



UPCOMING EVENTS

ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

(look for registration links in your email communications)

- ◆ **June 4:** David Hemmings - Doing Family History in COVID Days
- ◆ **June 11:** Linda Fritz - Queenston: The Inland Port
- ◆ **June 18:** Michael Clark - Famous & Infamous: Conn Smythe
- ◆ **June 25:** Sarah Kaufman - Memorial Hall: Niagara's own Cabinet of Curiosities

AT THE MUSEUM

All programs and events have been postponed until the end of June, 2020.

The following dates are subject to change based on provincial and municipal orders:

- ◆ **July 16:** Lecture Series, 7:30 pm
- ◆ **July 27:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- ◆ **August 20:** Lecture Series, 7:30 pm
- ◆ **August 24:** Famous & Infamous, 2 pm
- ◆ **TBA:** Members' Exhibit Launch

FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

We have all been shocked by this sudden change to our 'normal' lives with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Museum closed its doors on March 14th in order to keep its staff, volunteers, and visitors safe. About 5 years ago, with the support of Steve Baxter, the Museum converted its digital files to a "cloud" system and phased in a laptop system for staff. This change has allowed the Museum to better shift to remote work for 90% of a workweek at this time. Thank you, Steve! At least one staff person is onsite everyday to monitor the facilities, do onsite job tasks and gift shop orders.

The Museum's main services are in-person with exhibition visitors, program attendees, tours, educational programs, research visits, volunteer projects, rentals, and as a tourism ambassador. These have all been suspended at this time.

We have been able to continue some of our services by converting our gift shop to an online store, doing community outreach through social media, answering digital research requests, reaching out to members by phone, email and mail, and hosting online lectures and F&I sessions (thank you to David Murray and Elizabeth Surtees for their assistance in converting the F&I program to online!).

It is important that we maintain our communication with the community, Society members and stakeholders. We have been providing weekly newsletters by email, monthly newsletters to those who are not engaged online, telephone outreach, and newspaper articles. We have sent COVID-19 Diary Student Workbooks to local teachers and created a COVID-19 Audio Diary to document the community's experiences: 289-719-1918. The Museum has also increased its community engagement through a bigger social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with:

- mini historical articles and photograph descriptions,
- quizzes on local history and general Niagara-on-the-Lake knowledge,
- videos of the Museum, its collections and historical locations,
- links to online exhibitions on Google Arts and Culture,
- links to historical resources on our website or through other heritage organizations,
- Volunteer Appreciation posts for National Volunteer Appreciation day.

Continued on page 3...

happening at the museum



FAMOUS & INFAMOUS: People & Events

Planned & organized by David Murray & Elizabeth Surtees

January - November | 2 pm

Join us in the gallery each month for a presentation by a local resident, followed by a lively discussion about people and events from the past.

The presentations from March through June will be rescheduled for 2021. We hope to resume the series with the following:

DATE	PRESENTER	F&I/P&E SUBJECT
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]

EVENT CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS

**Saturday & Sunday Walking Tours and
June Neighbourhood Walks:**
Postponed until the fall - TBA

August Heritage Festival: Cancelled

Niagara Polo (September):
Postponed until September 11, 2021

DUE TO THE CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, MANY OF OUR MUSEUM'S PROGRAMS AND EVENTS WERE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED UNTIL A LATER DATE. THE DATES INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE THE ORIGINAL PLANNED DATES AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON PROVINCIAL ORDERS. PLEASE CONTACT US OR CHECK OUR WEBSITE TO ENSURE THAT EVENTS AND PROGRAMS HAVE NOT BEEN CANCELLED BEFORE ATTENDING.

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

The lectures from March through June will be rescheduled until a later date. We hope to resume our series with the following:

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:



DIRECTOR'S REPORT *...Continued from page 1*

The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining the Museum buildings and the collection. Further, it is their intent to maintain our small staff throughout this difficult time. Unfortunately, there were significant budget cuts to:

- Exhibitions & educational programs
- Marketing
- Curatorial/collections research
- Collections acquisitions & conservation
- Office supplies/equipment
- Professional development for staff
- Building repairs and maintenance

Staff are monitoring federal and provincial financial assistance programs and will be applying to any programs for which we may be eligible.

