



# MUSEUM Chronicles

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sept 1:** Pop-up Exhibit Launch in Virgil
- **Sept 8:** NIAGARA POLO, 12 - 4 pm (museum closed)
- **Sept 15:** St. Davids Heritage Day, 10 am - 3 pm
- **Sept 16:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- **Sept 20:** Lecture, 7:30 pm
- **Sept 21, 22, 28 & 29:** Cemetery Tours at St. Andrew's, 6 pm, 7 pm & 8 pm
- **Sept 28:** Unveiling of plaques in Rye Park, 2 pm
- **Oct 11:** AGM, 6 pm
- **Oct 21:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- **Nov 11:** "We'll Meet Again", 7 pm
- **Nov 18:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- **Nov 27:** Art Exhibit Opens
- **Nov 30 & Dec 1:** Rotary Holiday House Tour
- **Dec 1:** Members Exhibit Launch



The Niagara Historical Society & Museum is pleased to present our major fundraiser this year, Niagara Polo on the historic Niagara-on-the-Lake Commons. Get #InTheSwing on September 8, 2018.

Generously sponsored by Engel & Voelkers Niagara, Arterra Wines, Walker Industries, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Bed & Breakfast Association and the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Polo will feature two four-chukker games with players from the Toronto Polo Club, traditional divot stomp with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine sponsored by Vieni Estates, and half-time entertainment by the Niagara Regional Police Pipe Band.

There will also be food available from the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake and PigOut, a public bar serving Jackson-Triggs wine, Vieni bubbly and Silversmith beer, a collection of Niagara artists and artisans offering their creative designs, and Niagara Polo merchandise for sale.

For the general public, admission is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the gate (children 12 and under are free). In the field-side BeauChapeau Lounge, tables of 6 with an umbrella can be purchased in advance for \$240. Bottles of wine can be pre-ordered for the lounge by calling the Museum.

Although there will be plenty of delicious food for purchase, guests are welcome to bring their own picnic. However, NO OUTSIDE ALCOHOL will be permitted. General admission ticket holders are encouraged to bring their own chairs.

A silent auction will take place in the sold-out VIP area, but all attendees are welcome to make bids. A show of cars from the British Car Club as well as some high end modern cars will also be on display.

All proceeds from this fundraiser support our work in preserving, collecting and displaying the town's unique history and providing educational programs and lectures for residents and visitors.

Discover the power and passion of polo on September 8th! Gates open at 11 am with the first game starting just after noon. For more information visit [www.niagarapolo.com](http://www.niagarapolo.com).

Niagara Historical  
SOCIETY & MUSEUM

# happening at the museum



## 2018 LECTURE SERIES

This year's series focuses on the unique story of Camp Kosciuszko, the Polish training camp in NOTL during the First World War.

### FINAL LECTURE

**September 20 | Anthony Adamsky**  
*Falcons of Freedom*

Tickets are \$10 for the general public or free for Niagara Historical Society Members. Reservations required as seating is limited.

Generously sponsored by:

**GEOFFREY & LORRAINE JOYNER**  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE



## FAMOUS & INFAMOUS

2018 Season | 3rd Sunday at 2 pm

Join us in the gallery each month for a presentation by a local resident, followed by a lively discussion about the life and times of a famous or infamous person from the past. **\*\*FREE\*\***

- 16 September Frederick Banting
- 21 October John Stanislaus Joyce
- 18 November Robert Mondavi

# NOTL pop-up exhibits

BRINGING YOUR MUSEUM TO YOU

### old town

July 1 - October 31, 2018

First World War display at the Shaw Festival's Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre.

Fun Facts About Old Town at the Chamber of Commerce (lower level of the Court House).

### virgil

September 1 - 30, 2018

Highlights from the history of Virgil at Meridian Credit Union.

Community Launch:  
SEPT 1 | 12 - 2 pm | All Welcome

**Niagara Region** For more information visit [niagarahistorical.museum](http://niagarahistorical.museum)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### October 11 at 6 pm

Come learn about our accomplishments from 2018 and our plans for next year! We will also be voting in new board members. For a copy of the minutes from the 2017 AGM, please visit our website under the "Get Involved" tab. You can also call to request a paper copy by calling the Museum.



## "WE'LL MEET AGAIN" | November 11th at 7 pm

A Remembrance Day tribute in words and song. Join in the singing and share in the memories. Tickets are \$15 and space is limited.

## WINE RAFFLE

Our annual wine raffle has now begun! Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The first prize has a value of approximately \$400 and the second prize is valued at \$250.

