



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **December 3 & 4:** Rotary Holiday House Tour
- ◆ **December 9:** History in the Vineyard, 3-5 pm
- ◆ **December 10:** Doc Club, 10 am
- ◆ **December 18—January 1:** Museum Closed for the Holidays
- ◆ **January 7:** Doc Club, 10 am
- ◆ **February 4:** Doc Club, 10 am
- ◆ **February:** Members' Trivia Night TBD
- ◆ **March 4:** Doc Club, 10 am

All programs and events are subject to change. We are monitoring the COVID rules and restrictions to determine what is allowed. Our online calendar will be updated regularly on [notlmuseum.ca](http://notlmuseum.ca) when new events are announced.



## Exhibition Updates with Shawna Butts

The fall season seems to have flown by and has been filled with exhibits and more exhibits! At the museum, our temporary exhibition, Photographic Memory, opened in November and will be on until April. This exhibit uses photographs, videos, memories, and oral histories to transport visitors to the period from 1945-1985 when our community was described as “just a little quiet town”. For locals, this exhibition will certainly feel like a walk down memory lane and an ode to what they refer to as the “classic period” in our town’s history. For more recent residents and visitors, this exhibit will show what Niagara-on-the-Lake was once like and just how much our town has evolved in such a short amount of time.

I have also been working with Professor Elizabeth Vlossak of Brock University and the students of her HIST 3F02 class to curate an exhibition in our Tiny Museum about NOTL’s rich sporting history. This exhibit will be used at Canada Summer Games events in August 2022.

This class essentially underwent an exhibit “boot camp”. In five short classes, they learned all the ins and outs of writing exhibit text, selecting artefacts, designing panels and their case layout, and they even installed their final project in the Tiny Museum. Yes, the Tiny Museum was finally taken off the property to Brock where the students got to show off all of their hard work!

You will have a chance to see it too during the Canada Summer Games. I am so proud of these students. They were so keen, asked great questions, and produced a fantastic exhibit! Kudos to them!

**Photos:** Students of HIST 3F02 visited the NOTL Museum to do some research. Photographs are from the Brock Humanities Instagram account (@brockhumanities) and taken by the students.

# happening at the museum



## The Poppy Project

To the wonderful Poppy Brigade of more than 40 volunteers, a great big thank you for your commitment, passion, and talents. The Poppy Project has garnered praise from around the world. The feedback has been full of wonder and thanks, from veterans taking time to reflect, honour and contemplate the significance of the poppies, to neighbours appreciating the beauty of the cascading poppies on their street. But perhaps one of the most poignant comments came from a Royal Oak student, who looking up at all those poppies, believed they were reaching straight up into heaven.

We have now undertaken the 'take down and storage mission', with the intention of re-creating the project in 2022 with an expanded design. To our fabulous knitters, sewers and crocheters, if you ever find yourselves with nothing to do on a cold winter's night, you know what to do!



**NIAGARA ON THE LAKE MUSEUM** 2021 VIRTUAL LECTURE SERIES

**DEC 1** Sarah Kaufman - *Opening the Curator's Treasure Chest: Exploring The War of 1812 Collection Part II*

**DEC 15** Rochelle Bush - *The Lesser Known: Uncovering some of the Black people of Old Niagara and the surrounding area*

WEDNESDAYS AT 11 AM ON ZOOM

Visit [notlmuseum.ca](http://notlmuseum.ca) to register.



Pictured left: The Poppy Brigade attaching thousands of poppies to bird netting. Pictured above left to right: Sue Henry figuring out the clamps, and Sue Sherk and Dee Steele taking a tea break. Check out our website to see more pictures of this fabulous project.

## DOC CLUB NEWS

Our next Doc Club Meeting is Friday December 10. We will be discussing the virtues, pitfalls, and challenges of being a whistleblower, with the multi award-winning documentary **The Walrus and the Whistleblower**.