With recent provincial announcements, we are now planning for our reopening and what it may look like in terms of keeping our staff, volunteers and visitors safe. We will look at restricting the number of people onsite at one time, increasing cleaning of high touch areas, providing masks and gloves, and investing in hand sanitizer stations in the gallery.

We are looking forward to opening our site to the public again and having our members return for a new exhibition opening and our rescheduled programming. We hope to see you all when we're able to safely welcome you!

- Sarah Kaufman

KID CURATOR CAMP

Week 1: July 13-17, 2020 **Tiny Museum Curators!**

Help us prepare an exhibition for the Peach Festival in our newly constructed Mobile Museum called the Tiny Museum! Campers will learn all about what it takes to be a Museum curator! They will learn how to prepare, design and execute an exhibition as a group for half the day and the rest of it will be spent exploring the town and having fun!

***CAMP SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Week 2: August 10-14, 2020 **All Along the Waterfront!**

Let's explore NOTL's relationship with the Niagara River and Lake Ontario! We will talk about fishing, boat building, the War of 1812, Freedom-Seekers and the environment in a fun and engaging way!

Camp Runs 10am to 4pm
Monday to Friday

Cost
\$125/child

HANNAH JARVIS (part 2)

by Betsy Masson

The following is the second part of a presentation (unedited) by member Betsy Masson at the "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.

Although one would think that the Jarvises and Simcoes would become friends, this was not to be. Perhaps it was the fact that a trunk the Jarvises were transporting to Niagara for the Simcoes arrived damaged. More likely, the Simcoes thought that since the Jarvises were "colonials", they were not of the same social position. At one point, Hannah tells her father "I realize the friendship of the two Simcoes as no way essential to our future happiness, the malice of the one may be his own downfall in the end".

At any rate, they become friendly with a family who had a grist mill on Four Mile Creek. Hannah in a letter to her father says, "As soon as Mrs. Servos understood that I was an American, she sent me lard, sausages, pumpkins, Indian meal, squashes, carrots, etc. You cannot think how much it seems to please them when we go and see them. I soon found their eyes were fixed on me as an American to know whether I was proud or not. Mrs. McCauley and I have gained the character of being the plainest dressed women in Newark."

Another person that Hannah writes about to her father whose name you will recognize is that of the Rev. Robert Addison. Since both Addison and Samuel Peters were members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, they had obviously known each other in London. She comments that "Mr. Addison has bought a farm about four miles from town, where he lives, he is a good man but not a good sermon-maker". ...

Hannah reports to her father of the Upper Canada legislature's Act Against Slavery by saying that "Simcoe has by a piece of chicamamy freed all the Negroes (which was not accurate) - by which move he has made himself unpopular with those of his suite" (which was true). While Hannah's father had owned slaves, the Jarvises brought servants from England to Upper Canada with them. We soon hear complaints about the servants, Fanny and Richard. Fanny, after being described as useless on the voyage over and then called "a devil incarnate" soon marries a sergeant with the Queen's Rangers. Next we learn that she provoked her husband to shoot himself through the heart with a soldier's musket. Richard, described as always drunk also soon leaves them. According to William

Jarvis, "the whole country cannot produce a servant fit to place in Hell's Kitchen".

The predominant refrain in Hannah's letters from Newark to her father in London is asking why she has not heard from him and when he is coming to visit them. Apparently, as the Jarvises left London, there must have been a promise from Samuel Peters that he would soon follow them to Canada. (Here is an example of such a letter). Each letter ends with a comment such as this, "The little girls never pass a day without talking of their grandfather; the little boy joins in and pronounces grandpapa as well as either". In July 1795, she writes to her father: "I heard a few days since of your being alive in March 1795, the person saw you in London; the news gave me much pleasure and comfort, not having heard from you since the 6th of April 1794".

Samuel Peters, however, had made up his mind that he would not return to North America unless he was given the position of a bishop. He was at first considered for the bishopric of Nova Scotia but that was given to someone else. Next came the bishopric of Quebec but despite his avidly campaigning for that, he was turned down. And finally, despite a convention of Anglican ministers in Vermont asking him to be their Bishop, the Archbishop of Canterbury refused to support him, and so that failed. But Samuel did eventually depart London and return to North America, 30 years after leaving. In 1804, he quarreled with Prime Minister William Pitt who withdrew the pension that the British government had been giving him. He had no recourse but to sail for New York where he was met by Hannah and William. But Samuel refused to move to Canada and remained in New York where he finally died in poverty in 1826 at the age of 91.

