

Museums

Telling the stories
of our lives



Newsletter • Summer 2003

Faiazza Collection

Fort Erie lost a 'pillar of the community' with the passing of Madeline Faiazza. She was one of Crystal Beaches biggest supporters and a collector of local history.



Madeline's family has donated her collection of 460 photographs and documents to the Historical Museum. There are also about 300 documents and newspaper clippings for the Museum's archival reference files. We are indebted to Madeline for her service to the community and for keeping such complete records.

The photo above shows Madeline (left), and Joan Gould (right) at the 1967 Centennial Ball held at the Stardust Ballroom in Crystal Beach Park. Does anyone know who the gentleman is?

Archaeology

The Museum's archaeology collection is growing with each development project undertaken at the Peace Bridge Site.



This summer a crew of archaeologists from Archaeological Services Inc. have been working at the corner of Forsyth and Niagara Blvd. Dr. Ron Williamson commented that this area is revealing rich pottery and chert deposits. Above is an Iroquoian point from the site. Left is Blake Williams, an ASI crew member. These new finds are being stored in Toronto.



Survey says...

☞ 96% of Canadians believe that Museums contribute to their quality of life.

☞ 92% believe it is important for children to be exposed to Museums.

☞ 80% know about the Museum in their community.

☞ 78% put Museums on their list of things to see when travelling.

These findings are taken from a study called "Canadians and their Museums." This was done in March 2003 by TeleResearch Inc. for the Canadian Museums Association.

In Fort Erie we are very fortunate that quality of life issues are recognized as an important part of Town Council's strategic plans and budget allocations.

To quote Mayor Redekop..."Man can exist with just food and shelter, but why would he want to. Arts, heritage, culture and recreation are what make life worth living. The Town is working to provide a high quality of life for its residents."

Front cover...Museum supporters the late Austin Fox and Madeline Faiazza. The two older photos are unidentified. Have you written your family's names on the backs of your photos??? Every life holds many stories and the combination of these stories make up the history of our Town. What are your family's stories?



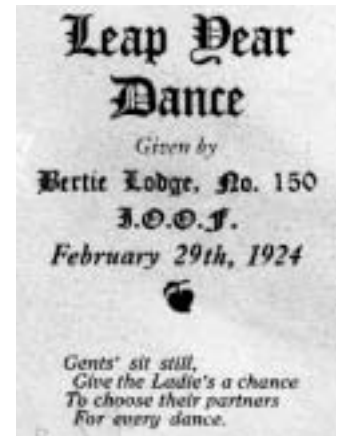
Many Voices 2 A Collective History of Fort Erie

It's almost finished!!!

The second edition of Many Voices is approximately 3/4 done. The first edition of this best-seller sold more than 3,100 copies!

For the second edition, all of the chapters have been updated with new articles and more than 300 new pictures. This gives us the opportunity to showcase some of the interesting new photographs and documents that have been donated to the museum since the first printing. The new edition will still be over 400 pages long, with at least 600 pictures.

Unfortunately we can't give an exact date for the release of the new edition — a staffing shortage has slowed progress. It should be ready sometime between December and February.



Holloway Chapel Pledge

The Museum is extremely grateful to the members of the Holloway Bay Memorial Chapel for pledging an annual donation to the Historical Museum's capital archival project. The chapel was built in 1894.



Photo at left shows its original country Gothic design. Chapel archivist Lannie Gartner shares our

desire for additional storage and research space for the Museum's archives, and the Chapel's financial support will help us to meet these goals.

The Fort Erie Museums Newsletter is published three times a year and distributed to those on our mailing list.

Place your name on the mailing list and receive future copies of this newsletter by calling 894-5322.

Written and designed by Jane Davies, Museum Curator.

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Underground Railroad Exhibit

This summer the Fort Erie Railroad Museum features an exhibit on the Underground Railroad.

The exhibit is divided into three sections slavery, escape and freedom. The slavery section features stories of life as a slave, a model slave cabin and shackles used for imprisonment as shown above. The escape section details the signs and symbols used to guide people along the route of the Underground Railroad and includes a model safe-house. The Freedom section includes stories of those who made it to Canada.

