



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **March 19:** Lecture Series, 7:30 pm
- ◆ **March 23:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- ◆ **April 10:** Good Friday - Museum Closed
- ◆ **April 11:** Easter - Museum Closed
- ◆ **April 16:** Lecture Series, 7:30 pm
- ◆ **April 24:** Volunteer Appreciation Lunch, 11 am - 1 pm
- ◆ **April 27:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- ◆ **May 7:** New Exhibit Opens - *All Along the Waterfront*
- ◆ **May 13:** Members' Exhibit Launch, 4-6 pm
- ◆ **May 18:** International Museums Day (Free admission)
- ◆ **May 21:** Lecture Series, 7:30 pm
- ◆ **May 25:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm

Voices of Freedom Education Program Update

One of the legacies of the Voices of Freedom Park that was led by the Museum via the Voices of Freedom Education Committee was the creation of an Ontario curriculum-based program about Niagara's Black History for students from grades 3-12.

During the month of February, which is Black History Month, Hillary (Voices of Freedom Education Programmer) and Shawna were able to get into schools to test out and deliver the FREE Voices of Freedom Education program. They attended Royal Oak and St. Michael Catholic Elementary School locally, as well as Harriet Tubman Public School in St. Catharines, A.N. Myer Secondary School in Niagara Falls and Trail Ridge

Montessori School in Grimsby, where students got to get hands on with history! They used artefacts and primary sources to learn about the stories of struggle, resistance, sacrifice and success relating to the Black history of our town.

Students asked a ton of great questions, had inciteful comments and made amazing connections. Thank you to the Town of NOTL's Voices of Freedom Project funding, which allowed us to deliver this program. We are looking forward to continuing to bring this program into the schools every year and adapting it to complement our Tiny Museum!

- *Shawna Butts*
Assistant Curator & Education Programmer



We are pleased to announce that the Voices of Freedom Park and its educational components won the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation! Museum staff worked closely with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's committee on the development of the park, and specifically the development of the walking tour app and school program that compliments the park. It is wonderful to see everyone's hard work recognized!

Committee members pictured to the right:
Back Row - Kevin Turcotte and Tom Ridout.

Front Row - Natasha Henry, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Donna Ford, Barbara Worthly, Sarah Kaufman and Juliet Dunn.

happening at the museum



FAMOUS & INFAMOUS: People & Events

Planned & organized by David Murray & Elizabeth Surtees

January - November | 2 pm

Join us in the gallery on the fourth Monday of the month for a presentation by a local resident, followed by a lively discussion about either the life and times of the subject person or the influence/importance of the historical period/event covered in the presentation.

DATE	PRESENTER	F&I/P&E SUBJECT
23 Mar	Suzanne Hebert	The Medicis (part 1)
27 Apr	Linda Fritz	Somerset Maugham
25 May	Richard Ficek	Roger Casement
22 June	David Aurandt	Col. Sam McLaughlin (part 2)
27 July	Gus Calderone	Kim Philby
24 Aug	Michael Clark	Simon Bolivar (part 1)
28 Sep	Julian Rance	Pioneer Aviation: Alcock & Brown
26 Oct	Ron Dale	Benjamin Lett
23 Nov	Lewis Ford	Magda Goebbels [& infanticide]

NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY LECTURE SERIES: *All Along the Waterfront*

March 19: Peter Mulcaster
A Railway History of Niagara-on-the-Lake 1854–1959

April 16: Tony Chisholm
Marathon swimmers on Lake Ontario

May 21: Linda Fritz
Queenston: the Inland Port

June 18: David Gilchrist
The Navy Hall Underwater Archaeology Project

July 16: Peter Warwick
Launch Today: A Brief History Of Shipbuilding & Boat Building In Niagara

August 20: John Henry
The Cayuga and her consorts: Remembering those beloved Niagara-to-Toronto steamers

September 17: Terry Boulton
The Sorry Tale of Commercial Fishing in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Lectures start at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$10 for the general public or free for Niagara Historical Society Members. Reservations required as seating is limited.