After complaining in 1792 about how terrible the living conditions in Niagara were, two years later when Simcoe moved the capital of Upper Canada to York, the Jarvises decided they'd really rather stay in Niagara. The Simcoes had moved to York the previous fall and spent the winter in the tents (which Hannah calls canvas houses) that they had brought with them from England. Hannah, never a fan of Elizabeth Simcoe writes "Everybody are sick at York - no matter - the Lady likes the place - therefore everyone else must...I am sorry the Governor did not come out solo".

Finally, In 1798, however, the Jarvises did move to York where William was granted a lot at Duke & Sherbourne Streets. where he built what was called at the time "the largest home in York". He was also, incidentally, granted 1200 acres of land described as being on Yonge Street. And now while I am speaking of Toronto real estate, I will dispel the notion that Jarvis St. was named after William Jarvis. It, in fact, was named after his son Samuel Peters Jarvis. Samuel inherited a parcel of these 1200 acres and soon after his marriage in 1822,

built a large, two story brick house surrounded by gardens and outbuildings called Hazel Burn. In 1846, because Samuel was very far behind in paying his taxes, the city of Toronto took over the Hazel Burn property, knocked down the house, and built Jarvis St. across it.

There is not much correspondence of Hannah's from her period in York that has been preserved and this may be because she did not have the time to write frequently, there now being six Jarvis children to take care of. William Munson and Hannah Owen had been born before leaving Niagara while Ann Elizabeth was born in York. What letters there are complain of William's treatment by other Upper Canadian officials. While still in Niagara he had been accused of writing a lampoon that maligned several prominent families. Denying he was the author, he challenged four men to duels but eventually was talked out of them. Then, he was forced to share the fees he was earning in issuing land patents which had been supplementing his salary of 300 pounds a year. The attorney general John White decided that since these patents were legal instruments and he was the Crown representative for legal matters, he should receive half the fees. William still had to pay for the parchment on which the patents were written which was expensive and so ended up losing money on each patent he issued. While he petitioned for redress, he did not receive any compensation until 1815 by which point he was in severe debt. In 1816, William made out a will, with Hannah's consent I will point out, so that his son Samuel inherited all his property but also all his debts. And on August 13, 1817, William Jarvis died.

Hannah attended the funeral alone. Her son Samuel was in prison on a charge of murder for having killed someone in a duel though that charge was later reduced and then withdrawn while her other children did not receive word of the funeral in time. Hannah remained in her house in York for two more years and then left to spend the rest of her life moving between her four married daughters. Two of her daughters, Maria Lavinia and Hannah Owen, had married sons of Robert Hamilton, the wealthy merchant, landowner, and government official of Queenston while daughter Ann Elizabeth married the brother of John Beverley Robinson who was the Chief Justice of Upper Canada for many years.

By 1830 or so, Hannah, although making occasional short visits to her other daughters, was spending the majority of her time with daughter Hannah and her husband Alexander Hamilton in Queenston. Alexander had inherited several businesses from his father but had not proved successful in running them. So by this point, he was making an income from political appointments; positions he held included postmaster of the Queenston Post Office, judge of the Surrogate Court, District Assessor for Niagara, Deputy Collector of Customs, as well as Sheriff of Niagara. Then in 1834, he decided to build this large

Greek Revival house in Queenston known as Willowbank. However, this undertaking proved to be enormously expensive. If you examine Alexander's papers at the Archives in Ottawa, you will find countless small chits of paper saying "I owe so and so this amount for nails or for carpentrywork or whatever" with Alexander's initials at the bottom.

In 1838, Alexander as sheriff of Niagara was responsible for hanging a participant in the Upper Canada rebellion of 1837. Alexander hired a professional hangman, paid him ahead, the hangman disappeared across the river into the U.S. so Alexander had to do the hanging himself and he botched it. Apparently, Alexander went into a deep depression and died a year later, leaving his wife Hannah with 9 children, a 10th on the way, a huge house to maintain and pay taxes on, and debts.

The only income available to the family was Hannah Jarvis's pension from the government as a United Empire Loyalist. This money must have been so important to her that she kept all her receipts and they are among her papers at Guelph. One, for instance, reads: "I, Hannah Jarvis, aged 80 (widow of the late William Jarvis Esq.) do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am the person entitled to an allowance of 25 pounds sterling as a UE Loyalist" and this is followed by her signature.