Fort Erie played an important role in this history as hundreds of escaped slaves found homes here. The community of Little Africa, around the Ridgemount area, had a population of 200 in the 1880s. It was one of the larger communities in Bertie Township at that time.

This exhibit is on loan from the Welland Museum, with assistance from Canadian Heritage. The Railroad Museum is located on Central Ave. just north of Gilmore Road and is open daily from 9-5. The exhibit closes Sept. 14th.

Heritage Loop Tours

The Museum had the honour of joining the line-up of speakers at the Riverwalk opening on July 1 to unveil the Town's new Heritage Loop Tours. The first tour will feature plaques of significant archaeological findings at the Peace Bridge site, such as the longhouse, flint mining area, thunderbird gorget (necklace), birdstone. Brochures will accompany these plaques so residents and tourists can walk or bike along these routes. Signs outlining the battles of the War of 1812 will also be done by this fall.



Using signs and tours to tell Fort Erie's stories is part of a sustainable stewardship program outlined in the Town's Tourism Master Plan. Stewardship is our obligation to care for the natural and heritage resources that rightfully belong to the future. Sustainability ensures that this stewardship can be maintained for a long time. Therefore, instead of just caring for heritage resources within storeroom walls, the Town is using heritage to create tours for visitors. Increases in tourism will increase the Town's tax base. Very innovative!

Feedback

Our spring newsletter posed several questions which all got answered with calls from... Janet Boyce - the quote we ran from Maggie Disher was from a poem by George Eliot. David Owen - the men marching down Jarvis St. are a company of American soldiers in stripped down field clothing in the spring of 1942.

Don Woods - the barracks at the B-1 Station was moved to Phipps St. for apartments.



Ridgewayfest

The Historical Museum participated in the annual Ridgeway summer festival this past July. About 960 people toured the museum and children enjoyed the free carnival games.



Scavenger Hunt

Both Museum sites are partnering with the Library for its summer reading program. Children can visit the museums for free with a scavenger hunt page which is available at any library.



Black History

The Railroad Museum participated in Black Heritage Day sponsored by the E.D.T.C. Our Underground Railroad exhibit was one of the free stops on the shuttle-bus service.

Both Museum sites are partnering with Shoppers Drug Mart for promotions and sales. Discounted admission tickets can be purchased at any Shoppers in Ontario.



Summer Partnerships

Don't forget the upcoming Doors Open event on Oct. 18 and 19. Both Museum sites will host free open houses from 10-5. This is a Tourism Ontario program.



Memorial Fund



The Museum's Memorial Fund received donations so far this year in memory of Vera Bateman, Madeline Faiazza, Allen Tripp and Lorne Kendrick. Donations to the Memorial Fund are invested in perpetuity and the interest from this fund is used for Museum educational programs, conservation of artifacts and new exhibits. The Museum Board has a Memorial Book located in the archival room at the Historical Museum. So far 32 names are recorded in this book. For a lasting tribute celebrating the life of someone special, call the Museum at 894-5322.

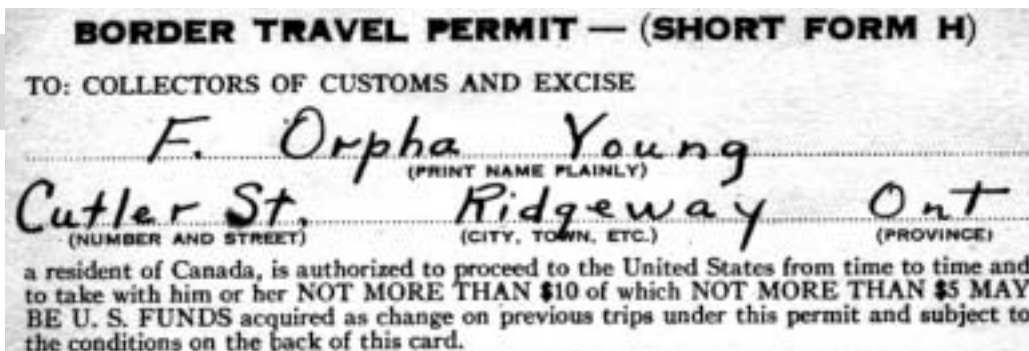
Station #2 formerly the Bridgeburg Fire Department is 100 years old this year!

