate.

Similarly, here at the Ontario Heritage Trust, we research, investigate, protect and interpret our heritage sites in much the same way you investigate your personal family history. Together, we learn about our ancestors in a way that helps define who we are and where we are going. We strive to find meaning and learn how best to commemorate the past.

In this issue of Heritage Matters, we look at many Trust sites and activities that help explore this theme. Whether conveyed through period architecture and décor, historical artifacts or genealogical records, stories from the past give greater context to our current lives. These stories are at the core of our heritage – helping us to understand the past, giving meaning to the present and imparting lessons for the future.
The biography of a house

If these walls could speak

By Erin Semande

Researching family history is a popular pastime for many who want to uncover their family’s unique past and discover how they contributed to Ontario’s growth, development and diversity.

Dorothy and Betty. Dorothy continued to live in the house until her death in 1997.

Wellington Ashbridge – the family’s second son — was a graduate engineer, a job that took him out west for a number of years. The Trust holds hundreds of personal records documenting the lives of Wellington and Mabel, including love letters and family photographs, giving today’s researcher a glimpse into their personal lives.

In 1985, Jonathan and Dorothy’s daughter, Betty, willed the Trust a large collection of artifacts and archival material in the collections that relate to the Ashbridge family.

in 1900, descendants of the Ashbridge family – from as far away as Pennsylvania — converged on Toronto’s Ashbridge Estate for a family reunion.

The fifth and final generation to live on the property was Wellington’s two daughters, Betty and Dorothy. The sisters recounted their family history in a series of oral interviews in the summer of 1985, and provided significant information about their personal memories and stories of Ashbridges that came before them.

This collection celebrates the evolution of the Ashbridge family, from their struggles as early settlers to 20th-century urban dwellers. But it also shows how the Trust absorbs every element of a property it receives – from buildings and foundations to gardens and natural features to personal artifacts and collections.

Using the Ashbridge collection, one can interpret a piece of Canada’s history through the eyes of a family who witnessed vast change over 200 years.

Dorothy and Betty. Dorothy continued to live in the house until her death in 1907.

WELLINGTON AND MABEL ASHBRIDGE ARE BURIED, ALONG WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ASHBRIDGE FAMILY, IN THE TORONTO Necropolis.

Today, the Ashbridge Estate is widely known in Toronto’s east end for its lush gardens. The Estate is owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust. Its extensive collection of artifacts and archival discoveries and operated by the Ontario Heritage Trust. For example, the Jesse Ashbridge House – located at 1444 Queen Street East in Toronto – was home to one of the city’s early families.

Dorothy and Betty. Dorothy continued to live in the house until her death in 1997.

In 2000, descendants of the Ashbridge family – from as far away as Pennsylvania – converged on Toronto’s Ashbridge Estate for a family reunion.

The Ashbridge collection held by the Trust includes a large assortment of books, letters, photographs and other artifacts.

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Catharine Parr Traill is one of Canada’s literary luminaries. Her life story spans most of the 19th century, crossing oceans, battling cholera and journeying through Ontario’s backwoods. Yet, despite the struggles and hardships, she maintained a positive attitude to life in the new world and channelled those experiences into rich and popular chronicles. She was formally commemo-rated in 1958 when the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario (now the Ontario Heritage Trust) unveiled a provincial plaque in Lakefield at the site of the author’s former home.

Born in 1802 in Suffolk, England, Catharine Parr Strickland came from a literary family that claimed kinship with Edward III and Catharine Parr – the sixth wife of Henry VIII. Her sisters (including the distinguished Susanna Moodie) also wrote history texts, volumes of verse, short stories and several novels. Catharine married retired Lieutenant Thomas Traill in 1832, whereafter they immediately left England for Upper Canada. After landing in Montreal, she was temporarily stricken by cholera that raged through the country at that time. After she recovered, they proceeded by steamer, wagon and foot to Katchewanooka Lake about 15 miles (24 km) north of Peterborough. Here, at “Oaklands,” half-pay and the money earned by Catharine from wildflowers and other plants. Her beautifully illustrated books, Canadian Wild Flowers (1868) and Plant Life in Canada (1885), remain outstanding resources to early Canadian botanical study. Catharine Parr Traill remains one of Canada’s – and Ontario’s – early literary giants.