But 25 pounds sterling which Hannah received on a quarterly basis did not go far. One diary entry which I found heart-rending declares: "not a shilling in the house nor butter nor meat or potatos". Son Samuel, by now Superintendent of the Indian Department in Kingston, suggests that the family move to Kingston but Hannah replies, "I agree with you that keeping this establishment is rather ruinous - still they are so comfortable where they are and house rent is so high in Kingston, and I suppose everything else". The Rev. Thomas Creene, rector of St. Mark's, writes to Hannah Hamilton "it has occurred to me, in thinking anxiously of your circumstances that it would be one of the most ready and sure means of support to get together 15 or 20 girls and to establish a select school in your own schoolhouse". He estimates that this "would ensure an income of 50 or 60 pounds per annum or perhaps more".

But the solution the two Hannahs decided on was sewing and there are frequent mentions in Hannah's letters and diaries of their sewing. For instance on July 1, 1842: "finished 11 shirts, got 14 more". Hannah even suggests to Samuel that his wife send her sewing over to Queenston from Kingston by boat. In one letter, she tells him "your sister has gone to Niagara to seek needlework to put bread into the mouths of her children - if she does not succeed, I see but one way - that she and the children turn out as mendicants from door to door".

Continued on page 9...

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In Kind

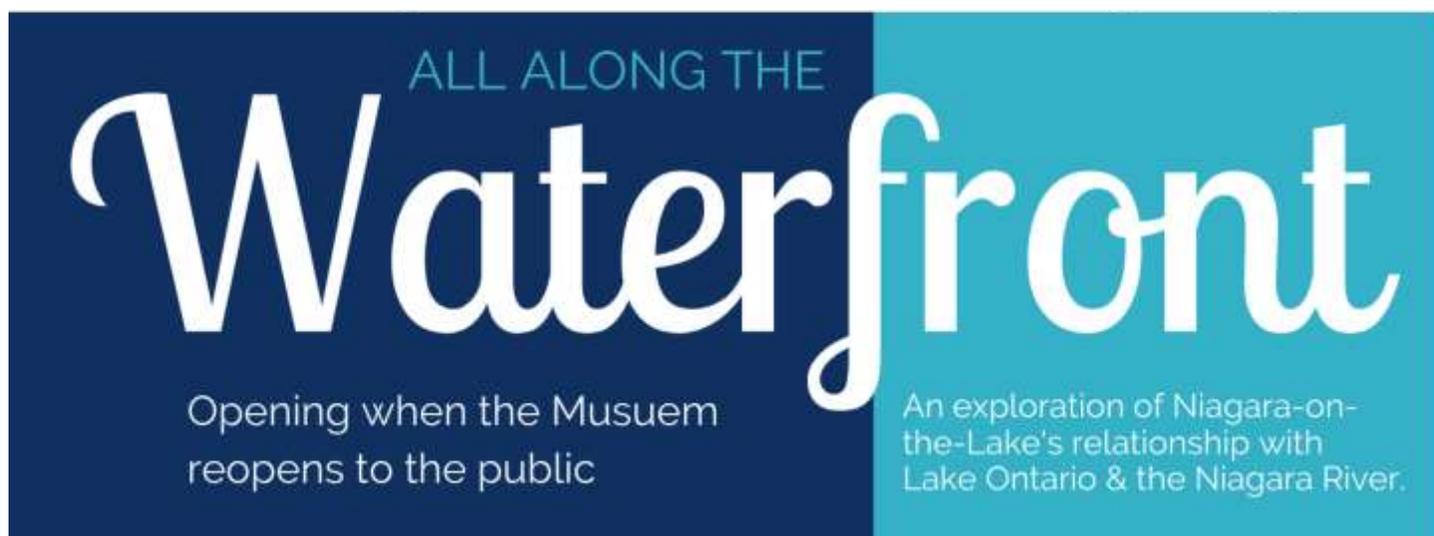
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COLLECTIONS CORNER

In the collection's corner series of the newsletter we typically focus on items that have recently come into the collection. But as we all know, the pandemic has forced us to pivot our lives in a new, temporary, direction. This also includes our ability to approve items for the permanent collection.