Fireman Dan Hawkins was at the Museum doing research on the history of his station the same week that we received an e-mail inquiry from Bob and Linda Jehle of Michigan. They



had acquired this picture and asked us for its history. When we told them of the station's anniversary they donated the original photo, in its original frame, and we have made up a copy for Station #2. To quote the Jehle's, "This is our 100th anniversary gift to

Fort Erie..." The photo was taken on the east side of the former Town Hall on Jarvis St. where the Fire Department was located. Many thanks to the Jehle's for their thoughtful gift!



From the Archives

A 1944 day-permit issued at the Peace Bridge to those wishing to travel into the United States.

Volunteer Profile

Carrie Wood has been volunteering at the Museum this past summer. She has been working with the Faiazza collection of artifacts, and answering research requests and tourist inquiries. Carrie and her two children live just a few blocks from the Historical Museum and she most enjoys "talking with visitors and working on the computer." Thanks Carrie for your interest and much needed help! Got spare time? We have a job to suit your taste - call us at 894-5322.



Summer Students

This summer you can find Zach General (top), Ben Featherstone (middle), and Amanda Longfellow (bottom), working at the Museums. They handle the admissions, gift shop, tourist inquiries and site maintenance. In their spare time they help with cataloguing artifacts.

They are busy processing the Faiazza, Irwin Industries, McDermott and Jewson collections of archival material.

This fall Zach will be going to the University of Waterloo to study science. Ben will return to the Ontario College of Art where he specializes in illustration.

Amanda will return to Ridgeway/Crystal Beach High School as a senior.

Since 1987, the Museum has hired 60 students, helping to finance their post-secondary studies.



Attention High School Students

The Railroad and Historical Museums offer work experience in exchange for your community volunteer service hours. Give us a call at 905-894-5322.



Co-op Placements Available



Peg Leg Donation

People find the most interesting things in their garages and attics. Gloria Trembly of Crystal Beach was cleaning out her garage and remembered her husband treasuring a rusty railroad spike and piece of track. Years ago an elderly friend of his gave these to him. The friend had salvaged them off the old Peg Leg Railway which ran between Ridgeway and Crystal Beach in 1896-1898. It was the first electric monorail in Ontario. Gloria was happy to donate these to the museum so we could show a piece of the Peg Leg with all of our photographs.

Quote from poet Maya Angelou about your family tree...

"We are not just blades of grass, blowing in the wind, that can be cut or pulled out of existence at any time...we are all oak trees, with broad, strong roots.

Knowing that you are an oak tree makes you stand taller and act prouder as you rely upon all that has come before you."

Genealogy

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Researching for the Canadian Niagara Power history book.

University of Waterloo engineering professor, Dr. Norman Ball, has been a regular visitor to our archives this summer. He has been commissioned by CNP to write a book about its history, past and present employees, and the impact of electricity on people's lives. It will be the seventh book for this award-winning author. We've lost count of how many photos he has looked at but we know that some of ours will appear in the CNP book. Norman gets quite excited when he finds what he calls "good stuff" and we're so pleased

that one more person has discovered the treasure chest of interesting information in our archives. Norman is a former employee of the National Archives and Museum of Science and Technology and he was impressed with our professional looking exhibits. As a youngster Norman visited his Aunt Gladys and Uncle Bill Johnston in Ridgeway during the summers and helped make concrete blocks in the barn at the back of Chester Johnson's house!

Below is a photo from the Museum's archives showing Westinghouse promoting electricity at the Peace Bridge with its "Mechanical Man Elektro and dog Sparko."

