



THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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Doors Open 2026 – The World in a City!

Dates: Saturday May 23, 2026
Sunday May 24, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., both days

The Scadding Cabin invites volunteers to help us celebrate Toronto’s global story! This year’s Doors Open theme is: “The World in a City.”

As Toronto prepares to welcome visitors from around the world for FIFA World Cup 26™, at Scadding Cabin, we’ll explore how Toronto’s global mosaic began long before Confederation – through the lives, traditions, and journeys of the many communities who built this region.

Visitors will step inside Toronto’s oldest surviving home to discover how newcomers, settlers, and travelers interacted at the edge of a growing town. Through demonstrations, stories, and hands-on activities, we’ll show how everyday objects and pioneer practices reflect influences from many cultures and traditions.

Interested volunteers are asked to make arrangements with John Marshall at yorkpioneers@gmail.com.

Volunteers are encouraged to bring their cell phones and cameras to help capture the spirit of this year’s theme and share the global stories hidden within Scadding Cabin. Come help us celebrate Toronto’s diversity, its history, and the many cultures that continue to shape our city.

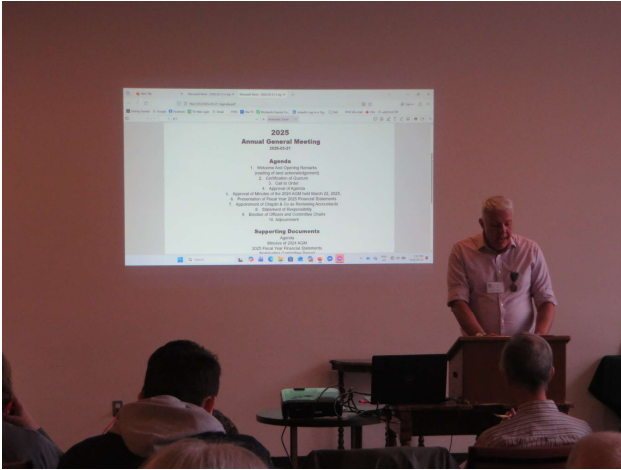


Above: Where the city’s oldest doorway still welcomes visitors, 232 years and counting... Photo: Brent Cunningham

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REPORT FROM THE 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Above: President Paul Litt, returning for his second consecutive term, calls the 2026 AGM to order.

Photo: Brent Cunningham

The 2026 Annual General Meeting of the York Pioneer & Historical Society was held at Friends House.

The meeting brought together eight past presidents of the Society: John Marshall, Patricia Robertson, Diane Reid, George W. J. Duncan, David Raymont, Fred Robbins, Angus D. Palmer, and Paul Litt. Paul, who previously served as president, returned for a second consecutive term, reflecting the Society's longstanding tradition of continuity and stewardship.

A few days prior to the AGM, Kayoko informed the Board that she would be unable to continue in the Scadding Cabin role for 2026. Accordingly, the position was presented as vacant at the meeting. Fred Robbins volunteered to serve and was elected by the membership. The Society extends its sincere appreciation to Kayoko for her dedicated service and contributions to the stewardship of the Scadding Cabin.



Above: The tribute to the late Chris Raible, accompanied by a detailed image of the Wagon Men, displayed at the 2026 AGM. *Photo:* Brent Cunningham

Outgoing Treasurer Jennifer Horwood delivered a comprehensive report on the Society's financial statements and addressed all questions from the membership. Jennifer received a standing ovation in recognition of her exemplary service as Treasurer as she transfers the responsibilities to incoming Treasurer Erich Welz.

The Society was also pleased to welcome back David Scadding, Emeritus Professor at York University and a direct descendant of John Scadding. Professor Scadding generously shared a selection of significant Scadding family artifacts, including a historic copy of Aesop's Fables once owned by Reverend Henry Scadding. As the lay reader under Bishop John Strachan, Reverend Scadding played a formative role in the early intellectual and spiritual life of York. The volume offered members a tangible connection to that era and to the Scadding family's enduring legacy.

A tribute to the life of Chris Raible, prepared by Fred Robbins and Diane Reid, was displayed during the meeting. A reproduction of this tribute appears on Page 5.

Guest speaker Rebecca Rizzo, Museum Coordinator at Toronto's First Post Office/Town of York Historical Society, delivered an engaging and informative presentation that was warmly received by the membership. The Society extends its appreciation to Ms. Rizzo for her contribution to the program and for sharing her expertise with those in attendance.

The meeting concluded with an abundance of cakes and refreshments provided by outgoing Membership Chair Marilyn Horwood, whose efforts once again contributed to the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the AGM.