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As well, she was a gifted botanist and, in all her works, devoted considerable attention to native wildflowers and other plants. Her beautifully illustrated books, Canadian Wild Flowers (1868) and Plant Life in Canada (1885), remain outstanding resources to early Canadian botanical study. Catharine Parr Traill remains one of Canada’s – and Ontario’s – early literary giants.

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Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall, VC

Although a plaque in itself does not confer provincial designation, plaques clearly promote awareness and understanding of our unique heritage. In 2002, for example, the Port Burwell Marine Museum Committee approached the Trust to commemorate the Port Burwell Lighthouse – the oldest wooden lighthouse on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie. This plaque tells the story of a distinctive lighthouse and helps visitors to understand its important role in Great Lakes navigation. In addition, it complements the historical interpretation of the local Port Burwell Marine Museum. Plaques also interpret our past and help shape our future. For instance, the Trust worked with the Lincoln and Wellesley Regiment and the Lincoln and Wellesley Regiment Foundation to unveil a plaque honouring Victoria Cross recipient Colonel Graham Thomson Lyall. In 1919, Lyall was given this award – the Commonwealth’s highest military decoration – for his actions in the First World War. In 2005, Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex and the Trust’s Chairman, The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, unveiled the plaque in St. Catharines. The plaque was installed in a memorial garden near the Regiment’s armoury and serves to inspire all Canadians, especially young soldiers serving in today’s armed forces.

The Trust works with many communities and dedicated individuals to commemorate and interpret Ontario’s past. But, for many, plaques are just a starting point for further learning and exploration, and a greater understanding of our collective role as heritage stewards.

Wayne Kelly is the Public Education and Community Development Manager for the Ontario Heritage Trust. Beth Anne Mendes is the Trust’s Plaque Program Coordinator.

Provincial plaques tell the stories of Ontario’s past – the people, places and events that have shaped our province. But where do the ideas for provincial plaques come from?

Each year, the Ontario Heritage Trust receives applications from a variety of sources – community groups, heritage organizations, municipalities, individuals and others. The Trust’s Board of Directors then reviews and considers each plaque application according to set criteria – provincial interest being the major criterion for assessment. Judgments about provincial interest are made within the context of a balanced and comprehensive view of Ontario’s past.

What drives communities and people to commemorate our past with plaques is different from person to person. But regardless of the motivation, plaques continue to interpret and commemorate heritage sites. And the stories are bountiful.

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For more information about the Provincial Plaque Program, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or e-mail plaques@heritagetrust.on.ca.
On a windswept summer day in 2005, a small congregation gathered beside a cloverleaf off-ramp at the western fringe of Toronto. In Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery, amid the high-pitched whine of speeding cars and merging semi-trailers, they held a memorial service commemorating Etobicoke’s founding families.

Richview Cemetery officially opened in 1853 to serve a small rural community located in what is now central Etobicoke. The site’s chapel, the Richview Methodist Church, was still active in 1959 when the confluence of the Macdonald Cartier Freeway (the 401) and Highway 427 was developed on a colossal scale. The chapel was demolished and the congregation relocated. But at the community’s request, the traffic engineers’ high-speed ramps avoided the cemetery. This remaining land – girded and rendered valueless for real estate development – was disturbed no further.

In the 1970s, two other local historic cemeteries, Willow Grove Burying Ground and the McFarlane family cemetery, were closed and relocated to make way for development. Their occupants, numbering about 110, were removed and re-interred alongside Richview Cemetery, between the concrete ramparts. And so it was that the graves of many of Etobicoke Township’s founding families found an unexpected resting place in Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery in the middle of a busy highway cloverleaf.

As memories fade, so did the markers of the pioneer families, each marker subject to its own natural process of deterioration and decay. What remained was a variety of block, slab and obelisk style monuments at various angles of repose and in various conditions. Those carved from limestone and marble showed the most wear, interestingly being made of sedimentary and metamorphic rock that was itself created by a process of decline and transformation.

Into the midst of this cycle stepped the Etobicoke Historical Society and Etobicoke Heritage Foundation. These groups count among their membership a number of descendants of those interred at Richview-Willow Grove Cemetery. They raised $20,000 in funding for conservation of the monuments and these funds were matched by the Ontario Heritage Foundation Community Challenge Fund. Broken stones were repaired with stainless steel pins, cracks were grouted and the markers set on new slab footings. The thin, white marble slabs with carved scrollwork and inscriptions stand upright once again, as did the pioneers in their day.