Instead we have shifted our focus and have been crowdsourcing the community to record their experiences during COVID-19. These records could be in the form of a journal, letters, artwork or even cell phone images of your life at home, going grocery shopping, or what you see and experience while you are out on a walk in your neighbourhood and greater community. We have even set up a phone number that you can call to leave a voicemail of your experiences, if journaling or letter writing isn't your thing - call 289-719-1918.

It's a strange moment to try and actively collect items during a period in history that we are currently experiencing. But what we have come to understand, based on the records that we have of the Spanish Influenza in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is that memories, stories and artifacts are lost overtime, and the past has now become silent. Finding any significant material on what was going on in the community during the time of the Spanish Flu has been difficult. Records from the Women's Institute, who held regular meetings, ceased to exist. Much like today, there were restriction on social engagements and schools, theatres, churches, clubs and public meetings were all closed. People were confined to their homes, doing their best to pass the time.

This is why we are actively trying to collect material, so that in the future, these primary sources can help shape our understanding of this historical event and communicate to the people of the future what it feels like to live in a community experiencing a pandemic. We can only work with what survives, and for historians, it means that we rarely have a complete picture of what life in the past was like. Instead we are given a small window to look through. With the Spanish Flu, it is the articles written by Elizabeth Ascher in the St. Catharines Standard, and the diary of Lt. Col. Arthur LePan, the commanding officer in charge of the Polish Army. But we don't have records of the daily lives and experiences of the people within our community.

So please keep those photographs, signs showing that your business is closed, schoolwork done at home by your kids, and the ways that you are thanking our frontline workers. Maybe you are helping our community by making fabric masks, record and share those experiences. If you have an unused mask or hand sanitizer (today's liquid gold!) please consider saving these items and donating them to us when the pandemic is over.

*Shawna Butts,
Assistant Curator & Education Programmer*



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

289-719-1918

Obituaries

Over the past six months we have lost several of our members as well as some key figures in our community. We wanted to acknowledge them and thank them for their support over the years:

- John Albrechtsen (December 10, 2019)
- Anne Lemon (December 22, 2019)
- Peter Baker (January 12, 2020)
- Barbara Morrison (February 26, 2020)
- Donna Scott (March 14, 2020)
- Paul Hancock (March 18, 2020)
- Margaret Newman (March 20, 2020)
- Wilma Morrison (April 23, 2020)
- Blanche Quinn (May 8, 2020)

JARVIS

 ...Continued from page 5

Hannah's diaries in those years in Queenston after the death of her son-in-law keep track of all her expenditures. One entry says she has received her pension for six months and then immediately after what was bought: flannel was 3 pounds, 12 shillings, boots \$5 (I gather that pounds sterling and dollars were interchangeable in Upper Canada in the 1840s), 31 ½ kg. of sugar were \$3.50, \$1 worth of tea and candles, etc. Her diary entries always start with a comment on the day's weather which, of course, in those days was a determinant in how quickly the laundry could be done. Monday seems to have been wash day and Hannah kept track of when it was done: 3:00 seems to have been usual but one day it was actually finished at 10:00 in the morning! But this is what Hannah's life had become: at age 80, she and her daughter were taking in sewing and washing, cleaning, cooking, as well as maintaining a vegetable garden and raising poultry. Throughout all these adverse times, Hannah is described as being cheerful and energetic.

Hannah died on Sept. 20, 1845 from a stomach tumour. She is buried in the Hamilton Family Graveyard next to Willowbank. On her gravestone is the following:

Shed not for her the bitter tear
Nor give the heart to vain regret
'Tis but the casket that lies here
The gem that filled it sparkles yet.

To quickly sum up why I wanted to talk about Hannah Jarvis. First of all, when you learn about life in Upper Canada in the 1790s, Elizabeth Simcoe's diary is often quoted. I thought this would be a good opportunity to present Upper Canadian life through someone else's eyes. After all, Elizabeth Simcoe only lived in Canada for four years while Hannah Jarvis spent 51 years here. Also, I feel that Hannah's life is not the usual successful one that is typically described where one moves to the New World and goes from rags to riches. In fact, hers was quite the opposite. But she lived during the days when a woman had to entrust her well-being to the men in her family and in Hannah's case, they continually let her down.

*Pictured left: Hannah Jarvis and two of her daughters.
From the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's collection.*



2019 ANNUAL REPORT:

The release of the Niagara Historical Society's Annual Report for 2019 has been delayed due to COVID-19. It will be available in June 2020.