The Society extends its gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the 2026 Annual General Meeting.



Above: Marilyn Horwood, Beth Alaksa, and company presiding over the ever-popular AGM dessert table – a tradition as dependable as the meeting itself. **Below left:** Rebecca Rizzo sharing her insights with the membership during her presentation at the 2026 AGM. **Below right:** Reverend Henry Scadding's personal copy of Aesop's Fables, presented in Latin and ancient Greek, offering a rare glimpse into his classical studies. **Photos:** Brent Cunningham.

BLACK CREEK BOOK LAUNCH UNITES COUSINS

By David Raymont,

On November 19 2025, York Pioneers Beth Alaksa, Glenn Bonnetta, David Raymont and President Paul Litt gathered in Toronto's Kensington Market to celebrate the launch of Susan Grundy's novel *Black Creek*.

Grundy's novel is a journey of discovery. *Black Creek's* main character, Kate Stong Smyth, is a Montreal architect who learns about her family's roots in Toronto and how the struggles of the past become an enduring legacy for the generations that follow.

In the novel, Kate has an emotional visit to the Stong cabin at the Village at Black Creek, and, later in the story, a York Pioneer volunteer shows Kate a picture of her ancestor Jacob Stong, who was part of the group that assembled the Scadding Cabin at Exhibition Place in 1879.

Grundy is a descendant of the Stong family and was surprised to learn that York Pioneer President Paul Litt is descended from the Fisher family. In 1816, Elizabeth Fisher married Daniel Stong, and together they turned the land she brought to the marriage into a successful farm.

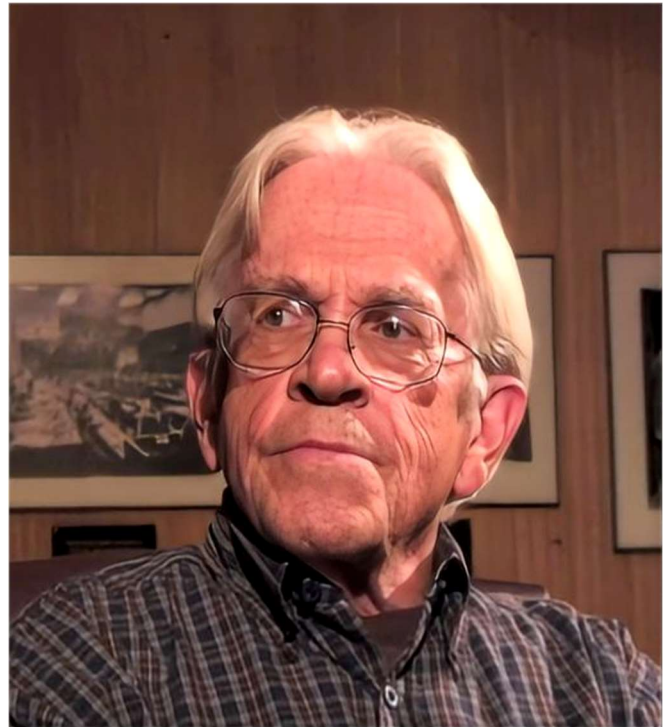
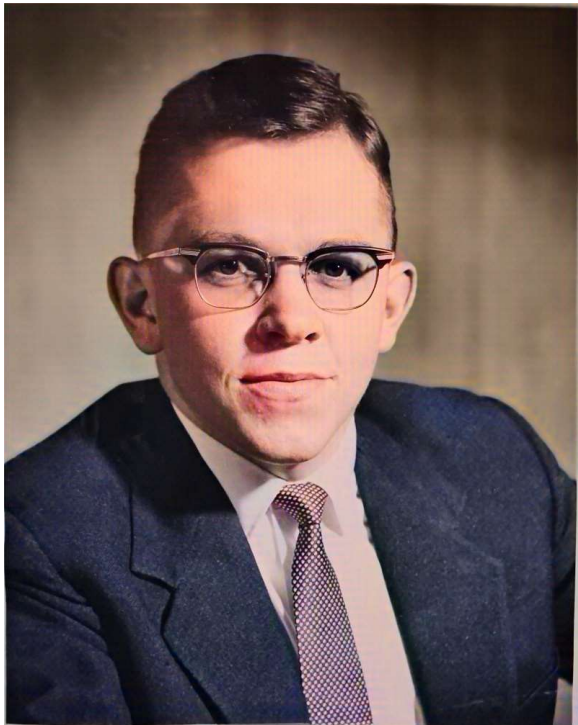
York Pioneer Jacob Stong was their first son. Altogether, Elizabeth and Daniel had eight children, not an excessive number for the time.