Generously sponsored by:



Museum Video Shown at Shaw Festival Film Series

In 2016 we completed a video project through generous funding from David Murray & Elizabeth Surtees. The 9 short videos were written and produced by Barbara (Babs) Worthy and complement our permanent exhibition, with each video exploring a different topic about NOTL's history. In February we were excited to have one of our videos shown before the start of one of the Shaw's weekly movies. The reaction was amazing and so many people reached out to Babs and the donors to let them know how much they enjoyed watching it. Next time you're in the Museum, grab a tablet and watch for yourself!

Neighbourhood WALKS 2020

Explore Unique Neighbourhoods
in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Fridays in June | 6pm | \$10

Tickets are limited and must be purchased in advance. Visit nhsm.ca/events for ticket link.

- June 5 | **The Waterfront** with Tony Chisholm
- June 12 | **The Commons** with Richard Merritt *in partnership with Parks Canada*
- June 19 | **Chautauqua** with Rick Meloan
- June 26 | **The Commons** with Richard Merritt *in partnership with Parks Canada*



The Museum has a new logo! Recently, the Society Board voted to change the name of the Museum to the “Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum”. The change in name will help the public better understand that we represent the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake instead of the whole Niagara Region. It will also be a better draw for tourists wanting to learn more about our community.

Thank you to Gary Hall who designed the Museum’s new logo, which includes a more modern font with a nod to our military past.

2019 Raffle Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the Society’s annual wine hamper raffle, held December 7, 2019. First prize went to Mike Everard and second prize went to Helen Vlachos. The raffle raised over \$2,357 for the Society!

Thank you to all of the members who donated wine for this fundraiser and to Ravine Winery for the donation of dinner for 4 and dinner for 2. And a special thank you to the wonderful volunteers who helped to sell ALL 1500 tickets!



New Exhibit
Opening Soon!

ALL ALONG THE Waterfront

May 7 - October 17, 2020

An exploration of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Relationship with Lake Ontario & Niagara River.

HANNAH JARVIS (part 1) by Betsy Masson

The following is a presentation (unedited) by member Betsy Masson at the monthly “Famous & Infamous (F&I)” program. F&I is a discussion group where local residents present about people and events of the past. It is planned and organized by David Murray & Elizabeth Surtees. Betsy’s presentation will be shared in two parts.

I’ll begin by telling you how I first learned about Hannah and why I began tracing her life. It was in the summer of 2004. I went on a tour of Willowbank in Queenston which had just been opened to the public the previous month and agreed to become a volunteer there. I met with Laura Dodson and she told me they were trying to learn as much as possible about Alexander Hamilton who had built the house, his wife Hannah whose maiden name was Jarvis, and what life had been like for their family after Alexander died three years following the completion of the house. So the next time I was in Toronto, walking by the Toronto Reference Library, I went in and found letters there that had been written by Hannah Hamilton’s mother to her brother. Then I learned that there was a lot of correspondence of the Jarvis and Hamilton families at the University of Guelph Library and indeed there is about 3 linear feet of material. As I strained my eyes, trying to read faded, ink-spotted sentences written 150-200 years previously, I decided that Hannah Hamilton’s mother, Hannah Jarvis, wrote more interesting, informative letters than her daughter. Then I came across a diary she had kept, her housekeeping book (which Elizabeth has since transcribed and published) and once I learned that Hannah Peters Jarvis had been born in Connecticut the same day of the year I was born in Connecticut, I was hooked. Since my first visit to Guelph, I’ve been back there two more times, gone twice to the National Archives in Ottawa which has a number of Hannah’s letters, twice to the town in Connecticut where she was born, to the church in London where she was married, and I’ve even visited a descendant who keeps (and sits on) Hannah’s chair in her living room. Now to Hannah’s life:

Hannah was born on Jan. 2, 1763 in this house in Hebron, Conn. Her mother, Hannah Owen, gave birth to two more daughters who died as infants and then she herself died from pleurisy when her daughter was two. Hannah’s mother and the two infant sisters are buried in this abandoned cemetery in Hebron.