At Richview, conservation techniques were used to slow the inevitable cycle of deterioration. The markers of a distant point in time have been preserved for a time longer. The pioneers hold their ground, remembered by their descendants even as the world rushes by around them.

Romas Bubelis is an architect with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

RUSH AND REMEMBRANCE

By Romas Bubelis

Cemeteries are a great place to begin your genealogical research. Many cemetery offices have searchable records databases and offer times when the general public can access these records. There are also many good online resources. For more information, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca.

PROTECTING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

By Tony Buszynski

Initial results from the Ontario Heritage Trust’s Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program (NSLASP) have been released. On June 12, 2006 the approval of 19 applications was announced by The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust; David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources and Caroline Di Cocco, Minister of Culture.

The approved applications for funding to acquire significant natural heritage properties in southern Ontario were submitted by a range of conservation partners – including the Bruce Trail Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada and several conservation authorities and private land trusts. Over 1,000 hectares (approximately 2,500 acres) of provincially significant natural heritage lands will be protected across southern Ontario through these projects. The total property value of the proposed lands acquisition is $3.4 million, with half to be funded from the program and half to be matched by the partners.

NSLASP focuses on the protection of significant components of natural heritage systems in Southern Ontario, the completion or connection of key trails, source water protection, habitat for species at risk, increased ecological representation in provincial parks and protected areas and large woodlands and wetlands and associated connecting linkages. The program supports land protection and the creation of stewardship plans and appropriate stewardship projects on the newly acquired lands.

These are exciting times for the Trust as we work with the Ministry of Natural Resources and a number of conservation partners to help conserve our natural heritage for future generations and to help protect and enhance the province’s diversity of plants and animals. We look forward to a second round of applications!

Tony Buszynski is the Acting Team Leader for Natural Heritage and Coordinator of the Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program for the Ontario Heritage Trust.

NEW BOARD APPOINTMENT

The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust, is pleased to announce the appointment of William W. Buchanan of Toronto to the Board of Directors. Mr. Buchanan is a Chartered Accountant whose community work has included volunteering and fundraising for a number of social service, arts and theatre organizations.

By Tony Buszynski

By Tony Buszynski
A world-class exhibit honouring a Canadian of national historic significance was launched this spring at the internationally renowned Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site in Dresden. The launch of this exhibit coincided with the site’s season opening on May 20.

Entitled “I’ll use my freedom well,” the new exhibit features artifacts, vivid imagery and interpretive panels to take a fresh look at the life of Josiah Henson. Recognized internationally for his contribution to the abolition movement, Josiah Henson asserted his leadership as an author, a preacher and a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Through his leadership, one of Canada’s first industrial schools – the British American Institute – was founded. The Dawn Community developed around the Institute. Henson worked with energy and vision to improve life for the Black community in Upper Canada (now Ontario).

To the schooner captain that had provided him and his family with safe passage across the Niagara River, Josiah Henson promised, “I’ll use my freedom well.” Prophetic words from a man of action. Henson indeed used his freedom well. He set about finding food and lodging for his young family – no easy task for a man who had arrived on the Canadian shore with nothing but a determined spirit.

In time, he would come to southwestern Ontario and convince other settlers to buy into his vision of a trade school, one of the first of its kind, around which would develop a strong, educated and self-reliant community. The British American Institute and Dawn Settlement were the result of this dream. He served as the spiritual head of this community, and went overseas on several occasions to promote the work of the Institute and spread the word that Canada, his newly adopted home, was a place of refuge from slavery. Although maimed early in life, he helped to defend this country as captain of a Black militia group stationed at Fort Malden during the Rebellion of 1837.

And then he went back – back to the southern United States, taking the Underground Railroad in reverse. He risked everything – his years of work, his freedom, his life – to bring others north from bondage.

Josiah Henson would eventually lead over 118 enslaved persons north – to a life without the sting of the overseer’s whip, to a land of new opportunity, to freedom.

“The world-class exhibit honouring a Canadian of national historic significance was launched this spring at the internationally renowned Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site in Dresden. The launch of this exhibit coincided with the site’s season opening on May 20.”