We rely heavily on member donations to make this fundraiser a success. If you would like to donate a bottle of wine to our raffle, please bring it by anytime! A tax receipt can be given for donations accompanied by a sales receipt.



*Pictured above: Enjoying the Art Gallery of Guelph during our bus trip; Rick Meloen leads a neighbourhood walk of Chautauqua; Brian Kon, Metis Nation of Ontario, at the Past is Present Heritage Festival.*

*Picture left: A buffet of materials for our succulent workshop held in July; a private dinner held in Memorial Hall.*

## St. Davids HERITAGE DAY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15  
Lions Club Park, St. Davids



- LIVE MUSIC
- HISTORIC DISPLAYS & DEMONSTRATIONS
- LOCAL VENDORS
- WALKING TOURS
- SILENT AUCTION & GRAND PRIZE

Presented by the St. Davids Ratepayers Association

FREE ADMISSION | 10 AM - 3 PM



## THEATRICAL CEMETERY TOURS

ST. ANDREW'S  
CHURCH, 323  
SIMCOE ST.

SEPT 21, 22, 28 & 29

6 PM, 7 PM AND 8 PM | TICKETS \$12



## Goodbye to our Students!



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien

Another summer has flown by and we could not have survived without the help of our wonderful summer staff. We wish Elaine & Lauren both a wonderful year ahead as they continue with their studies. A special thank you to the Government of Canada's **Young Canada Works/Jeunesse Canada au travail** for funding our two students this year.



**ELAINE JONES:** Hello, I'm Elaine, and this summer I had the privilege of being the Curatorial Assistant at the museum. Over the last few months I put together two small exhibits in the upper gallery of Memorial Hall. The first is on the Ansley Home and School for Children Who Deviate from Normal. For those unfamiliar, the school was a safe space for special needs children and was run by the six Ansley sisters for over 50 years. The second exhibit is on the better-known Maria Rye and her home for orphaned English girls. I expanded on information in the permanent gallery to hopefully give more context on Maria Rye's time and influence on Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I also had the awesome opportunity to take part in town events. If anyone was at Simcoe Park on Canada Day or at the Peach Festival you may have seen our tent and activities. I can honestly say I've never seen a parade for a cake before! Working at the museum was such needed experience for me and I'm so glad I gained it in such a beautiful town. Sadly, I will be returning to Ryerson University to finish my undergrad. I have really enjoyed getting to know the museum staff and volunteers, I'm definitely coming back to visit!



**LAUREN McAUSLAND:** I am very thankful to have been given the opportunity to return to work as the Program Assistant for a second year. I had such a rewarding experience working with the amazing staff at the Niagara Historical Society last year, that I was thrilled to have been offered the opportunity to return. This year I was very excited to take on a larger role programming both sessions of the Kid Curators camp. I created dozens of fun teambuilding challenges for our Amazing Race in July camp, spy-themed crafts and missions for our August Camp, and booked several fun day trips including the Botanical Gardens, Happy Rolphs, Fort George, the Makery, and a tour of Fire station 1. I greatly enjoyed facilitating the museums interactions with the community through children's activities, face painting and more during Canada Day, the Peach Festival, Kids Day at the Market, and the Past is Present Heritage Festival. Finally, I have also been assisting 'behind-the-scenes' with marketing for Niagara Polo, and I am very excited to participate in the event itself as well.



In September, I will be moving to Toronto to start a dual Master's degree in Museum Studies and Information at the University of Toronto. I am very thankful to the Niagara Historical Museum for providing me with the opportunity to explore the professional world of museums, and for playing a supportive role in the development of my future museum career. Thank you to the amazing staff and volunteers of the Niagara Historical Society and Museum for your time, patience and enthusiasm. You all have made my experience working here truly memorable, and I look forward to visiting again soon.

*Pictured left: Lauren McAusland & Elaine Jones; campers at the Butterfly Conservatory and doing activities for "The Amazing Race".*

## The Beginnings of Postal Service *submitted by Peter Moogk*

Before the 1850s the postal service in British North America was a branch operation of Britain's General Post Office and it was guided by British regulations. The Deputy Postmaster General for the Canadas was located at Quebec City and he answered to Britain's Postmaster General.<sup>i</sup> Post offices had existed on the Old Province of Quebec since 1763 but they were slow to appear in the new province of Upper Canada. Reconstruction of the early history of the pioneer post offices is hampered by the loss of the head office's records in a fire at Quebec City in 1841.<sup>ii</sup> As a consequence, the early postal history of Upper Canada depends on incidental references in various sources. The existence of Niagara's post office was first acknowledged in the Quebec Gazette in 1789. It was certainly active in the 1790s when, for want of postal instruments, letters were marked with pen and ink. Straightline NIAGARA postmarks, once attributed to the Canadian office, are now believed to be American strikes made at Fort Niagara.<sup>iii</sup> Canadian letters certainly passed through that American post office after a 1792 convention with the United States permitted the exchange of mail. The combination of letters from Niagara, Upper Canada, with the straightline "Niagara" postmark explains the assumption that this was a Canadian postmark.

