



THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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The EX Needs YOU!! Calling All Volunteers!

Dates: Friday, August 18th to
Monday, September 4th, 2023
Time: 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Daily!
Location: Scadding Cabin

Since our debut at the very first Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1879, York Pioneers have been a mainstay at the annual Canadian National Exhibition. After a successful Doors Open this past spring as documented in the pages that follow, we need to keep building our momentum and expand our Society’s awareness to the wider community.

Kayoko Smith is waiting to hear from you at yorkpioneers@gmail.com to align your interests with specific programming events this summer! Shifts are 4 hours and a parking pass is included. See Page 15 to view the calendar...



Above: The CNE’s Princes’ Gates still Stands with Ukraine, May 2023. Photo: Brent Cunningham.



Above: The Scadding Cabin, Doors Open Toronto May 2023. Photo: Beth Alaksa

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DOORS OPEN TORONTO 2023



Above: Volunteer Diane Reid assumes her leadership role at Doors Open 2023. *Photo:* David Raymond.

In the city's second year since mandatory lockdowns, good fortune was evident before the doors even opened on Doors Open 2023. A beautiful blue sky, blooming gardens, and relaxed safety protocols fueled an enthusiastic return-to-the-old-normal atmosphere.

Sarah Gossip, featured in last month's Update was back demonstrating both spinning wheels to visitors and curious onlookers. Pioneers educated and entertained visitors with stories about the Scadding Cabin and walks around the gardens.

Joining us again this year were our friends from La Société d'histoire de Toronto having set-up at the Fort Rouillé obelisk; the site of the original 1750s French fort that drew the York



Above: Volunteers Kayoko Smith and Beth Alaksa explore the gardens as La Société prepares at Fort Rouillé. *Photo:* Brent Cunningham

Pioneers to this location in 1879 as the permanent location of the Scadding Cabin. This extremely important memorial plot—interchangeably referred to as “Fort Toronto” on some maps from the Nouvelle-France era—would by 1834 replace York as the permanent name of our provincial capital, and marks THE Spot as the modern birthplace of one of the world's premier cities. Visit www.sht.ca to learn more about our friends at La Société.

Meanwhile, the sights and scents of the old normal would get a special boost by afternoon: Sound. Alana Cline, a fiddler specializing in early Scottish music drew a wider audience with transcriptions of tunes by Ely Playter, whose brother John lived in Scadding Cabin between 1796 and Scadding's return in 1818. In the article that follows, Alana herself delves further into the pieces she performed and their historical contexts.

In the end, despite public transit challenges, 504 visitors passed through the Cabin over the weekend, up 7.6% from 2022 which marked the first re-opening since the pandemic lockdowns. Unsolicited donations also rose 10% over 2022, all positive indicators as we head into CNE season.



Above: Alana Cline performs at Scadding Cabin. *Photo:* Kayoko Smith.



Top row: Sarah Gossip exercises her craft while David Raymont prepares the song book display. Photos: Beth Alaksa.

Middle row right: Robert and Marilyn Horwood display a needlepoint family heirloom. The inscription reads: "Isabelle Roddy's Work York June 30 1830 Aged 13 Years" with Marilyn being a direct descendent of Isabelle having the heirloom in her possession for some 60 years. Middle row left: Sarah Gossip shows samples of Icelandic wool. Photos: David Raymont.

Bottom row: President Angus Palmer listens to visitors. Photo: Alex Coomes

MORE ON DOORS OPEN 2023 – HISTORY OF CELTIC TUNES AT TIME OF SCADDING CABIN

By Alana Cline

It was a pleasure to perform traditional Celtic fiddle tunes in May at Scadding Cabin during Doors Open. As a fiddler specializing in tunes from the 1700s and 1800s, it was a wonderful experience to play these tunes at a building of the time period.

At Scadding Cabin there was a collection of sheet music on display, including two transcriptions by Ely Playter from 1815 of popular Scottish songs. Playter was a flute player, and was son of one of the Town of York's first settlers. The two transcribed songs were "Gilderoy" and "Tweed Side." From looking into the song "Tweed Side," it may refer to the River Tweed, which in certain places is the border between Scotland and England. There may be references as far back as the 1720s for the melody of this song.