By Steven Cook

Steven Cook is the Site Manager at Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site.
THE PAST UNVEiled

By Beth Anne Mendes

The Red Brick School

In the village of Elgin, in Rideau Lakes Township—situated between Perth and Gananoque—the Trust will unveil a plaque with the Elgin and Area Heritage Society on September 16. This plaque commemorates School Section No. 5—a late-Victorian one-storey, two-room brick schoolhouse from 1887. Although schools like SS No. 5 may be seen elsewhere in Ontario, this schoolhouse is provincially significant as an early example of important 19th-century provincial initiatives to improve the quality of school design and therefore the educational experience in Ontario. This school, and others like it, replaced smaller log-and-frame structures and was part of an effort by provincial and municipal authorities to ensure Ontario’s socio-economic future by fostering education in rural areas.

Douglas Point Nuclear Station

Also in September, the Trust and the Canadian Nuclear Society will unveil a provincial plaque on the shores of Lake Huron to commemorate the historical and technological significance of the Douglas Point Nuclear Station. This facility, which operated from 1968 to 1984, was the prototype commercial-scale CANDU nuclear power plant. Its significance lies in the genesis of Ontario’s and Canada’s large-scale nuclear powered electricity generating program.

The Honourable Pauline McGibbon

Mark October 5 in your calendars as the Trust and the Sarnia Kiwanis Foundation celebrate the life and work of one of Ontario’s most remarkable women—The Honourable Pauline McGibbon. A pioneer of the women’s movement at a time when the worlds of business and politics were dominated by men, McGibbon made history when she was appointed as the Queen’s representative in Ontario—the first woman to assume the position of Lieutenant-Governor in the province, the country and the Commonwealth. Ms. McGibbon’s life was defined by her lifelong commitment to volunteerism and a concern for others less fortunate than herself. She was a strong advocate of the arts, good government and the importance of vibrant communities. It is fitting that the plaque to honour Pauline McGibbon will be located in McGibbon Park in Sarnia, once the schoolyard of Lochiel Street School (1916), which she attended as a student, just two blocks from her family home.

By Pam Brooks

Fulford Place in Brockville was the residence of Senator George T. Fulford—an important businessman, politician and philanthropist. When completed in 1901, the house and grounds provided an expansive and gracious setting for entertaining. Fulford’s wealth and status was reflected in his home. Today, the rooms on the main level remain virtually the same as they did when Fulford and his wife Mary lived in the house prior to his death in 1905.

The drawing room, decorated in the Rococo Revival style, was furnished with pieces purchased during the Fulfords’ overseas trips or acquired from well-known firms. The importance of the surviving interior furnishings is one of the reasons Fulford Place was designated a National Historic Site. The porcelain vases, displayed in the drawing room, are examples of this impressive collection. The large green vases are over two feet tall and sit on a metal base with a brass ormolu (gilt bronze) rim and arms. White reserve panels on the front and back of each vase are elaborately hand-painted. Similar bouquets of flowers in vibrant hues of orange, pink, yellow, lavender and purple decorate one side of each vase. On the other side are lavish landscape scenes. The vases, which may be Sévres, have been dated to c. 1800.

These vases—and many other fine ceramics—are on display at Fulford Place. For more information on the site and its hours of operation, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or call 613-498-3003.

Pam Brooks is the Ontario Heritage Trust’s Coordinator for Eastern Ontario Sites and works at Fulford Place.
Genealogical research can be challenging, frustrating and ultimately rewarding as you wade through hundreds of records and personal artifacts. If you have reached an impasse with your data or need to find a clear way of sorting your records, follow these basic steps to embark on your genealogical adventure.

Begin with what you already know. Plot your family tree on a sheet of paper – beginning with yourself and working backwards through as many generations as possible. Don’t worry if there are gaps or unknown data; you can fill that in later. Add birth, marriage and death dates for each person. If in doubt, ask a parent or grandparent. Also, search through your own personal archives. Open the old shoeboxes and unlatch the trunks in the attic and sift through their contents carefully. You will be surprised at what amazing treasures you have in your possession. They may only have value to you or your immediate family, but each artifact adds clarity and richness to your past.

Now you can begin solving some of the mysteries these records present. Delve into the vast assortment of genealogical documentation available to you. A good place to start for your ancestry in this province is the Archives of Ontario (www.archives.gov.on.ca). The Archives of Ontario holds a vast treasury of family history records – from birth/marriage/death and cartographic records, to reference texts and directories, to wills and legal documents. Visit their website for preliminary research and then make an appointment to go to their Toronto offices and search through the microfilms. (The Archives will also loan microfilms to other public libraries across Ontario but not to individuals directly.)