Black Creek is highly praised by Toronto historian Adam Bunch and is a welcome gift for anyone interested in the city's history, and the story of the York Pioneers.



Left: York Pioneer President Paul Litt congratulates Susan Grundy on the launch of her novel *Black Creek*. **Photo:** David Raymont. **Right:** Jacob Stong is part of the group of York Pioneers that followed the ox cart to assemble the Scadding Cabin in 1879. **Photo:** York Pioneer & Historical Society.

IN MEMORIAM: CHRISTOPHER C. RAIBLE
LIFE MEMBER OF THE YORK PIONEERS 1933 - 2026



By Fred Robbins,

CHRIS RAIBLE was a former interpreter for the Toronto Historical Board at Mackenzie House in Toronto in 1988. He wrote two books about William Lyon Mackenzie, "A colonial advocate: The launching of his newspaper and the Queenston career of William Lyon Mackenzie" Paperback - January 1, 1999, and "Muddy York mud: Scandal & scurrility in Upper Canada" Paperback - January 1, 1992.

Chris was also historical advisor to The Mackenzie Printery and Newspaper Museum at 1 Queenston St., Niagara-on-the Lake, Ontario. He wrote articles and reviews for the Beaver, Ontario History, the Toronto Star (1988 - 1990), the Globe and Mail, and The York Pioneer and Historical Society, annual "York Pioneer" with many articles over the years.

"From Hands Now Striving to be Free" is an inventory and analysis of 94 boxes crafted by men jailed in the aftermath of the failed 1837 Rebellion of Upper Canada. The book was written by Chris Raible, with John C. Carter and Darryl Withrow, and is liberally illustrated with photographs of the boxes. This exciting publication was the York Pioneer and Historical Society contribution to the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Incorporation of The City of Toronto, (1834 - 2009).

Creemore has lost an active community member, a man who had one eye on the past and one on the future.

Chris Raible died on Feb. 10, at the age of 92, in Seattle where he was living near his son and wife Pat, who is in memory care.

Chris and Pat have been a force in Creemore, leaving a lasting legacy of culture and preservation.

Amongst a long list of accomplishments, the Raibles founded Curiosity House Books in 1995. Here it is shown at 122 Mill St. Creemore.



Chris was considered an expert on William Lyon Mackenzie and has published several books, articles and essays about the politician and journalist focussing on the printing press.

An intellectual and scholar, his impressive library was transferred to The Mayholme Foundation, a genealogical and historical research charity in St. Catharines when the Raibles were preparing to sell their Creemore home in 2023.

Chris was instrumental in the building of Station on the Green, acting as a key fundraiser. Chris orchestrated a ground-breaking for the community centre, inviting everyone to bring a spoon to help dig. He also conceived of the idea for the book bash, a used book sale that would for many years raise funds for Station on the Green.

He was also the driving force behind the preservation and relocation of the Creemore Log Cabin, and was the long-time chair of the management board, which was established in 2011, with Pat serving as treasurer.

Fellow board member and long-time friend Paul Vorstermans said the bookstore was an enterprise of passion more than finance.

"It was a personal project that they felt important and liked doing it," he said. "This was the place to which he was most attached for sure," she said. "He was a great friend and a great contributor to Creemore with the bookstore and the log cabin being his lasting legacy."

Chris met Pat, who grew up in Liverpool, she was a librarian, through a Unitarian youth group in Manchester, England in 1954 and they were married within a few months. "It was a whirlwind romance," said their son David. "They both moved to the U.S. and my mother became a U.S. citizen." "They were inseparable, really," he said.

Chris graduated from Starr King School for the Ministry, in California and his work as a Unitarian Universalist minister took the Raibles to serve churches in Jamestown, N.Y. (1957 - 1962); Brookfield, Wis.; Worcester, Mass., eventually landing at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, 175 St. Clair Ave. from 1982 till he retired.

He became Canadian citizen in 1987 and got to vote in his first election in the fall of that year.

Nearing retirement, they moved north to Creemore and began renovating the heritage building on Mill Street that would house the Curiosity bookstore.

Chris is remembered as being civically engaged, making appearances at council over the years on various topics relating to governance.

In 1965, David recounts, his father marched with Martin Luther King Jr in the Selma to Montgomery civil rights march in Alabama, along with one-third of all clergy from across the country.

He went to the second Selma march, said David, after his colleague James Reeb, a Unitarian minister, was attacked and beaten to death. As a result of the beatings, King and other leaders issued a call for clergy from across the country to join them in the second march.

"My mom packed him a bunch of lunches," said David, chuckling. "To make sure he had something to eat."