Hannah’s father, Samuel Peters, was born in Hebron in 1735. The Peters family were large property-owners in town and founded the Anglican church which is called (guess what?) St. Peter’s. St. Peter’s is the largest, best-situated church in Hebron which is unusual in New England as the main church in town is usually a white Congregational church on the town green but such was the influence of the Peters family in Hebron.

Samuel graduated from Yale College in 1757, expressed an interest in becoming the rector of St. Peter’s, and sailed to England to be ordained. He, apparently, very much enjoyed his time in London, meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury and he returned to Conn. “more English than the English”. After Hannah, his first wife, died in 1765, he married someone in 1769 who died 6 weeks after the marriage, and then in 1773, married Mary Birdseye who died giving birth to their second son, leaving Samuel with one daughter, Hannah, and one son named William Birdseye.

In 1774, the Boston Tea Party incident occurred, the citizens of Connecticut were divided over the issue, but Samuel Peters, now considered a leading Anglican minister knew where he stood on this matter. When the governor of Conn. sent a letter to all the clergymen in the state requesting them to ask their townspeople to contribute food to the Bostonians whose port was now blockaded by the British, Samuel immediately announced he would not do so. Gov. Trumbull then dubbed him an enemy of America and sent his son, accompanied by a crowd, to Hebron to get Samuel to sign a statement of loyalty to America. When Samuel adamantly refused to do this, the plan was to tar and feather him but he managed to escape. Samuel, travelling in disguise, tried to get help from the legal authorities in both Hartford and New Haven but failed. He returned to Hebron but learning that a large mob was due to arrive at midnight, made one last sermon to his congregation, and then escaped to Boston on horseback. In Boston, he sought the protection of General Gage, then learning that a ship was to sail to England from Portsmouth, NH, he made his way there and sailed to London on Oct. 27, 1774, leaving 11 year old Hannah and one year old Birdseye behind.

Before I continue with Hannah’s story, I’m going to recount an incident concerning Hebron and the Peters house which I found interesting. As Samuel Peters fled, he asked his slave Cesar and Cesar’s wife Lowis to care for the house and property until he returned which they faithfully did, living in this back section of the house. Thirteen years later, in order to pay property taxes to the town, Samuel authorized his brother to turn over Cesar and Lowis and their 8 children to a slavedealer. The slavedealer had gotten them to a ship where they were to sail to South Carolina by the time word spread through Hebron. The townspeople, who considered the slaves well-respected members of the community, rescued them by riding to the port, showing a fake warrant for

Cesar's arrest which obliged the slavedealer to release him and bringing the family back to Hebron. Two years later, a petition for the emancipation of Cesar and Lowis Peters was granted by the state legislature. This has been called one of the first incidents of abolitionist sentiment in the States, Yale filmed a documentary about it, and the Peters House is now a stop on Conn.'s Freedom Trail. Incidentally, I found several letters from Hannah to her uncle in Hebron asking about Cesar and Lowis so they must have been memorable because she had not seen them since she was 11.

After her father fled the colonies, Hannah spent two years at a boarding school in Boston and then in 1776, joined her father in London. Samuel, after being received by King George, was living in a poor section of Pimlico on a small grant of money from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, continually applying for ecclesiastical positions but never receiving an offer. Hannah, meanwhile, benefited from her time in London, studying Hebrew, Latin, religion, history, geography, natural history, astronomy, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, heraldry, needlework, drawing, music, dancing, and etiquette.

