We want to thank our generous members for your continued support through the pandemic.

Our recent pop-up pig roasts sold out and were well-supported by our members and the community. PigOut was very generous in having all the proceeds from the first event go directly to supporting museum operations. A special thanks also goes to Trinity Lutheran Church for the use of their parking lot for the event. We raised $1,700 from the first event!

For the month of June, every dollar that we received as a donation through CanadaHelps entered us for a chance to win $20,000. The results are not yet in, but we thank the 13 donors who donated a total of $1,195.

Finally, we thank all our members who have renewed their memberships and made donations through the mail or through our gift shop online. Your support is so important right now and it has kept us financially strong.
UPCOMING WEBINARS

All presentations start at 4 pm and require online registration:

July 16 | Shawna Butts - Some Women in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s History
REGISTER HERE

July 23 | David Hemmings - Was your grandmother a British Home Child?
REGISTER HERE

July 30 | Sarah Kaufman - Ask the Curator (submit your questions to us ahead of time!)
REGISTER HERE

Recordings will be emailed to all members following each presentation

MASKS AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM FOR $10

Member Fran Boot has been making washable fabric masks throughout the pandemic and supporting local charities. These masks come in a variety of patterns and include a pocket for inserting an extra layer of protection, with generous elastic ear loops that can be tightened.

If anyone is looking for masks, we have some available at the Museum for $10 each. Fran has generously donated some to support the Museum with the rest of her sales supporting local food banks.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

It has been great to see some smiling faces return to the Museum this week for our “soft opening” with members. You will notice a few changes and some additional signage. Plus, Staff will be working hard to make sure high touch surfaces and bathrooms are cleaned throughout the day.

If you’re looking to get out of the heat, come see us at the Museum and check out “A Piece of Her Mind”. We have held over this exhibition of quilts and coverlets due to the lengthy closure which cut the exhibit short. Our display about the history of the waterfront will be postponed until spring 2021 so that it can be available next summer.
St. Andrews Brotherhood at Niagara Camp

Just a few short weeks ago this image arrived here in Niagara-on-the-Lake as a purchase from a postcard dealer in (wait for this!) Edmonton. How it got to be in Edmonton - since it had not been used in the mail - is one of those eternal postcard mysteries.

At first, we thought that it was Masonic (the ‘Brotherhood’ caption). Richard Merritt pointed out that an image from a different angle is in his book On Common Ground (page 133). And it has nothing to do with Masonic orders, or even St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. Richard pointed out to us that “it was actually a benevolent society of the Anglican Church”. Richard further noted that “It was very popular amongst the camp trainees because the food served was particularly tasty - a welcome diversion from the usual army fare”.

We wondered whether - as in the U.S. during the First War - there were also tents from the Salvation Army, the Knights of Columbus, or the Canadian equivalent of the Jewish Welfare Board. Richard has seen no record of such, but his book does have an image of the YMCA tent. He comments that when the Polish contingent was training in the camp, the Roman Catholic service was in the YMCA tent, because St. Vincent de Paul was not large enough to hold such a large number of worshippers.

One of the joys of Real Photo cards such as this one is the good quality of the resolution of the image. It means that one can get out a high-powered magnifying glass (such as our 10-power jeweler’s eye loupe) and see wonderful detail. The initials, BSA are printed on the top of the tent. Right by the entrance to the tent is a very small tent which advertises that the proprietor is a “Watchmaker and Jeweler”. One would assume that he was a civilian and not part of the military. What hours was he open for business? Would he also have had a shop in town? Research looms.

Looking to the right is a fuzzy figure that may or may not be in uniform, apparently pushing a hand mower. That’s what happened when someone was in motion in a photograph a hundred and five years ago - images were rather blurry. But it is a fascinating insight - here we are in a camp on the Commons, and someone(s) has to keep the grass cut in areas that do not receive a lot of foot traffic - just like today!

Even further to the right, the last tent has a sign in front that reads ‘Chaplain’. No further information is needed and presumably his tent was at one side so that men who wanted counseling or comfort could seek the Chaplain out for a quiet conversation.

There are other photographic postcard images in the Museum’s collections with the same style of caption as this one in Judith’s collection. Make a note to check them out when this isolation ends!

Judith Sayers (jasayers@saybuck.com) has a large collection of postcards of Niagara Camp and Niagara-on-the-Lake which will be shared with you in this series.

Richard Merritt’s books about the Commons and Niagara Camp are available for sale for those who want to order a copy for further insights.