A whistleblower at the iconic amusement park MarineLand in Niagara Falls is sued for \$1.5 million for plotting to steal a walrus. His mission is to end what he sees as inhumane marine mammal captivity. The documentary was written, directed and produced by Nathalie Bibeau, and premiered in 2020 at Toronto's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival – the largest documentary festival in North America. The film received numerous awards, including Overall Audience Favourite, and most recently was also a nominee for the prestigious Donald Brittain Award at the 9<sup>th</sup> Canadian Screen Awards. At the heart of this film is the questions of ethical behaviour and compassion for all living things, including humans.

**The Doc Club** meets virtually the first Friday of the month at 10 am. However, the next Doc Club gathering is scheduled for Friday, December 10th to avoid conflict with other winter activities. Participants of the Doc Club receive links to watch the videos on their own time and are then invited by zoom to join the Friday morning discussions. Everyone is welcome to join in the friendly, informed, and even raucous talks, or to simply listen.

**The Doc Club** winter discussion dates are: January 7, February 4, and March 4. Full details will be sent to all Doc Clubbers. For links, and more information, contact Babs Worthy: [bworthy@nhsm.ca](mailto:bworthy@nhsm.ca)

- Babs Worthy

# HISTORY *in the* VINEYARD

A HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER IN SUPPORT  
OF THE FRIENDS OF FORT GEORGE &  
THE NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE MUSEUM



**THURS, DECEMBER 9, 2021**

Pick up your specially-packaged orders ready to reheat at Ravine Winery from 3 - 5 pm OR choose delivery in Niagara-on-the-Lake for \$10.

Add a bottle of Ravine's Sand & Gravel wine for \$15 (limit 2 bottles per ticket).

**MENU CHOICES BY 3 NOTL CHEFS:**

Chef Collin Gallie of Ravine Winery  
Chef David Watt of Garrison House  
Chef Ryan Crawford of Ruffino's

**TICKETS \$100 PER PERSON**

*includes a \$30 tax receipt*

NOTLMUSEUM.CA  
FRIENDSOFFORTGEORGE.CA

## CHILD EMIGRATION IN 19TH CENTURY

In 1867 Maria S. Rye started communicating with the newly confederated Canadian Government about the immigration of young poor women and girls to Canada from the gutters of urban centres and workhouses (or unions) in Britain. For a decade she had been a leading advocate for improved employment opportunities for young women in Britain and was an early suffragette. In 1868, after testing the distant waters of Australia and New Zealand, she settled on the colony of Canada because it was much closer. So, that year she brought young women in their 20s to be domestics in Canada. Although this was partially successful, she realized that the British Government acknowledged a greater pressure on society, the huge unresolved issue of young and teenage destitute, deserted and orphaned girls who were unending generations of life givers by unscrupulous means, mostly in filthy urban areas. Overcrowding of poor uneducated children in workhouses was also a growing concern. In 1869, Rye acquired the former courthouse & gaol in Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) in Ontario, Canada for a modest sum and converted it into 'Our Western Home'; and the first girls arrived there during that year. This was the first large mass transport of children to Canada and Rye was always considered by the Canadian Government as the leader in the Children Immigration field. With advertising and unsolicited requests for young domestics and farm workers, Rye's program was hugely successful and the demand accelerated at an extraordinary rate. So much so that Annie Macpherson and many others quickly followed her lead. Rye also acquired Avenue House in Peckham, Southwark, South London to channel her British homed children through to the administration at Our Western Home.

In 1874 the Doyle Report slammed Rye and Macpherson for their practices of child immigration without proper Government oversight and inadequate follow-up of those children placed in North America. Doyle, a Catholic, was especially damning of Rye, who was an evangelical Anglican. When one reviews the paperwork currently available for the children in the charge of Rye and Macpherson, the latter did a somewhat better job of her accounting reports while Rye felt that the children were in respectable and/or adopting families. As we all know,

teenagers will be rebellious teenagers, and some children, even in those days of more respect, religious instruction and controls, were bound to be dissatisfied with their new environment. The effect of the Doyle Report was that, in 1877 when child immigration to Canada restarted, Rye made sure that all her reports offered only children's initials and ages, and not their full names. This also applied to the person(s) who acted as the placement for each child. So, in the 21st century, a useful listing of Rye children is only possible by combining the ship's manifest information with Rye's reports.