On Dec. 12, 1785 at the age of 22, Hannah married William Jarvis who was 29 at the time. William had been born in Stamford, Conn., educated in England, and returned to Connecticut just as the American Revolution broke out. He enlisted in the Queen's Rangers American regiment which was under the command of a man named John Graves Simcoe. William fought under Simcoe until in June 1781, he was severely wounded at a battle in Virginia. He resigned his commission in the Queen's Rangers in 1783, returned to Stamford but finding the feelings of the townspeople to someone who had fought for the British to be decidedly negative, sailed to London where he, obviously, met another Loyalist, also originally from Conn. Hannah and William's marriage was at St. George's Church, Hanover Square in Mayfair. Incidentally, soon after St. George's was built, the composer Handel moved into a house down the street, and he was a regular parishioner there. And by a strange coincidence, the subject of next month's F&I presentation was also married here; Theodore Roosevelt was the only Amer. president to be married outside the U.S.

Within a year of their marriage, Hannah and William's first child, a boy who was named Samuel Peters, was born and soon after two daughters, Maria Lavinia and Augusta Honorina. They were living in Pimlico with Hannah's father with William earning money by shipping goods to his brother who had moved to New Brunswick after the Revolution. In 1792, William was approached by his former commandant, John Graves Simcoe, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the newly formed province of Upper Canada and accepted his invitation to become Secretary and Registrar of the province; it is said that Simcoe offered him the position because he felt sorry for William for having been wounded just at the end of the Revolution. Just before setting sail for North America, the only known likeness of Hannah Peters Jarvis was painted with her daughters by Joseph Earl; it hangs at the ROM.

The Jarvises left on a troop ship with two servants and a governess named Charlotte Adlam. Charlotte, by the way, later met a young Scottish merchant named William Dickson and married him. Dickson went on to build an estate in Niagara now known as Randwood; the street that runs on one side of it, Charlotte Street, is named after the Jarvises' governess. The Atlantic crossing was rough and took 2 months. At last, they reached Montreal, then proceeded to Kingston, to find that Simcoe had decided on Niagara as his headquarters for the next two years. William proceeded to Niagara ahead of the rest of the family in order to, as he said in a letter to Samuel Peters, find "a hut to place my wife and lambs in but without success". He finally paid \$140 for a log hut with three rooms, then comments that "Col. Simcoe is very unwell and if he has a good shake with the ague, I think it will be but justice for his meanness in dragging us from Kingston to a spot on the globe that appears to be deserted in consequence of a plague." Then William describes the streaked snakes and rattlesnakes in Niagara and says, "People here only live from hand to mouth as if they were to be gone tomorrow".

No sooner had the rest of the family arrived in Niagara (which at this point, Simcoe had renamed Newark but I'm going to keep calling it Niagara) than their eldest child, Samuel, became ill and died, aged 5 ½. Hannah in a letter to her father commented that "it has been a sickly season out here and a deadly one to children, so much so that there is scarcely a child left in the fort the other side of the river and numbers have died here". Fortunately, there was good news to report a month later as Hannah gave birth to another boy who was given the same name as his brother, Samuel Peters Jarvis.

If you want to picture where the Jarvises were living in Niagara when Hannah was writing her many letters to her father back in England, they had been given Lots 3 & 4 which were on Front Street at the foot of Regent, across from where Queen's Royal Park is now.

To be continued in the June newslettter...

From the Managing Director

Our Tiny Museum is near completion and we can't wait to show everyone the finished product! The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), along with David and Faith Bell and other anonymous donors, were very generous to support the development of the project in 2019. The exterior is complete, and the windows and doors have been installed. The interior, with display cabinets and a kid's corner, will be completed soon! The OTF grant has provided funds for the purchase of a truck to help haul the Tiny Museum around the community. A special thank you to Jeff Gates and the staff at Performance Toyota for their support of this project! We can't wait to show off the Tiny Museum at events this summer with special displays on Niagara-on-the-Lake's history!