Also on display was the book *The Songs of Scotland* from the 1870s. I learned two songs from this book. The first song, "Wha'll be King but Charlie?" I originally learned many years ago as a Cape Breton fiddle tune with no words. Cape Breton fiddle music is a style of old Scottish fiddle music from the 1700s and 1800s when a lot of Scottish people came to Canada. Each area of Scotland has its own fiddle style, and many of the Scottish people who went to Cape Breton were from the Scottish Highlands. Since Cape Breton was an island, the music style stayed preserved, whereas the music in Scotland was affected by other influences from Europe. Musicians and researchers now travel to Cape Breton from Scotland to see what this older style sounds like.



Above: Alana Cline at Scadding Cabin. *Photo:* David Raymont.

I also learned a version of “Auld Lang Syne” from the book. This version was close to the well-known version played on New Year’s Eve. I also know another version of this song with a different melody, which I’ve heard may be an older version.

For the rest of the tunes I performed, it was a mixture of Scottish, Cape Breton, and Irish tunes. I chose traditional Cape Breton tunes, Irish tunes from the 1800s, and Scottish tunes from the late 1700s and early 1800s so the music would be reflective of Scadding Cabin’s era. Some of the Scottish tunes reflected a classical music influence, as some traditional music composers at that time were also writing classical melodies such as minuets. Scottish composers whose music I performed included Robert Mackintosh, Niel Gow, and John Bowie.



Above: Alana Cline with visitors to Scadding Cabin and Fort Rouillé. Photo: Alex Coomes

REPORT ON REPAIRS TO THE SCADDING CABIN

Dear Members,

By now you would have received in the mail an urgent appeal from our President Angus D. Palmer concerning wood rot appearing in the northwest corner of our 229 year-old cabin; hardly surprising for a building erected in 1794. As we all affirm as York Pioneers, it has been our core uninterrupted mandate since 1879 to preserve this last remaining gem of Toronto's earliest days. We continue to carry our burden in earnest.



Top: Volunteer Chuck Stephens shares a model of the Scadding Cabin to members of the Board to explain his plan for cabin repairs. Shown from left to right: past President George Duncan, current President Angus Palmer, Carlos Morell of GBCA, Cabin chair Kayoko Smoth, John Payne of GBCA, Chuck Stephens. **Below left:** Chuck ensuring a smooth fit for a new chock. **Below Right:** Chuck placing the second chock in the dovetail. **Photos:** David Raymont.

Delightfully, as visitors and volunteers can attest from Doors Open this past spring, extensive repairs to the the Scadding Cabin are actively underway. In February, your Board approved a proposal from architectural firm GBCA, allocated \$30,000 in estimated repair costs, and submitted a request to the City of Toronto for a building permit. By April, the City of Toronto approved our permit to proceed with repairs. Volunteer Chuck Stephens has taken the lead to remove the rotting log, insert supporting shims and chocks, and apply a fungicide to exposed areas. Efforts are expected to carry over well into the autumn—certainly during the Canadian National Exhibition, hopefully wrapping up ahead of the Ghost Walks in October.



Above: Chuck Stephens treats exposed areas. Photo: Kayoko Smith.

However, this is the most significant and costly log restoration effort we have taken on since 1985. And it does need your continued support. Members of your Board have made individual contributions from their own private resources to replenish our charity's restoration fund. At the time of publication, together with donations from the membership, we have restored **\$8,040** and therefore need **\$22,960** to close the gap. To those who have donated thus far, our sincerest Thank You.

