Update Museum News During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Hello!

This week our new summer student started her work contract remotely. This is definitely uncharted territory for us but we are making the best of it and hoping that we will be able to bring her onsite soon to work at the Museum.

Emma Facca is our Program Assistant and will be helping coordinate programming as well as taking on some curatorial tasks. We are hoping to be able to deliver some form of summer camp this year, but if not, her work will get us prepared for next year.

We decided to only hire one student this year although our funding was approved for two. Our staff space is limited which will make social distancing with extra staff more difficult. Also, the Curatorial Assistant position really focused on working with the collection which can't be done remotely at this time.

We want to thank the Government of Canada through the Young Canada Works Program for their generous funding towards our summer placement, which offers students meaningful employment in their field.

This week's fun links:

- Video: Artefact Spotlight
- "F&I: The Medicis" Recording
- Historic Home Quiz

We want to know your COVID-19 experiences. Call the number below to record your audio diary!

289-719-1918

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Follow us on social media @NOTLMuseum
UPCOMING WEBINARS

All presentations start at 2pm and require online registration:

June 4 | David Hemmings
Doing Family History in COVID Days
REGISTER HERE

June 11 | Linda Fritz
Queenston: The Inland Port
REGISTER HERE

June 18 | Michael Clark
Famous & Infamous: Conn Smythe

June 25 | Sarah Kaufman
Memorial Hall: Niagara’s own Cabinet of Curiosities

Recordings will be emailed to all members following each presentation

IT’S IN THE CARDS

A SERIES BY JOHN G. SAYERS

The Pennant Postcard

This postcard was the type of communication that could have been sent by someone who lived in town, rather than by a tourist or someone training at Niagara Camp. It’s not a local landmark and not a photo of anyone in town. It’s just darned cute.

This type of ‘novelty’ postcard is called a ‘pennant card’ and it’s not hard to guess why. Publishers would offer local merchants the chance to purchase, say 100 cards, with the name of the town printed on the pennant. The only identifying mark on the back is the note ‘Made in U.S.A.’.

This card was sent on June 13, 1916 to Miss Ada Cass in Owen Sound by ‘Unkle Jack’ and briefly describes the life in Niagara Camp. So it WAS from a trainee! The cancellation heralds the advent of the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. Business as usual? Not when you note the two one-cent green War Tax stamps affixed to the card.

Because this design of card would have been ordered for many different towns and cities in Canada, each with its own unique name, there is a wide range of varieties ‘out there’ and there are collectors who search out a complete set from the entire country. Given that this card was produced south of the border, you can assume that there are a large number of ‘sister’ cards of various towns and cities in America. There is one major limitation – no one knows how many places ordered this design of pennant card. When the popularity of postcards waned with the wider use of the telephone, most publishers went out of business and their records ended up in landfill.

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The Pennant Postcard continued

And this would not have been the only design of pennant card. There could have been several others, produced by other publishers. So for the collector there are an unidentified number of iterations of an unknown universe!

The first iteration of this series showed pretty ladies with the caption ‘The Girls at Niagara Camp will greet you with smiles’. There could be another version that refers to the girls at Niagara Falls...and so on. Not a pennant novelty card because there are no attachments, but the concept is similar.

Then there the pennant cards with real felt, such as one with a cameo photo of a couple in love. These cards would have been more expensive to make because of the hand labour to cut out and paste on perhaps a hundred felt pennants for an order of a hundred cards for the Niagara-on-the-Lake version, and then the same process for a hundred or more different ‘name’ pennants for another town. The more elaborate the card, the higher the imputed esteem for the recipient – another facet of the postcard’s message!

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.
Prior to the 1920s, Niagara-on-the-Lake did not have a proper hospital. During the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918, an emergency hospital was opened at a private residence owned by an American named William G. Gray of Connecticut. 

The house, at 83 Gage St., was likely a summer residence for his family but at the time of the Spanish Flu outbreak they had moved to England and it was left vacant. It was used by Dr. Rigg and several volunteer staff to treat the sick until the Spanish Flu had passed. 

Following the First World War, each community received a certain amount of funding from the leftover wartime fundraising of Victory Bonds. There was a lot of debate in Niagara-on-the-Lake about what the community should do with this money. There was obviously a strong case for a new hospital as the Spanish Flu had demonstrated to the community, and to many communities in Canada, the need for a proper medical facilities.

It was obvious to many Canadians in 1919 that the state of health services in Canada was in need of serious upgrades. The funding ended up going toward the memorial clock tower and cenotaph on Queen Street, which commemorated the men, mostly local although some not, who died in the war.

In 1920, after a considerable fundraising drive, 175 Queen St. became the site for the local Niagara Cottage Hospital.

Its last resident was Dr. Hedley L. Anderson, who was one of the town’s leading physicians. At the time of its opening, the new hospital had six small wards.

A baby was delivered on its opening night, perceived by some as a good omen. The building served in this capacity until the hospital on Wellington Street opened in 1951.

Sarah Kaufman is managing director/curator of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

MASCOTS @ NIAGARA CAMP

Bulldogs, goats and bears...oh my!

Many Battalions at Niagara Camp during the First World War had mascots, like the bulldog in the one image. But did you know they also used goats and bears?! The other two images were recently found when processing a donation to the collection!