The next step is the development of the school program that will be offered locally in Niagara. We have received support from the David S. Howes Fund and Vintage Hotels NOTL Community Fund at the Niagara Community Foundation to get this started. We're also applying to the OTF's Seed grant and appealing to the community for financial support to develop the programming. This project will be developed in consultation with education professionals who will help to establish curriculum connections with our local history. Exhibitions and activities will be developed for the Tiny Museum on the topics identified.

This will be a great opportunity for us to reach out to students but also to the larger community through festivals and events throughout the year. Keep your eye out for the Tiny Museum in 2020!

- Sarah Kaufman



A big thank you to the wonderful ladies who decorated the Museum for the Rotary Holiday House Tour. They made the outside beautiful with fresh greens and also decorated Memorial Hall for the event. Pictured above are some of the window displays featuring models made many years ago by Peter Babcock. Our decorating volunteers in 2019 were: Peggy Bell, Lois Chapman, Hilda Ellard, Marie Marozzo, Myrna Mackay, Deborah Paine, Barbara Peat, Alice Rance, Maybeth Ross, Gail Santsche, Jennifer Stevens, Margaret Teare (Chair) and Barbara Webber.

Pictured top to bottom: Sarah welcomes our new MP Tony Baldinelli for a tour of the Museum; volunteers David & Faith Bell, Victor Packard, Barb Cole and Dick Coyne (missing are Tom Pekar, Janet Guy) and the Kaufman Family) brave the rain during the parade on the partly-constructed Tiny Museum; guest speakers Scott Finlay, Ashley Creed and Peter Martin (all from Parks Canada) at "History in the Vineyard" held at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Hemmings, Society President

After 125 years in operation, the Niagara Historical Society is looking to the future. Our Museum's heritage buildings are in need of additional storage space, we must meet the Ontario accessibility laws for 2025 and we are undergoing a re-envisioning overhaul. We have invested in a completed set of as-built drawings and are currently working with the Town to obtain approvals on an acceptable Heritage Impact Assessment and Site Plan to obtain the necessary building permits. Even local charities that do extraordinary work for our community are required to find the funds to satisfy local government requirements. As we now turn our attention to finding the funds for the proposed expansion, we need YOU to volunteer your time to find and appeal to those who might be interested in contributing to this exciting local project. Contributions can come in various forms, whether structured over time or through one of a series of vehicles. If you can offer your volunteer services, then we recommend you discuss your proposed assistance with Sarah Kaufman, our Museum's Managing Director at 905-468-3912 or email SKaufman@nhsm.ca.

COLLECTIONS CORNER

In January we had a large collection of Cooper Family Archives donated to the Museum! Most of the collection encompasses documents and photographs relating to William John Cooper and Vera May (nee Cooper) Derbyshire. This collection offers wonderful insight into a local family who lived in the Township on Progressive Avenue, known today as Concession 2. The preservation of family archives like these offer not only the Museum, but also our community and visiting researchers, the opportunity to learn what everyday life was like in Niagara-on-the-Lake. From this collection we can see that the Cooper family had their children at the Niagara Cottage Hospital, they participated or attended local theater productions at local churches, purchased local goods and attended school in Niagara, and letters and photographs offer a window into what was happening in the family or social commentary on Niagara-on-the-Lake. We are always looking to add to our collection documents and histories like this one. As your community Museum we want to make sure that the voices and histories of all Niagara-on-the-Lake's communities are preserved and shared. Thank you to Marnie Taylor for all her hard work and research on this collection.

Shawna Butts,
Assistant Curator & Education Programmer



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MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is open daily year-round .

May-October: 10 am to 5 pm | November-April: 1 pm to 5 pm

The Museum is closed: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Closed December 18 - 31.



NHS MISSION STATEMENT

We are a team of staff & volunteers which passionately collects, preserves, researches, educates and promotes the history of Niagara-on-the-lake and its communities. We inspire an appreciation of local history through engaging programs and exhibitions.

www.nhsm.ca