The Scadding Cabin has survived since 1794 ONLY because York Pioneers like YOU prioritize it as an object of historical importance. It has survived one enemy occupation (1813), one major rebellion (1837), two devastating global economic depressions (1873 and 1929), two world wars (1914 and 1939), one major hurricane (1954), two global pandemics (1917 and 2020) and too many local epidemics to list here. It has seen inflation run as high 21% (1920), deflation crater by 17% (1921), and residential mortgage rates as high as 22% (1981). There have been no shortage of human and economic calamities over the previous 229 years that York Pioneers of old have overcome, and we can only presume there are more calamities on the horizon for the next 229 years. If the Cabin's walls could talk, what stories would they tell?

But its walls will only continue to stand for the next 229 years with donations from York Pioneers like you. The Cabin's walls literally need YOUR help. With your care and concern, the Scadding Cabin will survive this latest challenge too.

Make history today! You can donate online at www.yorkpioneers.com/donate/ and all donors will also be recognized in "The York Pioneer" for all posterity.



A PRESENTATION OF ELIZABETH SIMCOE

By Holly Benison

Readers will likely already be familiar with the story and diary of Elizabeth Simcoe, but to be on the same page a brief summary is in order. Elizabeth Simcoe was the wife of John Graves Simcoe, veteran of the American Revolutionary War and first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. Elizabeth had been married for nine years before embarking on a five year sojourn in Canada, which she later reflected on as being the best years of her life. While in Canada she kept a diary of her experiences, produced maps for the purposes of surveying, and memorialized her travels in her watercolors and sketches.

I had been reading her diary in the early months of the Pandemic. I was doing my undergrad at the time at Bishop's University, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. As a result of my time off from school, I was using that time to build my budding YouTube channel, and thought it would be fun to recreate Elizabeth's outfit and make a video about the process. Overall, it was my interest in Canadian and textile history that made a portrait reproduction project of interest to me, and well within the scope of my research interests. Elizabeth's portrait shows her wearing a blue dress and a bonnet with a tall crown and a decorative bow. The portrait is from the waist up, leaving many of the details of what she may have been wearing obscured to the viewer. To create the full look, many of the design decisions I made relied on contextual research of late 18th century clothing in general, as well as how I could incorporate my own tastes to make the recreated outfit work best for me.



Left: Elizabeth Simcoe. Watercolour by Mary Anne Burges, 1790, Toronto Public Library, now at the Canadian National Archives. **Right:** The Recreated Outfit. May 2021. **Photo:** Aiden Locke.

The first step was determining the elements of her outfit that we could see in the portrait. In my initial investigation I determined she had on a dress, a sash or belt of some kind, a fichu (a scarf that covers the neck and décolletage), a chemisette (same purpose as a fichu but with more structure), a cap to cover the hair and a bonnet on top. From here I was able to research and source the elements. Starting from the inside out, I first constructed the undergarments - primarily a set of short stays (a boned transitional garment between the 18th century style and the emerging 19th century style of corset) and a petticoat to help give the dress shape. Research wise, it was easiest to construct these as they wouldn't be seen. Historical accuracy was achieved, but in this case it didn't have to be 'accurate' to the portrait.

For the dress, I began my research by consulting museum collections databases. I found my main inspiration dress from the Victoria and Albert museum in London. They have a significant collection of extant garments with high quality photographs. From there I was able to source commercial sewing patterns that would achieve a similar look - I went with the Empire Dress #0119 from Black Snail Patterns - and modified the sleeves to make them elbow length and added pintucks to the bottom hem. The dress closes using drawstrings in the centre back, and has a gathered front panel. For this I wove some ribbon on my reproduction 18th century box loom using matching blue and white cotton threads.

For the belt I used a length of satin ribbon and tied it in the front. I used another length of the same ribbon to decorate the cap. Instead of sewing the ribbon to the cap I fastened it with pins. This would have been a versatile decoration option for ladies caps, as ribbons could be switched out as needed and other decorations could be added or taken away with ease, making any cap suitable for a variety of outfits.

The chemisette was made using a pattern from the American Duchess Guide to 18th Century Dressmaking. This particular chemisette is modelled after a men's shirt collar, and emulating the style in women's dress was becoming trendy. Overall, I feel like the collared chemisette style looks rather sporty, and layering this with a fichu is uncommon.