Chris and Pat were dual recipients of the Creemore Legion 2013 Citizens of the Year award.

On June 12, 2010, The Ontario Historical Society presented to volunteers Chris and Pat Raible the Cruikshank Gold Medal, which honours individuals "who have performed with distinction on behalf of the OHS." After receiving the prestigious award, Chris Raible thanked the Society and spoke briefly on the importance of the written word and why publishing is fundamental to the preservation and interpretation of Ontario's history.

Both were active members of the St. Luke's Anglican Church, Creemore.

Chris was past secretary of the Ontario Historical Society and past president of the Town of York Historical Society.

He is survived by Pat; three children, John, David and Ann Beasley; six grandchildren; nieces and nephews; and a growing number of great- grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Creemore Log Cabin or St. Luke's Anglican Church.

Article in past YP annual booklets

2004 39, 45

2005 14, 40

2006 17, 34

2008 22, 34

2011 60, 62

2013 39, 45

2014 45, 54

2015 74, P74

2015 27, 31 "A Picturesque View of a Prisoner's Box"

2016 23, 29 "More romance than Probability"

2018 53, 60 "Prisoners mourn Lount and Matthews"

2019 p74

2019 52, 58, 59 - 60 "Uncertainty as a Future Fate"

2020 edit. 35

2020 42 - 49 "Confined in Toronto Gaol Under a Charge of H. Treason"

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE YORK PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN YOUR LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT?

As we reflect on Toronto's rich history, we are reminded of figures like Lady Eaton, whose bequests helped preserve our city's heritage. Many of our members have already contributed – through volunteering, donations, and storytelling. Including the York Pioneer & Historical Society in your Will is a meaningful continuation of that legacy.

If you believe in the importance of preserving Toronto's history, this is a powerful way to ensure your values live on.

Scadding Cabin, standing since 1794, remains one of our most cherished landmarks. Thanks to our donors, it has endured for over two centuries. With your support, it can remain a vital part of our community for the next 232 years.

Several members have already taken this step. Whether your gesture is grand or modest, it affirms your commitment to preserving Toronto's story. Even sharing your intention with loved ones helps strengthen our collective legacy.

Please speak with your legal counsel, accountant, or financial planner to ensure your wishes are honoured and your legacy is preserved. Your support – past, present, and future – is invaluable.

Thank you for your generosity and dedication.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The 2025 Volume of “The York Pioneer” has been delivered to our active members.

Renew your membership today to ensure you receive your 2026 edition.

Individual membership is an affordable **\$30.00**, with students eligible to join for only **\$20.00**. Or sign-up your family for just **\$50.00**.

Send us your cheque payable to:

The York Pioneer and Historical Society
PO Box 186
260 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M5A 1N1

or, visit our website at www.yorkpioneers.com, and pay by credit card, PayPal, or e-transfer at yorkpioneers2@gmail.com.

Important Tax Note:

Due to CRA rules that require us to deduct the value of any benefits received – such as our \$20 York Pioneer magazine – from membership dues, we can no longer issue donation tax receipts for Annual, Family, or Student Memberships after December 31, 2025. Donation tax receipts will continue to be issued for Life Memberships, and all other donations over \$20 remain eligible. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Don't miss your chance - renew your membership **today!**

Welcome New Life Members!

Roland Smith

Renewing Annual Members!

Sarah Gossip

2026 Board Members

Officers

Past President: Angus D. Palmer

President: Paul Litt

Vice President: Brent Cunningham

Treasurer: Erich Welz

Recording Secretary: Robert Horwood

Corresponding Secretary [Social media]: Bob Georgiou

Archivist: Erin Baxter

Committee Chairs

Editorial: Dawn Ayer

Membership: Victoria Moorshead

Programme: Beth Alaksa

Publicity/Newsletter: Brent Cunningham

Scadding Cabin: Fred Robbins

Representative on the Board of Sharon Temple: Glenn Bonnetta

Representative to the Canadian National Exhibition Association: Liam Peppiatt

Members at Large: Marilyn Horwood, Sebastian Aguanno, Miles Griffin



Pictured left to right: Brent Cunningham, Angus D. Palmer, Robert Horwood, Jennifer Horwood, Erich Welz, Fred Robbins, Marilyn Horwood, Liam Peppiatt, Bob Georgiou, Sebastian Aguanno, Miles Griffin, Beth Alaksa, Paul Litt. Photo: Audrey Fox.

The YPHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming



The inaugural York Pioneer & Historical Society grand dinner of 1870 – a reminder of the Society’s earliest traditions, and perhaps an inspiration for gatherings yet to come...