The office of a town's post master was a patronage appointment. Niagara's third postmaster, Alexander Davidson, wrote that in 1821 "I was recommended by the late Marquis of Londonderry, usually known as Lord Castlereagh, to the favourable notice of the authorities of this country. He was at that time Foreign Secretary. I [then] entered the Post Office Department." Davidson published a Conservative newspaper and, with the advent of Responsible Government in 1849, he feared that the Reformers in power would dismiss him "on account of my political opinions."<sup>iv</sup> He weathered that storm yet, increasingly, political patronage determined who would be appointed as a postmaster in the Province of Canada. After August 1842 local members of the legislative assembly nominated candidates for appointment.

Service at Niagara in the 1790s was casual. Peter Russell, the provincial Receiver General, complained that "the letter business is managed with unpardonable carelessness by the post people since the Governor's absence at York, all the letters being thrown about in the merchants' shops and being picked up by whoever pleases to take them and, as I live back from the river, I seldom receive mail for several days after their arrival."<sup>v</sup> Drygoods merchants and printers often doubled as postmasters. The rules of the post office stipulated that the office be located in a separate room and never in a tavern. The mail service was usually run as a sideline to another commercial activity, much as Canada's sub post offices do today. Niagara's first known postmaster was Joseph Edwards, a merchant, but, because of the loss of early post office records, we do not know when he was appointed. We only know that he served as postmaster until 1812. His successor was a Scot, John Crooks, a retailer who was licensed to sell liquor and was also a Justice of the Peace.

Even after Queenston's post office was made the region's exchange office for mail to and from the United States, the Niagara post office continued to handle international letters. After 1796 Joseph Edwards was assisted by Silvester Tiffany, an American-born printer and publisher, whose primary task was to deal with cross-border mail. American towns across the river and their road links with the East Coast made the Niagara River a major crossing point for international mail. Youngstown appeared opposite Niagara Town and Lewiston was across the river from Queenston. Buffalo, New York, grew in importance with the 1825 completion of the Erie Canal, linking it to the Hudson Valley and to New York City. Despite the rapids, there was a ferry between Buffalo and Fort Erie in Canada yet this was not a customary mail exchange route. Fort Erie remained a minor post office at which the postmaster had to inscribe the date in ink. Letters were conveyed by road rather than by canal, hence the preference for Youngstown and Lewiston, New York. Coach service linked Lewiston to Rochester and to American cities farther east. Sending letters via New York City's all-weather port expedited their delivery. In

*Continued on next page...*

### Postal Service continued...

1803 Alexander Wood, a merchant at York, advised correspondents in Scotland to use that route. Letters sent by way of Halifax, Nova Scotia, took up to six months to reach him. "When left at New York," Wood wrote, "the inland post to Niagara leaves that place once a week and letters are generally at hand in three months."<sup>vi</sup> By 1825, according to The Gleaner newspaper, European newspapers and letters arriving at New York took just six days to reach Niagara. Reliance on the port of New York for faster mail service made Niagara, Queenston, and Kingston Upper Canada's principal exchange post offices.

*i* The Deputy Postmasters General in the Canadas were Hugh Finlay (1784-1799), George Heriot (1799-1816), Daniel Sutherland (1816-1827), and Sutherland's son-in-law Thomas Allen Stayner (1827-1851). The appointment of postmasters became overtly political after 1842 when the DPG lost his power to appoint them.

*ii* Kenneth S. Mackenzie, "Canadian Postal History Sources," *Archivaria*, No.9 (winter 1979-80), pp.151-177.

*iii* This was the opinion of Allan L. Steinhart communicated to me orally in the 1970s and investigation bears it out. Pitt Petri, in "The Early Niagara Post Offices and Their Markings," *BNA Topics*, Vol.17, No.5 (May 1960), pp.117-121, illustrated the straightline marks and so does Frank W. Campbell, Canadian Post Offices, 1755-1895 (Boston: Quarterman Publications, 1972), p.117. One would need to find a letter addressed to a British North American resident with a straightline Niagara postmark to re-establish its Canadian credentials.

*iv* Letter of 5 Sept., 1854 to W.H Merritt quoted by Max Rosenthal, "The Decline of Niagara and its Post Office," *BNA Topics*, Vol.33, No.4 (July-Aug., 1976), p.15.

*v* Quoted by Max Rosenthal, "The Beginnings of Postal Service Along the Niagara River," *BNA Topics*, Vol.22, No.6 (June 1965), p.140.

*vi* Quoted in Rosenthal, "The Beginnings ...," p.141.

## President's Message

### Faith Bell, Society President

As I go into my last months as President, I reflect on some of our achievements. The Tiny Museum was a vision of getting the Museum into the whole community and I am proud to say we are moving in on the target. We are acquiring quotes for materials and build and can see the day of our build in the near future. At the same time, we will develop the educational programs to enable us to interface with our schools and make the artifacts and information that we hold available to the teachers and students in the Niagara area. Just one way we are "moving history forward". September 8th is Niagara Polo. This will be an action-filled day to bring the history of polo back to Niagara. We hope to see you all at the largest fundraising event for the Niagara Historical Society this year. It will be fun for all!

## New Plaques for Maria S. Rye and Our Western Home

Between 1868 and 1896 Miss Rye brought over 4,500 girls from the urban streets and workhouses of Britain to farms and homes in Southern Ontario. Another 1,000 girls came through NOTL between 1897 and 1914 under the auspices of the Church of England.

On Friday, September 28th at 2:00pm, two new plaques will be unveiled in Rye Park, celebrating the life's work of Maria Rye and "Our Western Home", the building used for domestic service training and as a distribution point for the girls to their destinations.

This project was generously funded by David Murray & Elizabeth Surtees.



**VOLUNTEER ALERT:** We are looking for one or two people to do some odd jobs around the museum including cleaning our exterior signage and light fixtures as well as painting exhibition boxes. If you are interested in helping out, please let us know!

## From the Managing Director

The Museum's expansion plans were very well-received by the Municipal Heritage Committee in June when they were asked for feedback on our new build. We were very pleased to have their positive comments.

Anyone who wishes to view the presentation to the MHC can do so here: <https://livestream.com/NOTL/events/8247595/videos/176293169> .

We also held a public engagement session with the community on August 21st in which our neighbours, specifically, and the general community were invited to see the designs and offer feedback to Lynch & Comisso, the staff and Board of Directors. At the time of print, we had not yet hosted the event, so I cannot provide the feedback at this time.



Since the Museum has been heavy on the military history in the past few years, we're switching gears for our Winter 2018 and Summer 2019 exhibitions! The Winter 2018 exhibition, "Painting Niagara-on-the-Lake", will open November 27, 2018 and we're featuring artwork in the Museum's collection that portrays Niagara-on-the-Lake landscapes or built heritage. We're looking forward to highlighting the recently acquired Betty Lane collection, the Francis H. Grainger collection, and the RJR Pottery collection. Invitations to the opening will be sent out in November so keep your eyes peeled! The Summer 2019 exhibition will feature the Museum's fashion collection. We'll be pulling out several beautiful pieces and accessories from different time periods. Stay tuned for the corresponding lecture series for this exhibit!

In case you hadn't heard through the grapevine, I will be heading off on Maternity Leave in early November. Chris, Isabel, Madeline and I look forward to welcoming the new addition sometime around November 3rd. I'm sure Amy will keep everyone posted on when baby Kaufman arrives. I plan to volunteer on a few subcommittees during my leave but will be officially returning to work in September 2019.

- Sarah Kaufman

## CURATOR'S CORNER

### RECENT ACQUISITIONS: Claus Papers

In May the Collections Committee accepted a series of papers from the Claus family involving William and John Claus, who were both officials with the Indian Department. There are approximately 37 documents in this donation, most of which deal with the Claus' interactions with the Six Nations of the Grand River settlement. There are letters from John Brant and documents signed by several chiefs regarding land claims. There are additional documents and personal letters within the donation that are associated with local families including the Dickson's, Clench's and the Water's. My favourite is a letter addressed to John Claus regarding a keg of oysters that are in need of fresh vinegar. I cannot imagine an entire keg filled with oysters!

This collection is still being processed. All of the documents will undergo transcription, further research, and digitization. They will eventually be made available on our website.

- Shawna Butts, Assistant Curator

# Niagara Historical Society & Museum

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## HONORARY LIFE SUPPORTERS

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## CONTACT US

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Visit us at [www.niagarahistorical.museum](http://www.niagarahistorical.museum)



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## MUSEUM STAFF

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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.niagarahistorical.museum](http://www.niagarahistorical.museum)