INTRODUCING THE TINY MUSEUM!

WE ARE READY! Even though we are closed in at our homes, the Tiny Museum is now complete and ready to take the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake on the road. The project that started as a generous donation to improve the Christmas float of the Niagara Historical Society, has blossomed into a viable vehicle that will take our Museum out to the community. At a time when the future is so uncertain, we are certain that the Tiny Museum will enable our staff to assist in the delivery of local historical education at our schools, and to be an icon of what the Museum does best – taking history to the residents of NOTL through community activities and events. This project would not have been possible without the skills of Drew and Nathan Chapman – thank you for your work, and the grant provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. As the Town moves towards reopening, watch for the Tiny Museum as it travels around the town and ask “Where is the Tiny Museum going today?”.

- Faith Bell

Editor’s note: Faith has been very modest in her report. The Tiny Museum was her brainchild and she and her husband David generously contributed to its construction.

Pictured left: Tiny Museum interior; more pictures on next page.



Board Nominations: *The Niagara Historical Society is currently seeking nominations for the Board of Directors to serve for a three-year term starting October 15, 2020. If you or someone you know would be a good candidate for the Board, please fill out the slip below and return it to the Museum by August 1.*

NOMINATION FORM FOR SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name of Nominee: _____ Address: _____

Name of Nominator: _____ Address: _____

Seconded _____ Address: _____

I, _____, agree to stand for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual General meeting, October 15, 2020. If elected to the position for which I am nominated, I agree to serve for the term elected.

NOMINEES SHOULD INCLUDE A SHORT BIO OR CV WITH THEIR NOMINATION FORM.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Hemmings, Society President

Yes, despite self-isolation, our Museum continues to be working for you, though our doors have to be closed. As I have, many of you have enjoyed the Museum Updates and purchased from the Gift Shop. Some of you have also been listening to our new series of webinar lectures, which are most educational and easy to attend. Just register through the link provided in the Museum's email communications.

While you were enjoying your walks along more silent streets, Sarah, Amy and Mona (our Treasurer) have worked diligently and successfully to secure generous funding from the Town of NOTL and a no-interest loan from Meridian Credit Union. They are also applying for the federal wage subsidy program which covers 75% of staff wages for a defined period.

Shawna and the rest of the staff continue to deliver social media material about our Museum's collection and archives, and about the history of the community; this effort has been a huge success to those of us savvy enough to use Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

With no revenue from admissions and events and the postponement of our major fundraiser (Niagara Polo) to next year, we struggle to generate revenue. A number of Members have still not re-subscribed for 2020. If you are wondering how you can support the Museum during this time, think about increasing your individual membership (\$30) to a family membership (\$50), which covers everyone in your household.

Some of our projects have been limited by this year of uncertain financial sustainability:

First, we are about to begin a complete redevelopment of the Museum's website, including a virtual gift shop and membership subscriptions with e-commerce components, better access to the extraordinary collections of online files and artefact images, and hyperlinks to other related websites. This is most appropriate in these COVID-19 days, to get our online services into a more attractive and efficient state. Second, our Tiny Museum is complete but educational development is still ongoing. Third, we are hoping to soon continue with the required heritage impact assessment, archaeological survey and reports by qualified consultants in order to move forward with an expansion building permit from the Town. As you know, our Museum already has shovel-ready drawings from our architects, but these final reports and permits have been put on temporary hold and are needed to move the project along.

If you are interested in contributing a small part to any of these projects, it would be very much appreciated.

Finally, at the AGM later this year, our Board of Directors will be seeking one new member. If you, an acquaintance or anyone with a passion for the future of our Museum would be prepared to put their name forward, please contact Sarah at (905) 468-3912 or SKaufman@nhs.ca.



NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:



CONTACT US: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum

43 Castlereagh Street, PO Box 208
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
Phone: 905-468-3912 | Fax: 905-468-1728
contact@nhsm.ca

Visit us at www.nhsm.ca



@NOTLMuseum

STAFF

Sarah Kaufman

Managing Director/Curator
skaufman@nhsm.ca

Amy Klassen

Director of Finance & Marketing
aklassen@nhsm.ca

Shawna Butts

Assistant Curator
sbutts@nhsm.ca

Barbara Worthy

Visitor & Member Services Assistant
bworthy@nhsm.ca

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