In the last 30 years several researchers have attempted to piece together the Rye organization's reports, notes, press releases, ships' records and other materials. During this period, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) archived these various attempts and published partial data on these British Home Children (BHCs). In parallel to these efforts, Richard and Monica Taylor, volunteer researchers for the NOTL Museum, started to collect materials on Maria S. Rye's children with the intention of creating a comprehensive database. In 2016 a project was initiated to systematically collect, index and compile as much information on Rye BHCs as remains extant. By late 2018 the NOTL Museum published on its website a comprehensive detailed list, on a single searchable spreadsheet and in chronological order, of about 5,300 BHCs – all those known to have been administered through Our Western Home in Niagara. Reflecting the work of the Rye organization (1868-1896) and the subsequent work of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society using the Niagara home for its Ontario placements (1897-1914), the list includes about 4,600 girls and 700 boys. Since 2018 this list continues to be refined.

Considering the work of many emigration groups (e.g., Dr. Barnardo, Catholic Church, Fegan, Marchmont, Middlemore, Quarrier, Salvation Army), this transfer of young people from Britain to Canada is likely to have exceeded 150,000 in a period from 1868 to the 1930s. This period does not include subsequent child emigration during World War Two. So, the NOTL BHCs represent less than five percent of those brought to Canada. Of course, today, many families are not even aware that their

grandmother or great-grandmother was a BHC, because there was a stigma attached – as there has been with adoptions and out-of-wedlock births.

Since the NOTL Museum published its findings in late 2018, there has been a steady stream of interest from family members researching their family secrets. In 2019 a secondary project was initiated to create a compiled spreadsheet of the post-emigration life events of as many of these NOTL BHCs as could be found in the Ancestry genealogical database. An initial listing for 1968-1896 is already published on the NOTL Museum’s recently enhanced website. A list of 1,200 (of the 5,300) married BHC life events (1868-1914) was published in October 2021. This is a statistical, or genealogical, project - and not really a history project, although some composite historical conclusions may be drawn from the experience of doing this work. Indeed, it will be the first time that such a compilation of Life Events has been made available for any large Canadian BHC group. One important finding is that many BHC placements resulted in a name change, particularly for girls. There is no comprehensive extant listing of these name changes in the days of arbitrary “adoptions”, before Government-controlled and documented adoptions were instituted in the 1930s. So, after the ship’s record during immigration, many BHC names have simply “disappeared” from genealogical records and could only be recovered by extensive individual research in census and other records.

To date, there have been a few books written about the negative experiences of some BHC teenagers in their placements around North America. This has led to a somewhat distorted perspective of the experiences of BHCs and their placements, many of which were full adoptions. Today it is hard to recognize life before the introduction of the Welfare State in Britain in the late 1940s and in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. It is also hard for us to recognize life before electricity, women’s suffrage and agricultural automation.

As a postscript, Our Western Home was used to accommodate Polish officers in training at Niagara Camp in World War One. The building in Rye Park, NOTL was demolished in 1923.

To access the NOTL Museum’s BHC documents, see [www.notlmuseum.ca/research/british-home-children](http://www.notlmuseum.ca/research/british-home-children). In addition, the compiler of this article has been invited to

give a Zoom talk to members of the UK Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives), expected in January 2022. It would appear that members of the Wales Network and South East England Network of the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA) will be attending, and the NOTL Museum also plans to invite its members to this talk, which is expected to be at 8:30am our time - that's life in the global world. Final details will be sent to you in an NOTL Museum Newsletter.