Another valuable cache of records about family members can be found in Ontario censuses. Some census documents are more complete than others; they are sometimes frustrating and genealogists must be aware of their limitations. Census takers often took guesses at, or made assumptions about, who lived somewhere. They might also ask about a neighbour who was not at home during a census visit. Consequently, information can be incorrect or completely absent. Handwriting of census takers, too, can be challenging to decipher and transcriptions of these records sometimes contain errors because of handwriting confusion. Despite these limitations, census records remain important documents for family history research. Again, these records can be accessed, among other resource centres, through the Archives of Ontario.

It should come as no surprise that once you begin asking questions about your genealogy, a number of new questions arise. Once you have begun researching your family’s fascinating past, you will need to discover more. Fortunately, there are many options. Join your local branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society (visit www.ogs.on.ca). Conduct online research through thousands of websites, newsgroups and web forums. Purchase a genealogy software application to help you store and sort your data. Genealogy can be a rich and rewarding pastime. Fortunately, thanks to the resources available, you will quickly be rewarded for your efforts. And your family’s contributions to the growth and development of communities in Ontario will become apparent.

Gordon Pimm is a Marketing and Communications Coordinator with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Books, cards, certificates, letters, diaries, manuscripts, maps, paper currency, newspapers, deeds, paintings and photographic prints ranging from the late 1700s to the late 1900s all have something in common. They are all paper-based documents and can be found in the Ontario Heritage Trust’s cultural collection. These artifacts have documented our world, inspired and captured our creativity and cemented our desire to maintain their preservation.

To ensure that valuable paper artifacts are well preserved, it is helpful to understand that there are two basic threats to the survival of paper-based documents – unstable environmental conditions and improper handling. Fortunately, these threats are both controllable.

The use of poor-quality materials and the paper-making process used by some manufacturers can contribute to a higher level of acidity, a less than ideal condition for paper documents. The ideal temperature for paper-based artifacts is between 18 and 20 degrees Celsius, with little or no temperature fluctuations recommended. Any temperature change should be gradual. Elevated temperatures coupled with high humidity can cause chemical reactions to take place in the paper, causing discolouration and embrittlement.

The relative humidity should be no higher than 60 per cent and should not fluctuate rapidly. In cases where the temperature and relative humidity are both high, these two factors create the ideal setting for the growth of mould and mildew. The recommended relative humidity for paper is below 50 per cent – with photographic material even less, at 45 per cent.

Paper documents are extremely sensitive to natural and artificial light. As a result, paper will discolor and pigments and dyes will fade. The use of ultraviolet filters will reduce the amount of harmful ultraviolet light. Limiting the exposure time of paper artifacts on display will extend the life of those artifacts.

Poor handling of paper documents can also result in tears and creases, stains, folds and abrasions. A few simple measures will help preserve them. The use of cotton gloves when handling paper documents will protect them from finger oils. They must also be supported by a stiff, acid-free cardboard backing slightly larger than the document. This will provide the appropriate support when handling the document. Overcrowding of documents in boxes can also place considerable stress on paper. Acid-free folders and boxes are a wise alternative to storing paper documents in cardboard boxes. Acid-free tissue should be used to interleave between paper artifacts. Before storing paper documents, metal fasteners such as staples and paper clips should be carefully removed. Acidic cardboard and/or backing boards should also be removed. This may be difficult depending on how the backing is attached to the paper; you may need to seek the services of a qualified conservator. Newspapers should be stored separate from other documents as they tend to be extremely acidic.

With careful attention to storage environments, your paper artifacts will be heirlooms you can pass on to future generations. Similarly, the conservation and protection of the Trust’s artifacts ensure that these treasures remain in their best possible condition for generations to come.

Simonnee Seon-Milette is the Cultural Collections Coordinator at the Ontario Heritage Trust.
Built in Perth in 1823, Inge-Va represents one of the finest Neo-Classical Georgian houses in Eastern Ontario. In its refined, park-like setting, the house also embodies many of the triumphs and tragedies that constituted life during the 19th century. Often, archaeologists have little more than statistics to help glimpse the past. By using a combination of available historical documentation about the family, oral history and the archaeological record, we have pieced together a fascinating history of the life course of one family that occupied this picturesque home.

Inge-Va was built in 1823 for Reverend Michael Harris as his first home in Perth. Harris built a second house called "The Grange" and moved his family there in late 1832 or 1833, at which time Thomas Mabon Radenhurst moved into Inge-Va. Radenhurst, the "Father and Champion of Reform" in Lanark County, was widely known in the small community of Perth. A Reform and a friend of Robert Baldwin, Radenhurst was also an adversary of two other Perth lawyers, James Boulton and Daniel McMartin.

After his death in 1854, Radenhurst’s widow and children continued to live in the house. Over the next 20 years, many deaths associated with disease occurred within the household. Fanny contracted typhoid fever in December 1866, dying a few days later. Charles succumbed to tuberculosis in 1869. His two elder sisters, Mary and Edith, also suffered from tuberculosis. Both girls died in April 1873 within days of each other. The apparent mass disposal of household contents in the Inge-Va privy – which was archaeologically investigated in 1988 – has been interpreted partly as a reaction to this series of deaths. The fear of contamination within the household led to the disposal of items that were thought to be communal and used by the infected individuals within the house.

Over 15,000 artefacts were recovered from this site – and more are being uncovered today. Mending of the ceramic sherds has resulted in a minimum vessel count of 369 vessels that include sets of china and toiletry wares. There was also a large quantity of glass objects within the deposit, numbering 313 vessels. Members of the Radenhurst family lived in the house into the 1890s, at which time Ella Inderwick and her family moved in. It was Ella who named the house "Inge-Va" – a Tamil word meaning "come here."

When the Inderwick family moved to Inge-Va in 1894, it was generally believed that the house was infected with tuberculosis since the Radenhursts had the disease. One family story tells of Dr. Beeman visiting the house soon after the family had moved there and upon seeing young Cyril playing on the floor, demanded to know how Ella had cleaned the floorboards. Since she had only scrubbed them with soap and water, he insisted that she paint them as well to eliminate the germs in the cracks. This precaution is unusual since nobody with tuberculosis had lived in the house for 21 years!

The 1993 archaeological season discovered the original summer kitchen inside the current one. The original 1823 summer kitchen was much smaller than the one you see today. The original west wall can be seen inside the current building. It appears that while Lucy Radenhurst was staying with relatives in Toronto in the early 1840s, the kitchen was renovated.

Since 1992, Algonquin College’s Heritage Masonry program has worked with the Trust to rebuild a tall stone boundary wall along one side of the property. In 2002 and 2005, during excavation of the trench to lay the new stone wall, hundreds of artifacts were recovered. These artifacts included intact medicine bottles and ceramic sherds. This material dates to the Radenhurst occupation of the property and reflects the disposal of refuse during the 19th century.

Taken together – the historical facts about the Radenhurst family, the discoveries through archaeology and the oral history associated with Inge-Va – we have a glimpse of life in Perth’s past as experienced by one family through time.

Dena Doroszenko is the archaeologist for the Ontario Heritage Trust.
The genealogy of your family… a straightforward overview from family trees to vital statistics. Where to find your ancestors in the locations of a number of essential sources, such as maps, censuses and religious, immigration and land records. An orderly process helps you tie the first two parts together. The next steps are items not covered in this book but which you will soon need to study—among them, computer programs, numbering systems and copyright.

Dr. Fraser Dunford, a Professional Engineer and former academic, is the Executive Director of the OGS. He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists. His previous books include Places of Worship in Peterborough County and Municipal Records in Ontario. He is most interested in Peterborough County, Ontario, where he grew up and where his family has been since Europeans first settled the area.

For a copy, contact the OGS at www.ogs.on.ca or 416-489-0734.

Mysterious Brockville 2, by Nancy Wickwire Fraser (2006)

Henderson Printing, Inc., Brockville. Brockville has its share of supernatural beings. Mysterious Brockville—the first book—grew out of the Friends of Fulford Place Association’s popular Ghost Walks. It describes the visits of some of those disparate entities to area residents. Some area history also provides the background for each story.

The Ghost Walks, initiated in 1997, were inspired by similar entertainments in Perth, Kingston and Toronto, themselves modeled on the famous ghost tours of London, England. Like these hallowed walks, the Brockville tours—and the book—weave together ghost stories, historical anecdotes and chilling legends.