Finally, the hat was made from silk using a millinery pattern from Timely Tresses, and modified to have a wider brim. It could be argued that Elizabeth's dress also could have been made from silk to match the hat, but I made a personal comfort choice here. I used a cotton-linen blend for the dress for its breathability in the warmer months, it's easier to care for than silk, and for the kind of work that I do using this fabric over silk increases the wearability when used for other outfit.

In 2021 I was actively involved with the online historical costuming community - who had been organizing a virtual video event named CoSy - short for Costume Symposium. It was a chance to have historical costumers who were also YouTubers post content on the same weekend so as to promote each other and generate some excitement around this virtual event when we were all still very much in 'quarantine' mode. Using CoSy as a springboard, I wanted to highlight Elizabeth's story and I took the idea I had already had, and developed it into a

project with a slightly larger scope. As a result, I created a four part series leading up to the event, documenting the research and construction of all of the outfit elements. The final installment was a short film named *Postuma: A Short Film*, which reimagined Elizabeth's travels in Toronto, and premiered on my YouTube channel on August 22nd, 2021. It featured Scadding Cabin in the opening scene. The story featured a young woman reading Elizabeth's diary and visiting the same locations she mentions in the text - Scadding Cabin, the Victoria Memorial Square and the Scarborough Bluffs. Unbeknownst to her, the ghost of Elizabeth Simcoe is travelling right alongside her.

The following summer I visited Scadding Cabin during the annual Doors Open programming. In chatting with some of the volunteers I mentioned my project and video, and it was through this initial meeting that I ended up being invited back later in the summer to interpret Elizabeth at the cabin.

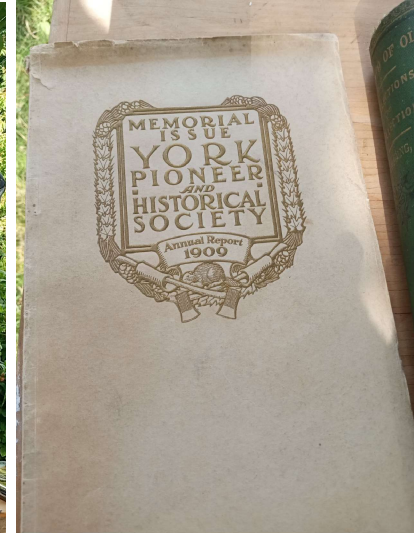
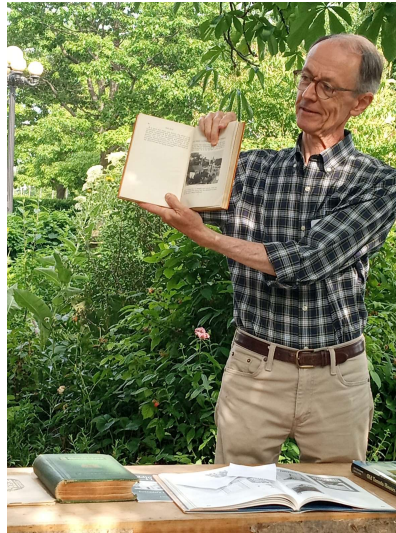
Doing this project allowed me to further develop my own approach to history - one that focuses on women's experiences and the many ways we can bring them to life. Through costume, video, storytelling and interpreting, I hope that in some way my approach to Elizabeth's story could bring a newfound inspiration and sense of curiosity to what we still have left to learn about women's history in Canada! At the time of writing I'm already working on my next big project - my master's thesis. It is taking the form of a multi-part video series, also on YouTube, focusing on Canadian culinary history in the 19th century.



Above. The completed outfit, Summer 2021. **Photo:** Aiden Locke.

STRAWBERRY SOCIAL!!

Good times are here, back in the garden! A volunteer gathering was held on Sunday July 9th of an early summer evening. Great conversation, valued information was shared to kickstart the CNE 2023, and a great time was had by all.