- David F. Hemmings, Past-President, NHS

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

At the AGM, the Board announced a new membership pricing and structure for the Niagara Historical Society. This will take affect January 1, 2022. The purpose is to give members an opportunity to bring along family and friends to experience the museum through enhanced levels. It also changes “family” to “dual” (two people living in the same household) as we now give anyone under 18 free admission to the Museum.

MEMBER TYPE	2021 RATE	2022 RATE
Student	\$10.00	\$15.00
Individual	\$30.00	\$35.00
Family (now Dual)	\$50.00	\$60.00
Individual Life	\$300.00	\$300.00
Couple Life	\$500.00	\$500.00
NEW: Individual Enhanced		\$50.00
NEW: Dual Enhanced		\$85.00

If you wish to renew your membership before the end of 2021, you can do so at the current rate and structure. This can be done through our online store at [notlmuseumshop.square.site](http://notlmuseumshop.square.site), at the museum or by mail. All members will receive the new membership information in the new year. Memberships are due in January each year.

*Reminder: If you choose to have your newsletter delivered by mail, a \$5 fee will be added to your annual membership. If you receive your newsletter by email, no additional fees will apply. Hard copies are also available at the Museum.*

## FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

2021 brought along its own set of challenges as COVID has continued to dominate all of our lives. There was a loss of revenue due to low visitor numbers (down 74% from 2019) and cancelled programs. Considering our museum was closed for about 64% of the year, the above number is not surprising! Volunteer hours are down by 83% still as we struggle to bring them back with our lack of space and some restrictions. We do have high hopes to bring these generous folks back soon! Our Niagara Polo event was also postponed once more, but we are excited to start planning for 2022 now that restrictions are starting to ease for outdoor events.

Despite these setbacks, 2021 did come with a number of successes too! Our book *Making Her Mark: The Women of NOTL* was featured by CBC and went, almost immediately, into a second print run. We all enjoyed the successful online lecture series (12 lectures in total) and the many social media postings related to local history. Stay tuned for our digital programs as we have 3 new mini documentaries coming out soon on black history, agriculture, and the waterfront! Our Community Courtyard, supported by the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, was a huge success thanks to all of you who enjoyed meeting friends and participating in the events held there throughout the summer and fall! Our most popular 2021 event, of course, was the poppy project! Thanks to our community poppy brigade who helped the Museum highlight the history of the poppy and honour our veterans in a unique way. In 2021 we were also the recipient of the Niagara this Week- Reader's Choice Awards: 1st place for Indoor Attraction, Museums, and Summer Camps and 2nd in Kids Camps. We also received a Gold for Museums in Niagara from the St. Catharines Standard's Reader's Choice Award!

We remain optimistic as we march on into 2022! Keep your eyes peeled for our Tiny Museum as it travels around the community. We're testing it out this winter with students from Brock University and we can't wait to show it off to you all in 2022!

- Sarah Kaufman

## NEW GRANT, NEW STAFF!

Hello! My name is Katelynn and I have been hired to fill the role of Digitization Coordinator. Thanks to the **Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) - Community Building Fund** I will be with the Museum for the next year. My main task is to digitize the collection. I will be using these images to create online exhibits and to develop a lecture. I am very excited to join the team and to have the opportunity to discover another archive.

My education and career experience will be fully applied in this position. I received a BA in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology from Wilfrid Laurier University and a certificate in Museum and Gallery Studies from Georgian College. I have worked short contracts at Ruthven Park NHS, Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum, and at the Erland Lee (Museum) Home. Since finishing school, I worked at the Welland Museum for five years as the Acting Archivist and then as the Collections Coordinator. I am thrilled to add another Niagara area museum to my resume and to delve into this area's history.

I love exploring new collections as each museum is unique with many remarkable artefacts. Getting to put my hands on history is always exciting and in the few weeks since I have started this project, I have come across documents on land grants for Fenian Raid veterans, personal accounts of battles during the War of 1812, and the history of St. Andrew's Church.

I am looking forward to what else I can find in the collection over the coming year.



## President's Report

Hello everyone,

On October 14, 2021, I accepted the nomination and was elected President of the Niagara Historical Society. After spending 4 years on the Board of Directors as the Treasurer, I now have a new job! I am thrilled, humbled, excited, and a bit scared... Welcome to my new world!!!

Comprised of an amazing team of volunteers, our Board of Directors is ready to serve you, the member, and work hard to showcase our beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Our wonderful staff is available to greet you and make sure you have the most amazing experience when you visit.

This month, I was a bit teary eyed when, even if I knew it was there, I first saw the incredible display of handmade and assembled poppies on the lawn of the museum. This represents our pride in the many hours spent by so many soldiers protecting our freedom, but also demonstrates the tireless dedication of our cherished volunteers, led by Visitor & Members Services Assistant Barbara Worthy.

Over the next 3 years, my focus will be on leadership, volunteers, and our expansion. If you want to get involved (for a day, a week, a month, or a year), please reach out to Museum staff or send me an email at [mtmbabin@gmail.com](mailto:mtmbabin@gmail.com)

I look forward to serving you well and meeting you at one of our many events (I hope you see you at the History in the Vineyard event, on December 9).

Take care,  
*Mona Babin*

## 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

At the AGM on October 14th, we welcomed new Board Members Sandra Aversa, Ben Buholtz, Stewart Hall, Tim Johnson, Alexander Topps and George Webber. We said goodbye to David Bell, Janice Johnson, Gill Mukkar, Carol Perrin and President, David Hemmings. Mona Babin took over as the new President of the Society. A huge thank you to our retiring board members for all their hard work and support of the Museum and welcome to our new Board!

For a full version of the minutes from the 2021 Annual General Meeting, please visit our website at [www.notlmuseum.ca](http://www.notlmuseum.ca).

## PHOENIX CIRCLE

Throughout the pandemic, we have not been able to bring our Phoenix Circle donors together. However, as restrictions eased this fall, we planned two special events for these donors in November. The first was a sneak peek at the new "Photographic Memory" exhibit before the opening.



The second was a private tour of the Niagara Parks Commission's newly restored power station (pictured above). As usual, we forgot to get a picture of our group, but they had a great time learning about the history of this building!

Phoenix Circle donors are individuals who donate \$500 or more annually to our general operations, with no restrictions on their gift. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Phoenix Circle, you can email Sarah at [skaufman@nhsm.ca](mailto:skaufman@nhsm.ca) or call the Museum at 905-468-3912.

## HOLIDAY CLOSURE

The Museum will be closed from December 18 to January 1 for the holidays. Staff will check email and voicemail periodically.

## IN MEMORIAM:

**Jacqueline Johnson (Aug 23, 1928-Aug 29, 2021)**

Jackie was a long-time member of the historical society and a volunteer for several years, serving on the Board of the Directors. Her presence will be missed in the community.

# NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mona Babin, President  
George Webber, Vice President  
Ted Rumble, Treasurer  
Alexander Topps, Secretary  
Paul Harber  
Jim McArthur  
Judy Thornton  
Tim Johnson  
Stewart Hall  
Ben Buholtz  
Sandra Aversa  
Allan Bisback- Town Rep

## HONORARY LIFE SUPPORTERS

Joy Ormsby  
Dr. Richard Merritt  
Christopher Allen  
Robert Knight  
Nancy Butler

## GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:



## MEMBERSHIP DUES

due in January each year  
New rates as of January 1, 2022

Individual: \$35  
Individual Enhanced: \$50  
Dual: \$60  
Dual Enhanced: \$85  
Student: \$15  
Individual Life: \$300  
Couple Life: \$500

## CONTACT US: Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum

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Visit us at [www.notlmuseum.ca](http://www.notlmuseum.ca)



@NOTLMuseum

## STAFF

### Sarah Kaufman

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### Shawna Butts

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### Barbara Worthy

Visitor & Member  
Services Assistant  
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## MUSEUM HOURS

THURSDAY TO MONDAY, 10 AM 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.notlmuseum.ca](http://www.notlmuseum.ca)