With few exceptions, these tales describe phenomena experienced by more than one person, or by a person and an animal, thus eliminating illness or over-medication as sources of the eerie visitations. Personal experiences and street addresses are published with permission.

Mysterious Brockville 2 chronicles original ghost stories plus tales from the townships. In this book, you will encounter the Voices of the Dead, the Phantom Invasion of 1915 and The Library Poltergeist. Curl up with the lights down low—and be sufficiently spooked!

SAVING THE SPENCERVILLE MILL—PRESEVING COMMUNITY HERITAGE

By Louise Burchell

The Spencerville Mill, a fine cut-stone flour and grist mill, is located on the bank of the South Nation River in the small rural village of Spencerville (population approximately 300), located off Highway 416 south of Ottawa.

In 1876, the Canadian Illustrated News described the mill as “producing as fine a gist and flour as any country mill in Canada.” Built by Mercy and Robert Farbairn, the mill had been operating since 1864. A fire gutted the mill in 1884 and it took a couple years to rebuild the structure within the remaining stone walls. Soon afterwards, it was sold to Thomas Bennett, who installed a single roller mill in an attempt to meet the demand for more refined white flour. J.S. Barnard, a newcomer to the village, took over the mill in 1903 and replaced the machinery with up-to-date milling machinery. He developed “Gow or Bust” feeds, which became the first registered trademark in Canada for a line of balanced feeds for poultry and livestock.

In 1934, the overshot waterwheel was replaced with a rebuilt “Canadian” turbine that is being restored for demonstration purposes. In the early 1930s, the mill was a bustling centre of activity. Feeds, grains, seed and farm-related goods were sold to local farmers and dealers throughout southeastern Ontario. But, in 1972, after three generations, the Barnard family closed the mill.

For several years, the mill sat neglected and its walls aed neglected and the elements took their toll. In 1980, a small group of local residents formed a committee to save the mill. In the late 1990s, with the help of the South Nation Conservation Authority and generous donations from three local families, the dam was rebuilt, the mill’s stone and timbers stabilized and a new roof installed—thereby preserving the last standing mill on the South Nation River.

The Spencerville Mill Foundation, a volunteer organization, now owns and operates the historic mill. With the assistance of some grants and the help of numerous volunteers, restoration work continues and new programs are being developed to make the mill a heritage and cultural centre for visitors and local residents. Volunteer and student tours welcome visitors to the mill. A summer heritage camp is a fun-filled week of history for area children. Self-guided walking tours highlight historic buildings in the village. Local artists, musicians and artisans are showcased at the Spencerville Mill through art and musical events. A park behind the mill makes a peaceful spot for a quiet break or a family gathering. In addition, the mill pond is a favourite place to launch canoes for a leisurely paddle.

Almost 150 years since the Spencerville Mill began operations, it is being restored and revitalized as a centre of community activity. The Spencerville Mill is once again becoming as fine a country mill as any in Canada and a symbol of our agricultural heritage. Villagers are justifiably proud of the Spencerville Mill.
Come out to Doors Open Ontario events this fall!

The Doors Open Ontario 2006 season is in full swing, with many events still to come in September and October. Take this opportunity to explore communities across the province and discover their hidden heritage treasures.

For more information, visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca.

Downtown Occasions in Landmark Locations

Let our magnificent venues inspire your special event.

Ontario Heritage Trust

Conference and Reception Centres

Call 416-325-5025 today for a confidential discussion with our Manager of Fundraising and Development or e-mail us at general-inquiries@heritagetrust.on.ca to receive information by mail.

Our young people are the heritage champions of the future

The Young Heritage Leaders program celebrates the significant voluntary contributions of young people to the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural, natural and built heritage. For more information on how to nominate an outstanding Young Heritage Leader in your community, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or e-mail reception@heritagetrust.on.ca for an application. The deadline for this year’s nominations is December 22, 2006.

The Ontario Heritage Trust is your organization for the preservation of Ontario’s heritage. By making a planned gift to the Trust, you can ensure that our heritage is conserved for the enjoyment, education and well-being of present and future generations.

A planned gift is a donation to be realized in the future. Planned gifts are a source of income that will help the Trust to continue its important work.

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