Top row: Visitors take in the strawberry delights at Scadding Cabin. Bottom row left: President Angus Palmer with past presidents John Marshall and Diane Reid. Bottom row centre and right: past president John Marshall shares collections from our library including the 1909 Annual Report Memorial Issue of the York Pioneer and Historical Society.

CALL FOR PAPERS – SHARPEN YOUR DIGITAL PENCILS

The York Pioneer is one of the longest-running local history journals in Canada.

With apologies from the Board for delays in delivery of *The York Pioneer*, the 2022 edition will shortly go to print, the 2023 edition is well underway, and members and friends are now invited to compose articles for the 2024 issue.

Oral histories and transcriptions of old documents that relate to Toronto or anywhere else in York County (a.k.a. Region) are fair game. Artificial Intelligence bots are not. For the other (very few) guidelines, please email the editor, **Bruce McCowan**, bmccowan@netrover.com.

For the 2024 issue of the York Pioneer, please email your proposed first draft (or better) to the Editor by Sept. 30 2023.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The 2022 Volume of "The York Pioneer" is about to go to press!

Ensure that you receive your copy by renewing your membership in the York Pioneer and Historical Society today

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 your cheque, payable to "York Pioneer and Historical Society" to:

York Pioneer and Historical Society
260 Adelaide Street East
P.O. Box 186
Toronto, Ontario
M5A 1N1

or, visit our website at www.yorkpioneers.com, and pay by credit card or PayPal.

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



CNE CALENDAR 2023 – SCADDING CABIN

As always, the York Pioneers welcome volunteers and members to join us at the Scadding Cabin during the CNE. See below for the list of special events:

Sat., Aug. 19	Spinning Demonstration	1:00PM-4:00PM
	Carpentry Talk	1:00PM-4:00PM
Sun., Aug. 20	Spinning Demonstration	1:00PM-4:00PM
	Bees of Toronto	1:00PM-2:00PM
Mon., Aug. 21	Favourite Plants of Pioneers	1:30PM-2:30PM
Tue., Aug. 22	How the Treaties came to be	1:00PM-4:00PM
Wed., Aug. 23	Scadding Cabin Timeline talk	1:00PM-4:00PM
Thu., Aug. 24	Monarch Butterfly Tagging	1:30PM-4:00PM
Fri., Aug. 25	Bees of Toronto	1:00PM-2:00PM
Sat., Aug. 26	Monarch Butterfly Tagging	1:30PM-4:00PM
Sun., Aug. 27	Scadding Cabin Timeline talk	1:00PM-2:00PM
	Spinning Demonstration	1:00PM-4:00PM
	Carpentry Talk	1:00PM-4:00PM
Mon., Aug. 28	Favourite Plants of Pioneers	1:30PM-2:30PM
Tue., Aug. 29	How the Treaties came to be	1:00PM-4:00PM
Wed., Aug. 30	Governor and Mrs. Simcoe visit	1:30PM-4:00PM
	Historic Cooking Talk	
	• Maple sugar shortbread	12:30PM
	• Ginger bread	2:30PM
Thu., Aug. 31	Monarch Butterfly Tagging	1:30PM-4:00PM
Fri., Sept. 1	Historic Cooking Talk	
	• Sweet potato pie	12:30PM
	• Vegetables	2:30PM

Welcome New Members!

Joel Espedido Peter Marshall Karyn Stowe Loretta Taber

Renewal as Life Members!

Joyce Crook Michael Loader

IN MEMORIAM

Ronald Morris, husband of life member **Helen Hatton** passed away April 9, 2023:

<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/theglobeandmail/name/ronald-morris-obituary?id=52255168>

Jeanne Hopkins, long-time annual member passed away July, 13th 2023:

<https://www.arbormemorial.ca/mceachnie/obituaries/jeanne-louise-hopkins/106641>

The York Pioneer & Historical Society offers our condolences to the families of Helen and Jeanne.

York Pioneers are looking for a qualified candidate to serve as its Treasurer. If you have the skills, time, and interest, or if you want to learn more about this position, please e-mail our President at angus.d.palmer@gmail.com. Thank you!

The YPHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries.