

NO. 3



FREE ISSUE

SHORE STORIES



Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre

Editor's Letter

We are living in an important moment in history as we experience the COVID-19 pandemic. Everything in this moment will be remembered and recorded for future generations. It's a lot to have on our shoulders. With this edition of *Shore Stories*, our contributors wrote about topics they were discovering or thinking about in our newfound reality.

Due to social isolation restrictions, we will not be printing this third edition of *Shore Stories* - it will have a solely digital run. On the bright side, a digital run means that we have not been limited by page restrictions - and we seized the opportunity!

We dearly miss our space and each of you. We hope that flipping through this edition will help fill your time with something new.

If you have feedback, or would like to contribute to the next edition of *Shore Stories*, please send us an email to info@lakeshoregrounds.ca. The team continues to work through this time remotely, bringing you more content and we hope you enjoy learning alongside us.



Nadine Finlay
Assistant Curator & Editor

L Field, Lakeshore Campus,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre

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Contact Us

While our space remains closed at this time, our team continues to work remotely - from our living rooms and sometimes even our pajamas - to continue sharing the history of the Lakeshore Grounds with you. You can reach out to us online at any time! We'd be happy to hear from you.

Follow, like, message, or find new things to explore with us online:

@lakeshoregrnds



Visit our website, complete with resources to learn and connect. You can also sign up for our monthly newsletter to stay hip:

lakeshoregrounds.ca

To tell us how we're doing, contribute to a future edition of *Shore Stories*, or to say hello, you can reach our staff directly via email:

info@lakeshoregrounds.ca

Tree Swallows

Of the five species of swallow that are known to have bred in Colonel Samuel Smith Park, Tree Swallows are the first to arrive each spring from their winter vacation in the southern states and Central America.

They start turning up in the last week of March and are present in the Park in large numbers by the middle of April.

Tree Swallows winter farther north than other swallow species and return to their nesting grounds long before the others come back. They can eat plant foods as well as their normal insect prey, which helps them survive the cold snaps and wintry weather of early spring. It can be an amazing sight to see them eagerly flying in from the southern warmth while it is still snowing!

The best place to see them in spring is in the Swallow Field. It is located south of the waterfront trail that runs through the Park and immediately east of the Yacht Club.

Friends of Sam Smith Park (FOSS), a local community group dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and promoting the natural areas of the Park has been installing Tree Swallow nest boxes there over the past ten years.



*Tree Swallows,
Photo by Terry Smith*

*Cleaning Tree Swallow Nest Boxes,
Photo by Terry Smith*





*Tree Swallows,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre*

There are now almost seventy boxes in the Park. Every spring, volunteers prepare the boxes for the swallows by cleaning them out, repairing and sterilizing them against parasites.

When the Tree Swallows arrive, there begins a fierce competition for the precious nesting spots, not just with other swallows, but also with House Sparrows.

House Sparrows, an abundant, non-native invasive species, are heavier and more aggressive than the native swallows. They will even destroy eggs and nestlings to secure a box for themselves. The only way to humanely deter sparrow occupation is “eviction” by FOSS volunteers before they lay eggs.

Tree Swallows are declining in number because of increasing insect scarcity caused by the overuse of pesticides, climate change, and pollution.

Their preferred natural nesting spot is a cavity in an old tree, like a woodpecker hole, but, because of the removal of old trees and wetland drainage where old snags are commonly found, those spots are becoming scarce.



*Nest Box Building Volunteer,
Photo by Terry Smith*

So, the nesting boxes definitely help fill a need. To date, FOSS estimates that well over a thousand young swallows have been raised in that field over the years and that could explain why we see ever increasing numbers each breeding season.

Fortunately, Tree Swallows will happily take to man-made nest boxes and like living close together in colonies. Their beauty, playfulness and tolerance of people close by have made them true ambassadors for the Park's wildlife.

Tree Swallows are primarily "aerial insectivores" that catch insects in flight. Many of those insects are the very ones that pester us – and swallows catch and eat a lot of them. An adult can consume 2,000 a day and, when their brood of four to seven nestlings has hatched, the catch goes up to 6,000.

It is interesting to watch them skimming over the water in the Marina, drinking and bathing while in flight, or feasting on insects emerging by the thousands from their larva stage in the water below.

Friends of Sam Smith Park has an easy to find blog and a very active Facebook page. Check us out, but, please, be sure to check out the Swallow Field.

Terry Smith

Nest Boxes in Colonel Samuel Smith Park,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre





friends of sam smith park

Join *Friends of Sam Smith* on Facebook to find birders of a feather, to volunteer, or simply to enjoy the park from home:



**Friends of
SAM SMITH
PARK**

Read FOSS' blog for regular updates and cool information from volunteers and organizers:

friendsofsamsmithpark.ca

You can learn more about the bird species on **allaboutbirds.org**. Click the species' name below to learn more about them:

Tree Swallows

House Sparrows

That Feeling of Impending Renaissance

In early March this year, I made a switch from Management Studies to working towards my Bachelor of Commerce in Hospitality & Tourism Management at Humber Lakeshore's Business School. Spending the first half of my life in a restaurant and service industry, and the latter years in tourism, this move only seemed natural with all the passions that I pursue in life and all the experiences I have already had.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, shutting down most non-essential travel and imposing many limitations within countries around the globe. Generally speaking, the travel and tourism industry has been put on pause. At first, it was an unsettling realization that everything I love to do is not allowed anymore, and the future is extremely uncertain.

I have been experiencing a feeling of loss and grief for something that we've had, something we've wanted to grow and expand, something that is just not present anymore. Throughout these weeks in quarantine, I've had many meetings and conversations with hospitality and travel industry professionals about what's happening and how to move forward.

After the initial shock, while juggling a toddler out of daycare and an exam week with a full course load, I started wondering if continuing my education in the tourism and hospitality sector was a flawed idea.

I had to look deep into my motivations and experiences and realized that I have never been more alert or in tune with other people and what they're all going through.

This quarantine has become a type of equalizer that has physically separated people, but at the same time made them that much more connected. We all feel like we are going through the same difficulties and obstacles. I came to a realization that even though these are difficult and unprecedented times, I feel fascinated and humbled by the response from the majority of the population.

The outpouring of support for frontline workers, and the shift in realizing what is truly important in operating a society, has been overwhelming.

Even though the political and financial climate is rough, the genuine willingness to help is visible even in the most controversial environments. Online, the memes and the humour that people continue to share under the circumstances have spread like wildfire, and even though the whole world is on pause at the moment, it will be exciting to be a part of a renaissance and rebuilding that is bound to follow.

Now, more than ever, we will need people that are highly motivated to do better and to build something that will stand the test of time. We are given an opportunity to look within ourselves and understand what drives us, and commit to those ideas. We can connect with people, which is now easier than ever, who have similar views and push for the rebuilding of what we feel that new normal will be.

We, as people, have a chance to learn from our mistakes and embrace new ways of conducting business or just simply living our lives. This is not just concerning the travel or hospitality industry, but educational, cultural, financial, and political institutions. There is a sense of hope having a clean slate to work on and be able to rise from the ashes and into a new environment.

Specific to Hospitality and Travel industry, as well as cultural and educational institutions, there will be a shift in concentration coming very soon that will focus on a domestic and more localized market. Our quarantine experiences have taught us how important it is to have a strong local community and cultivate those connections to everything that surrounds us. Combine that with impending reluctance of travel across the borders after a pandemic for at least a year and the concentration on rebuilding the local economy, it is guaranteed that people will start looking to support local options first.

This will be a time for museums, historical organizations, community groups, and galleries to flourish. This will be a time for local and truly motivated people to show what binds them to their work, their home, or their heritage.

This will be a time to create a new normal where we can all feel like we are where we belong and embrace everything that surrounds us. Let's start with looking deeper to what's right outside of our doors.

Alex Sein

Streaming the Lakeshore Grounds

Have you been missing the Lakeshore Grounds? We certainly have been! To feel a bit more “connected,” we’ve put together a list of some of the ways you can bring the Grounds to you.

The Lakeshore Grounds have served as a popular location for movies, TV shows, and commercials since *Equus* first filmed on the grounds back in 1977. We’ve been slowly compiling a list of the various productions at lakeshoregrounds.ca/history-film, but the biggest challenge has often been simply finding a copy to watch. This being said, there are a surprising number of productions available for viewing online*!



Lakeshore Grounds
Interpretive Centre

THE FILM HISTORY PROJECT

[Interpretive Centre](#)

[Contributors](#)

The Lakeshore Grounds have been a popular setting for films, TV shows, and commercials since the late 1970s. Production companies were encouraged by the province to use the area in the years following the closure of the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital but the tradition has continued past the opening of Humber College's Lakeshore campus.

The **Film History Project** aims to track and locate the productions that have filmed on the Lakeshore Grounds over the years. This ongoing research project will continue to be updated regularly.



THE HANDMAID'S TALE (2017 - present)

Dystopian drama TV series based on the 1985 novel of the same name by Margaret Atwood where women are forced into child-bearing servitude in a future totalitarian society.

**N.B.: Availability changes regularly across these platforms. Our list is based on Canadian availability on May 27, 2020.*



Cherry pickers and trailers unfamiliar sights on the Grounds, Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre

For those of you with a streaming service subscription:

Netflix

Netflix Canada has the largest selection of series that have filmed on the Lakeshore Grounds of all the major streaming services.

Locke & Key: One of the more recent productions to film on the Grounds, Locke & Key is a Netflix series that uses the exterior of the cottage buildings along the eastern side of the campus as a stand-in for the boarding school the characters attend. It offers a bit of a surreal experience too: one moment you're watching the actors walk up the steps of G Building, the next moment they're standing inside Casa Loma!

Designated Survivor: Keep an eye out in Season 2 for some familiar views – in Episode 18 you'll notice that the hospital hallways and waiting area bear a striking resemblance to the interior of G Building (right down to those orange couches!). A little bit later in Episode 21 they'll try to fool you by digitally inserting the Washington Monument into the background, but you will definitely see the park bench, skating rink, and chimney of the old Powerhouse in Colonel Samuel Smith Park.

Police Academy: This one is a bit of a frequent flyer on Netflix – comes and goes on a regular basis. At last check, the first movie in the collection (which was filmed almost entirely at the Lakeshore Grounds) is available.

Salvation... well, this one is a “maybe.” We've been told that they filmed the limited series on the Grounds but members of our team have binged the episodes several times and are still having a hard time identifying any recognizable locations. Send us a message if your “Eagle eyes” catch a familiar site!



*Interior of G Building appears in
“Designated Survivor”*



*On the set of filming for Suicide Squad,
Photo by Wanda Buote*

Crave

The Handmaid's Tale: Only one series to catch the Lakeshore Grounds in on Crave – but it's worth every minute. The award-winning adaptation of Margaret Atwood's dystopian book, *The Handmaid's Tale*, is available on Crave to stream. There are many familiar Toronto locations to watch for throughout the seasons, but keep your eyes peeled for the Assembly Hall in Season 1 and the inner courtyard and surrounding cottages in Season 3!

Amazon Prime

Amazon Prime offers a really mismatched pair of movies in terms of those that filmed on the Lakeshore Grounds:

Suicide Squad: This blockbuster filmed in several locations around Toronto, but one scene was shot right on the Lakeshore Grounds – or, rather, under it! There's a lot of computer generated modifications to the set in this one so you'll have to take a close look: that cell where Killer Croc / Waylon Jones is held at the beginning of the movie is actually in the tunnels right below G Building.

Stanley & Iris: One of the less well-known movies from our list that you can stream online. The first half of the movie uses the Cricket Pitch and cottage buildings as the backdrop for the fictitious State Home for the Aged and features both Robert DeNiro, and Feodor Chaliapin Jr. on the grounds, with Jane Fonda joining the cast later in the film.

For those of you looking for productions to rent:

Google Play

Google Play currently has the widest selection of Lakeshore Grounds-located productions available to watch. Several repeat from the streaming services above, including: *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Designated Survivor*, *Suicide Squad*, *Stanley & Iris*, and *Police Academy*. But you can catch a few others that we haven't seen on any of the major streaming services lately:

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2: You probably watched the original blockbuster a few years back, but you should definitely check out the sequel if you want to be transported over to the former Lakeshore Teachers' College building (Humber's A Building). The gymnasium hosts both a volleyball tournament and a job fair – but even better is the cameo by the Humber Hawk!

Urban Legend: If you missed our screening earlier this winter, now's your chance for a little horror-on-the-Lakeshore-Grounds! A 90s classic filled with teen pop references, both G Building and Cumberland House are prominent in this film (the rest of the fictional campus is set at the University of Toronto).

(Opposite) The exteriors of G and F Buildings appear in "Strange Brew"

Strange Brew: Honestly one of the strangest movies on our list, but a classic to watch if you haven't seen it before! You'll catch glimpses of all sorts of familiar locations across the GTA but keep an eye out both for the shoreline in Colonel Samuel Smith Park, the Cricket Pitch (complete with the chimney from the Powerhouse in the background), and the lawns of G and H Buildings.

Police Academy, Police Academy 3, and Police Academy 4: Currently the only way to watch all three *Police Academy* movies from the Lakeshore Grounds is to rent them on Google Play. The movies use the campus widely and make it easy to spot familiar locations.

Both **Private Eyes** and **Rookie Blue** filmed several episodes on the Lakeshore Grounds – they're still on our own watch list though so we can't quite narrow down the seasons or episodes for you yet. If you get there before us, be sure to drop us a line!



Cherry Picker filming *The Handmaid's Tale*,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre

CineplexStore

Depending on your preferences, you can also rent from CineplexStore. You can rent: **My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2**, **Stanley & Iris**, **Strange Brew**, and **Police Academy**, **Police Academy 3**, and **Police Academy 4**.

YouTube

No, we're not going to list all the illegally available movies and TV shows that you can catch on YouTube in full (although we've come across a surprising number of productions from the 1980s section of our list....).

Legally, you can rent **My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2**, **Urban Legend**, **Stanley & Iris**, **Strange Brew**, and all three of the **Police Academy** movies to film on the Lakeshore Grounds.

Jennifer Bazar

Going Digital

Occasionally, we are asked how long it takes to create an exhibit. The answer is always that it depends on the exhibit. For #WeAreIndigenous, planning meetings with our partners at **Indigenous Education and Engagement** (formerly the Aboriginal Resource Centre) began months before the first paint can was seen at the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre. Months of planning went in to open the exhibit at the Interpretive Centre in mid-February 2020.

Regina Hartwick, the Acting Director, Indigenous Education and Engagement, described the collective works of **Niigaanii** (Emma Petahtegoose), **M. Hungrywolf** (Marissa Groulx), and **James N. Wilson** as examples of how creative expression challenges those engaged with it to “Rethink, Reorder, and Reimagine the world.”

How true these words ring several months later in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of us are turning to the arts in what news channels so regularly call this “unprecedented time.” Streaming TV and movies, reading, cooking and baking, at-home art projects, and other creative pursuits fill the web and our time more than ever these days. We turn to arts and culture to help us feel creative and connected.

*(Opposite) #WeAreIndigenous Exhibit,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre*





Whether or not to migrate #WeAreIndigenous from a physical to digital exhibit was discussed at length with the artists and our partners. It was impossible to recreate the same experience as would have been provided in person, regardless of next steps.

The question we focused on was how best to share the hard work the artists completed for the show, while keeping their message of self-expression and creativity in a time when people needed it the most?

31.

#WeAreIndigenous expanded to an online presence on Facebook and Instagram, featuring pre-recorded interviews with each artist, posted throughout the planned run of the exhibit.

Virtual visitors could hear the individual perspective, inspiration, and advice from each artist in their own words, accompanied with 360 images of the exhibit, and close-up images of the artworks in the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre.

32.

Additionally, the group discussion with Niigaanii, M. Hungrywolf, and James N. Wilson that would have played in the exhibit has been uploaded to YouTube. The **“#WeAreIndigenous Artists’ Discussion” video** helps to expand the ways visitors can listen and learn.

The Artists’ Reception was more difficult to coordinate moving to an online environment. Part of the agreement with Niigaanii, M. Hungrywolf, and James N. Wilson was that we would provide a platform for them to share their work and their words first-hand with visitors.

Hosting a virtual event at the Interpretive Centre was a new experience for us and on April 30th we made our debut. Friends, Family, and the community tuned in to the Zoom conversation and panel discussion from their homes across Turtle Island.



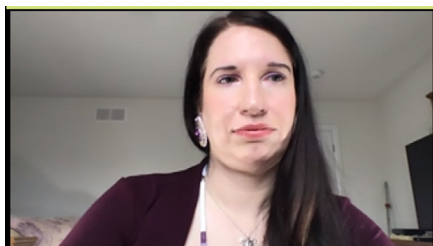
James N. Wilson



Niigaanii

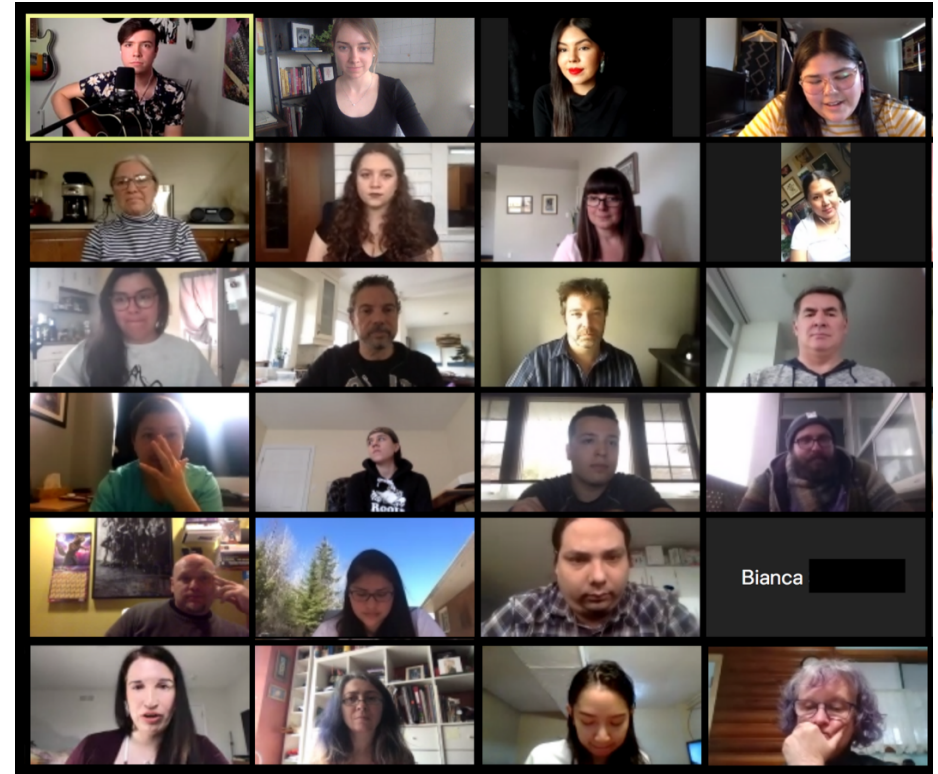


M. Hungrywolf



Regina Hartwick

Some Virtual Artists’ Reception attendees on screen, Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre



While this was not the vision we had planned for, adaptability is also a necessary quality of curation. The bold move to digitize just as we had opened the exhibit would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and excellent collaboration between the artists, the team at Indigenous Education and Engagement, and the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre. To see the project, visit: lakeshoregrounds.ca/weareindigenous.

Nadine Finlay

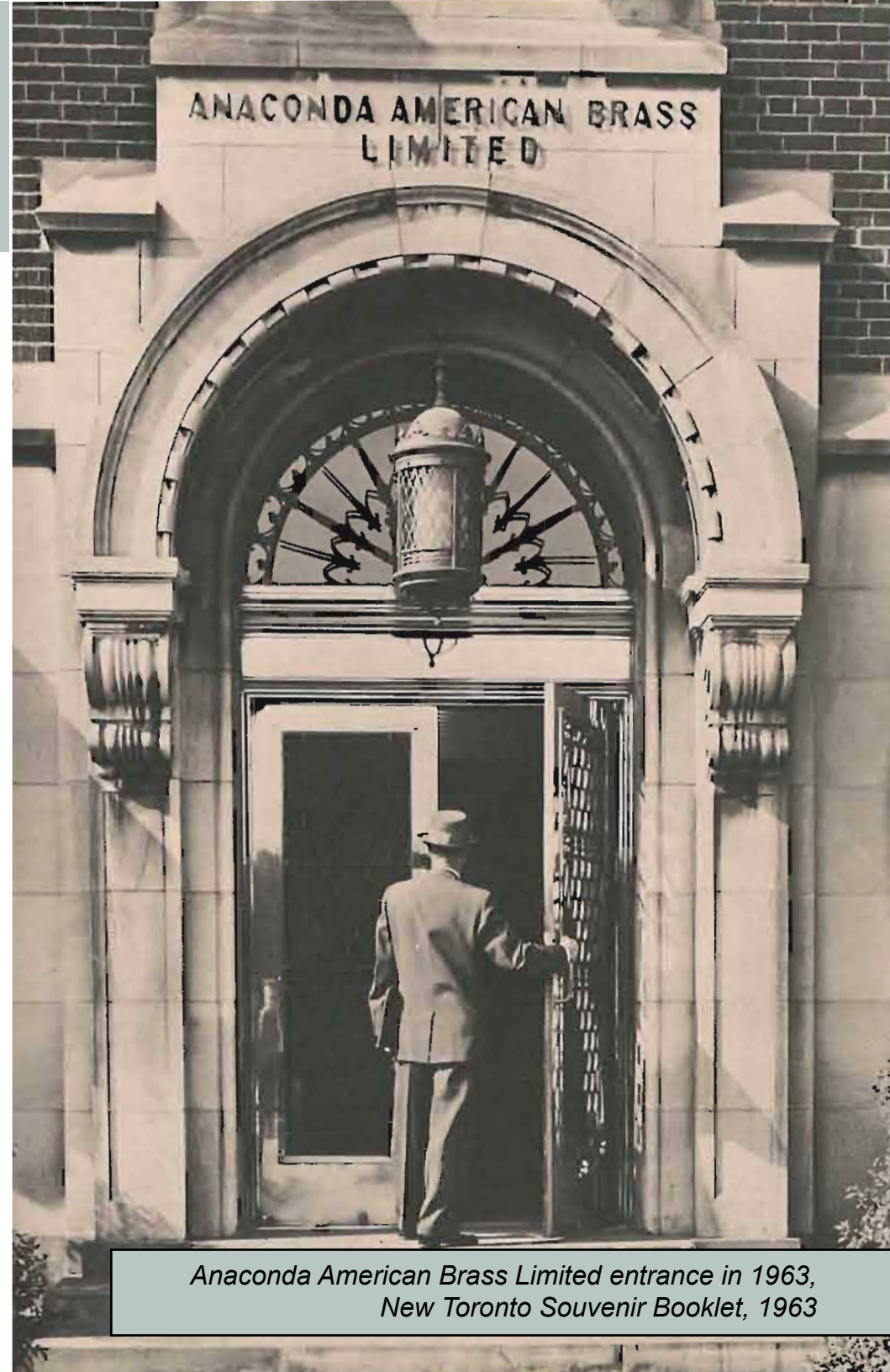
New Toronto: Then and Now

New Toronto was once recognized as a major industrial centre in North America. Originally part of the Township of Etobicoke, New Toronto operated as an independent municipality from 1913 until 1967. During these years, the area was known for its large factories and many manufacturing plants that contributed greatly to Canada's economy.

In its transformation from sparsely settled farmland into an industrial town, New Toronto was full of countless opportunities and careers not only for its own local residents but also for neighbouring municipalities.

The area was designed to be largely independent and self-sufficient, with residential and commercial areas for workers neighbouring the factories. Notable manufacturing companies in the area produced materials ranging from leather to liquor to brass to tires - and even soup.

That was New Toronto THEN. But how has New Toronto changed over the years? With evolving demands on local resources and a changing economy, factories began to close or relocate one after the other. Several of the vast manufacturing buildings were turned into other institutions such as schools, commercial buildings, or - more commonly - were demolished to make space for residential homes.



*Anaconda American Brass Limited entrance in 1963,
New Toronto Souvenir Booklet, 1963*



*Good Year Tire & Rubber Co.
New Toronto Souvenir Booklet, 1951*

I have spent the past few months exploring the changes that have taken place in New Toronto. As part of a Volunteer Internship with the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre, I researched the history of our local community and built a new online resource to help others explore the neighbourhood.

Launched this month, the “New Toronto: Then and Now” project outlines how New Toronto has been transformed over time by highlighting some of the area’s earliest businesses.

The project will take you back to the industrial days: compare images dating as far back as 1890 with their contemporaries, reminisce about the old days, and discover more about the history of New Toronto. A lot has changed, but you may be surprised to find out just how much has stayed the same!

Visit the project at:

lakeshoregrounds.ca/then-and-now-new-toronto.

Sheriza Anne De Guzman

Wartime Media Updated

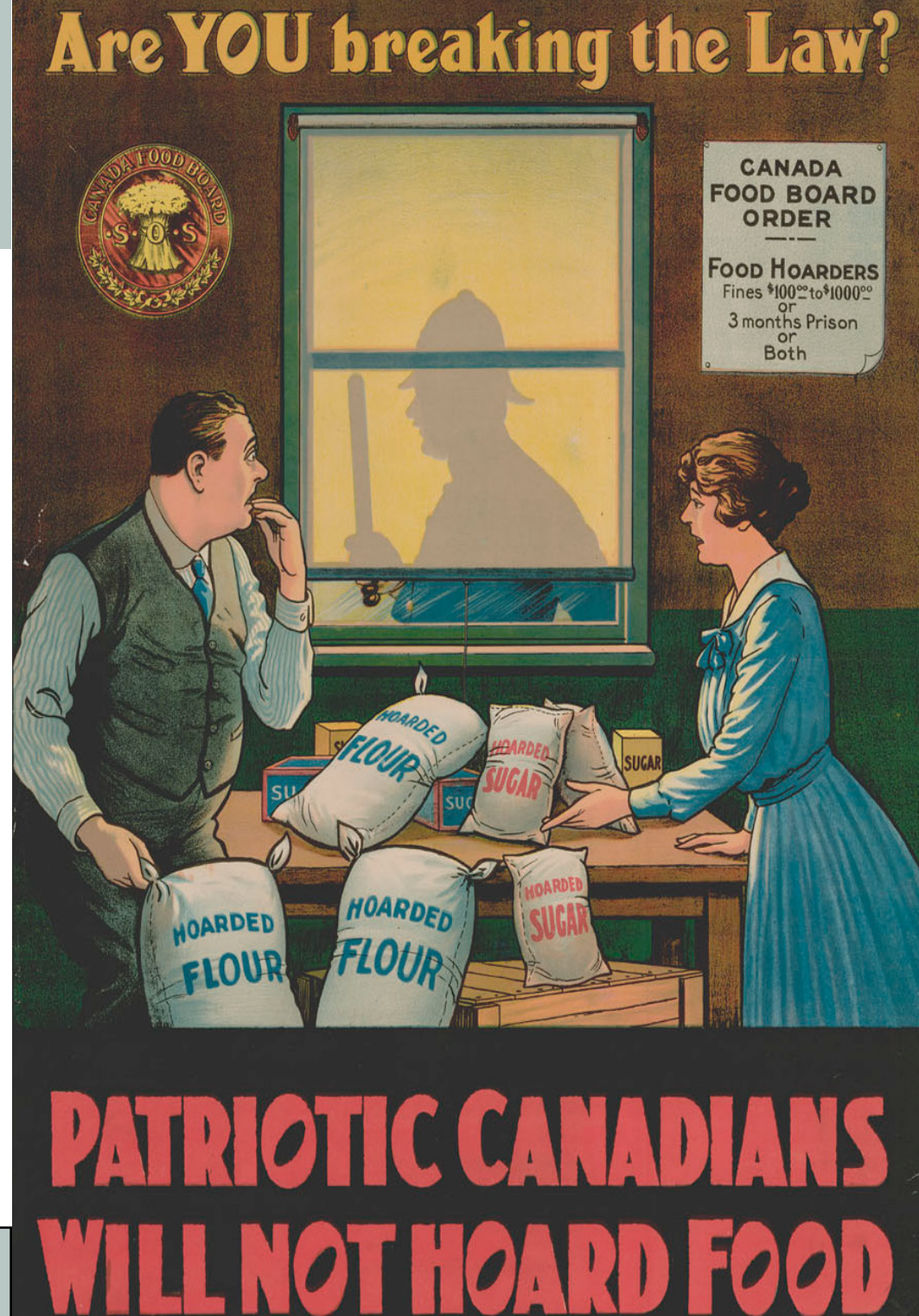
The days and weeks are blurring together so it's hard to keep track of what day it is and whether I remembered to put pants on today. Very important questions. Luckily my wife keeps an eye on me. And in these days of social isolation, I have been thinking about the Interpretive Centre's exhibit, "Women's Work."

Last year we presented an exhibit that looked at the South Etobicoke community during World War II and, specifically, the contributions of women in local factories and munitions plants.

The exhibit included reprints of World War II propaganda posters that reminded Canadians that they all had a role to play in the war effort and listed specific ways for them to help.

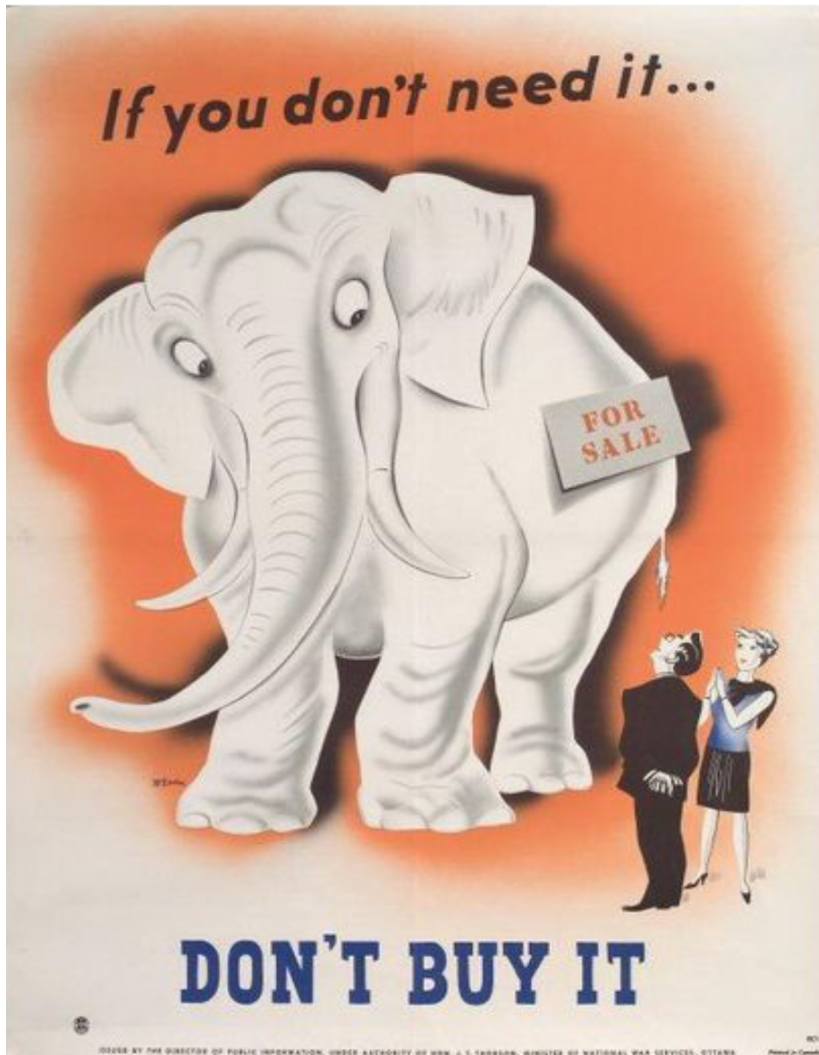
In the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, I heard a lot of comparisons to the pandemic's similarities to war: a "battle with an invisible enemy." Many people began stocking up on food and household cleaning supplies – especially, for some reason, toilet paper. These actions led to shortages and empty store shelves in the early days of our collective quarantine.

(Opposite) World War I Poster, Acc. No. 1983-28-704, Library and Archives Canada



The internet was quick to respond with posts of those same War posters we had shared in Women's Work gaining renewed popularity, their 1940s messages sounding relevant to our latest crisis. The Toronto Public Library then asked the **Toronto subReddit** to adapt wartime posters to the current pandemic.

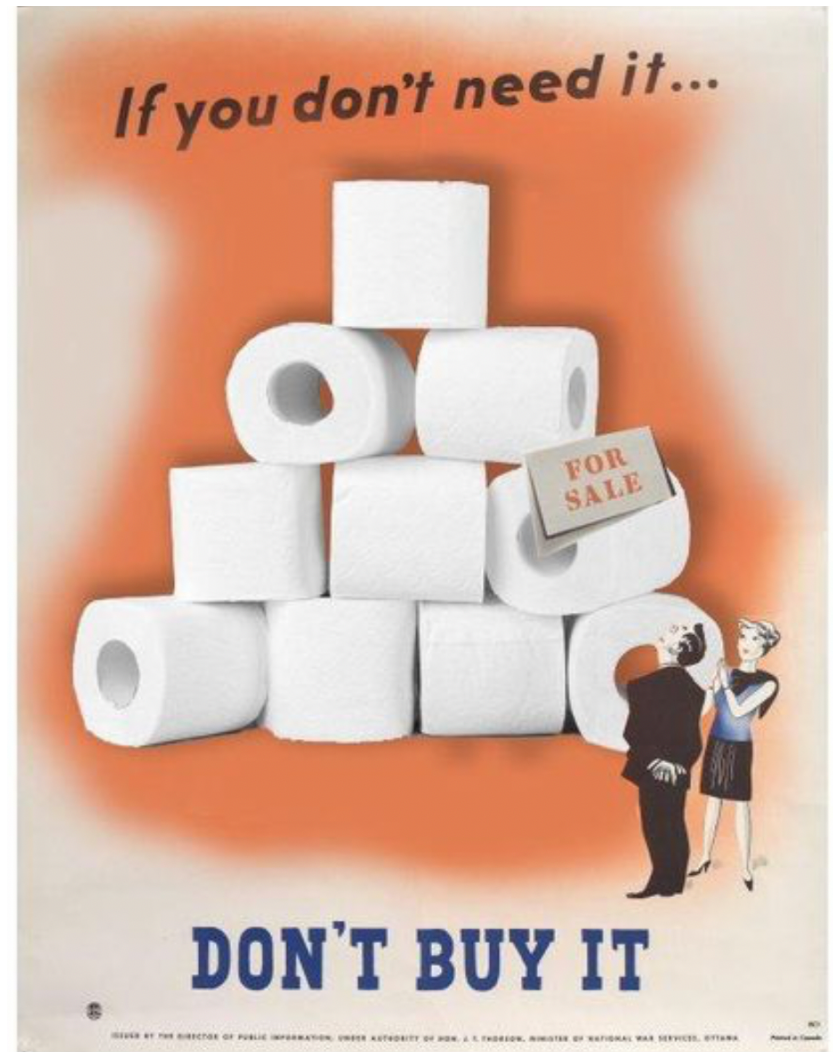
"If you don't need it ... don't buy it" 1941 McLaren, Toronto Public Library



41.

Talented folks exercised their photoshop skills and came up with new classics, including my favourite, "Don't Buy It." You can pick your favourite by visiting the Toronto Public Library Blog entitled: "***We Asked Toronto to Remix Wartime Posters for the Current Moment — See the Amazing Results.***"

Remix Poster 2020 Reddit User u/etc-etc-, Toronto Public Library



42.

Others still borrowed the style of the older artwork but re-imagined the posters with familiar characters and messaging, such as the work of artists **Chris Moet** and **Michael Slotwinski**.

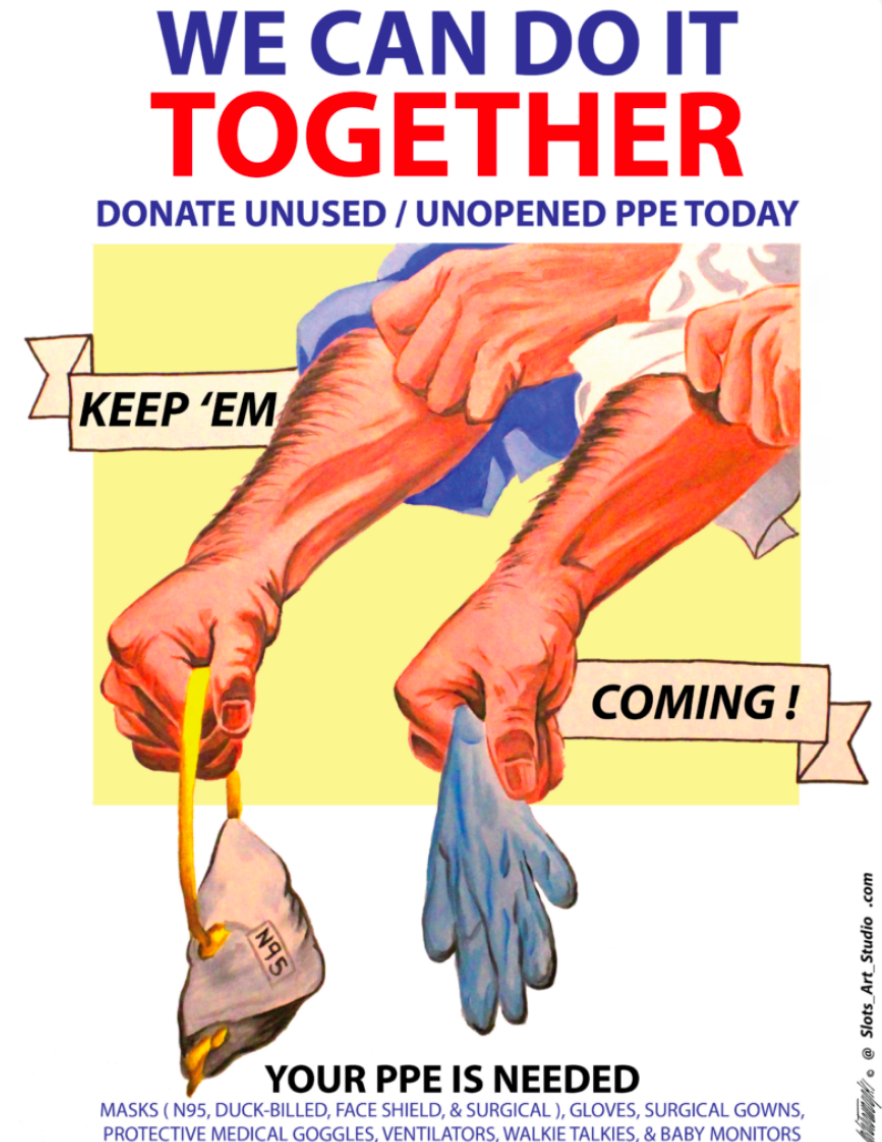
These poster (re)designs got their messages out by using a format that evokes memories of some of the greatest struggles of the 20th century.

(Below) "Flatten the Curve" Poster, Chris Moet, Chris Moet Artist



(Opposite) Corona Virus Poster 2020, Michael Slotwinski, Slots Art Studio

Even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau used the analogy in Parliament: "There is no front line marked with barbed wire, no soldiers to be destroyed across the ocean, no enemy combatants to defeat. The front line is everywhere: in our homes, in our hospitals and care centres, in our grocery stores and pharmacies, at our truck stops and gas stations" (11 April 2020).



Reviewing the Pandemic History of the Hospital

However, is it accurate to compare the current pandemic to war time? On social media, a few Veterans I know have shared their thoughts on social media comparing how being in military service is similar to being in quarantine, I've summarized here:

- A lack of toilet paper;
- Following instructions;
- Restricting the size of social groups;
- Constantly changing instructions;
- Information is out of date as soon it is received;
- Being told what to do in your free time;
- Standing in long queues to get food;
- Carrying a mask around all the time;
- Your favourite bars are off limits;
- Travel restrictions.

Today however we are facing this threat largely alone with few social outlets to help us through. Many of us have Netflix, but after a while it proves to be a poor substitute for social breaks with friends and family. I for one am looking forward to being able to slowly emerge from the quarantine to find some semblance of normal.

Jim Tate

The Question

As we locked the doors at the Interpretive Centre in March and began to adjust to remote work in response to the current COVID-19 crisis, I found myself reading through the annual reports of the former Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital with a renewed curiosity: What impact did previous pandemics have on the Hospital?

The Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital was in operation from 1890 until 1979. During this period, Canada faced four pandemics, all influenza-based:

1890 Russian or Asiatic Flu

1918 Spanish Flu

1957 Asian Flu

1968 Hong Kong Flu

Given that the campus of the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital is only a short distance from the dense population found within the City of Toronto and the institution's persistent battle with overcrowding, I assumed that I would find deep scars left by each of the pandemics within the Hospital's history.

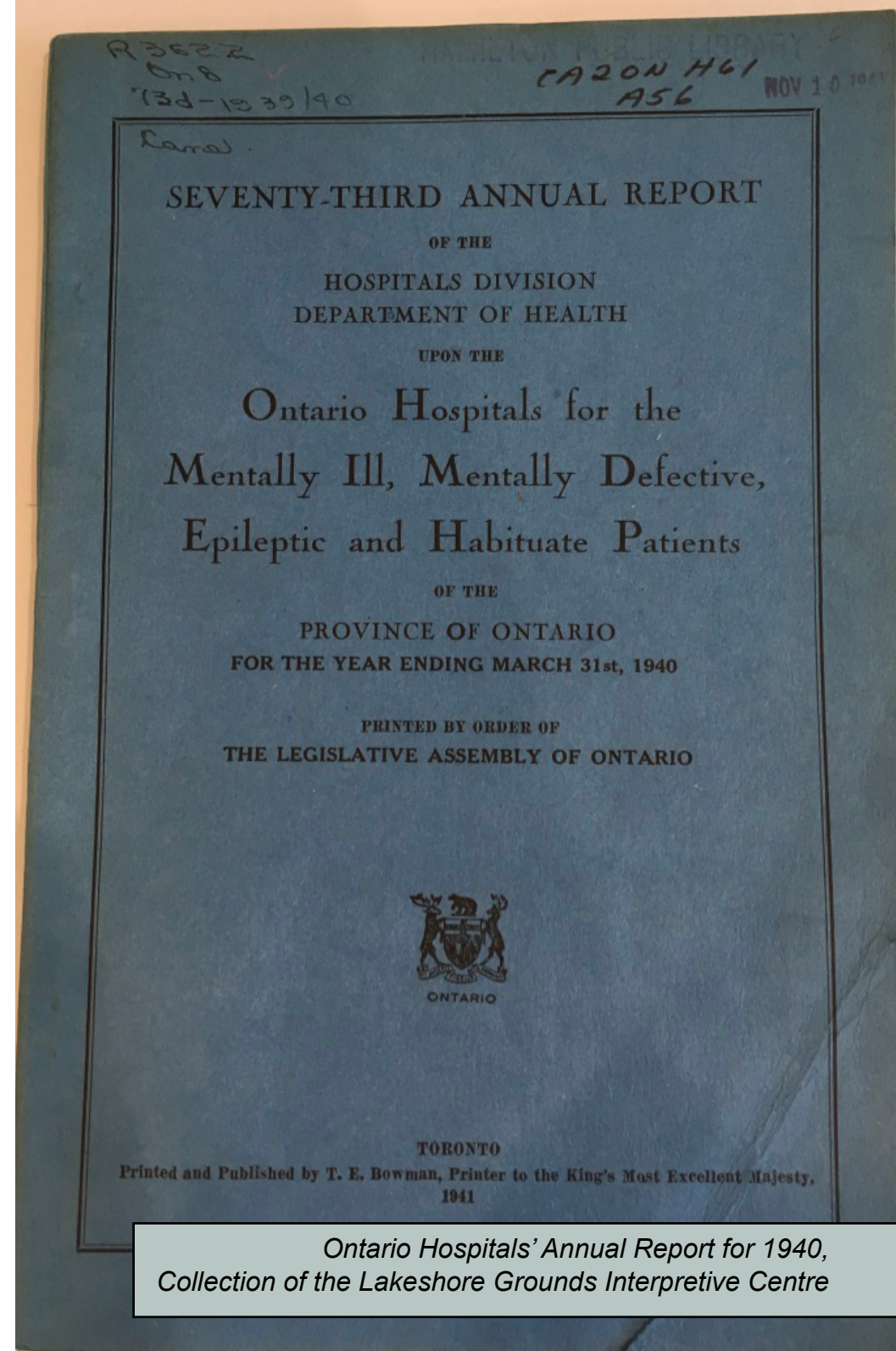
The Sources

Although I would like to blame my limited sources on archival restrictions caused by our current quarantine situation, there are very few records still in existence from which I could draw an analysis. As such, I've relied heavily on the annual reports from the Hospital which were published in the Legislative Assembly papers along with more general province-wide reports from the Registrar-General and Department of Health for Ontario.

To add salt to the wound: by the mid-twentieth century, the individual hospital reports in Ontario were replaced by a joint provincial report that consists primarily of statistical tables. I found no mention of either the 1957 Asian Flu or the 1968 Hong Kong Flu within these documents. As a result, I was forced to confine my search to the 1890 Russian Flu and the 1918 Spanish Flu (at least for now – I always hold out hope for new sources to emerge).

The Short Answer

So what did I find? The short answer is: there seems to have been little-to-no direct impact on the former Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital as a result of either the 1890 or 1918 pandemics. But as with all history, the longer answer provides a much more interesting (and unexpected) story.



*Ontario Hospitals' Annual Report for 1940,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre*

The Long Answer

The Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital officially opened as the Mimico Branch Asylum on January 20, 1890 – right as the province of Ontario was at the peak of an outbreak of the Russian Flu. *The Globe* estimated that 42%, or nearly 500,000 people, were infected in the City of Toronto alone. The vast majority of those infected in the province would recover, although subsequent waves of influenza would revisit the province in 1892 and 1894.

When the institution first opened, it was a branch of the Toronto Asylum. As a branch, the institution's news was reported as a subsection of the **Toronto report**. As might be expected, the focus of the early reports is therefore on the opening and continued construction of the new institution – no mention is made of the ongoing pandemic in relation to Mimico whatsoever.

In actuality, only the **London** and **Hamilton** asylums make any direct mention of the pandemic: both reported high rates of infection but no deaths among their patient and staff populations in 1890. For its part, the Toronto Asylum make no specific mention in their report but does list “La Grippe” as the cause of death in the case of one patient in their **1890 statistical tables**.

Although surprised by the relatively minor impact of the larger global pandemic on these institutions, I moved forward in time through the reports anticipating that my hypothesis would hold for the Spanish Flu.

The Spanish Flu first arrived in Canada in 1918. In that first year, Ontario reported the highest ratio of deaths in the history of the province with a 12.9% increase over the previous year. City centres were hit particularly hard, with the Registrar-General for Ontario estimating that although cities formed only 38.7% of the total population for the province, they represented 47.1% of the deaths from influenza in 1918 – this was rationalized as “a natural result of herding together, as is the situation in every city” (***Report upon Births, Marriages and Deaths for the year 1918, p. 5***).

By this period, Mimico had officially separated from Toronto and was operating as an independent institution like any of the other regional mental health facilities in the province. The reports I was able to draw on were therefore more detailed than those for the earlier nineteenth century period.

At first glance, Mimico's Superintendent, Dr. N. H. Beemer, shared my concerns. His **report for 1918** was prepared during the early stages of the Spanish Flu's arrival in Canada and as such he was understandably apprehensive. Nine men and 28 women were already infected at the time he was writing – but with 75 more patients than they officially had capacity for, Beemer anticipated continued spread as a direct result of overcrowding. He did, however, draw hopeful attention to the architectural layout of the Mimico campus and predicted that the separated cottage buildings would prove advantageous in curbing the spread – at least in comparison to its sister institutions where the bulk of the populations lived within a single structure.

Like the earlier Russian Flu, the Spanish Flu came in waves, affecting Canadians most severely in the spring of 1918, the fall of 1918, the spring of 1919, and again in the spring of 1920. But Beemer made no additional mention of the ongoing pandemic in his official reports to the province until 1920 when nine admissions during the year were listed as being “directly traceable to the exhaustion succeeding Influenza” (*Annual Report of the Ontario Hospital, Mimico for 1920, p. 75*).

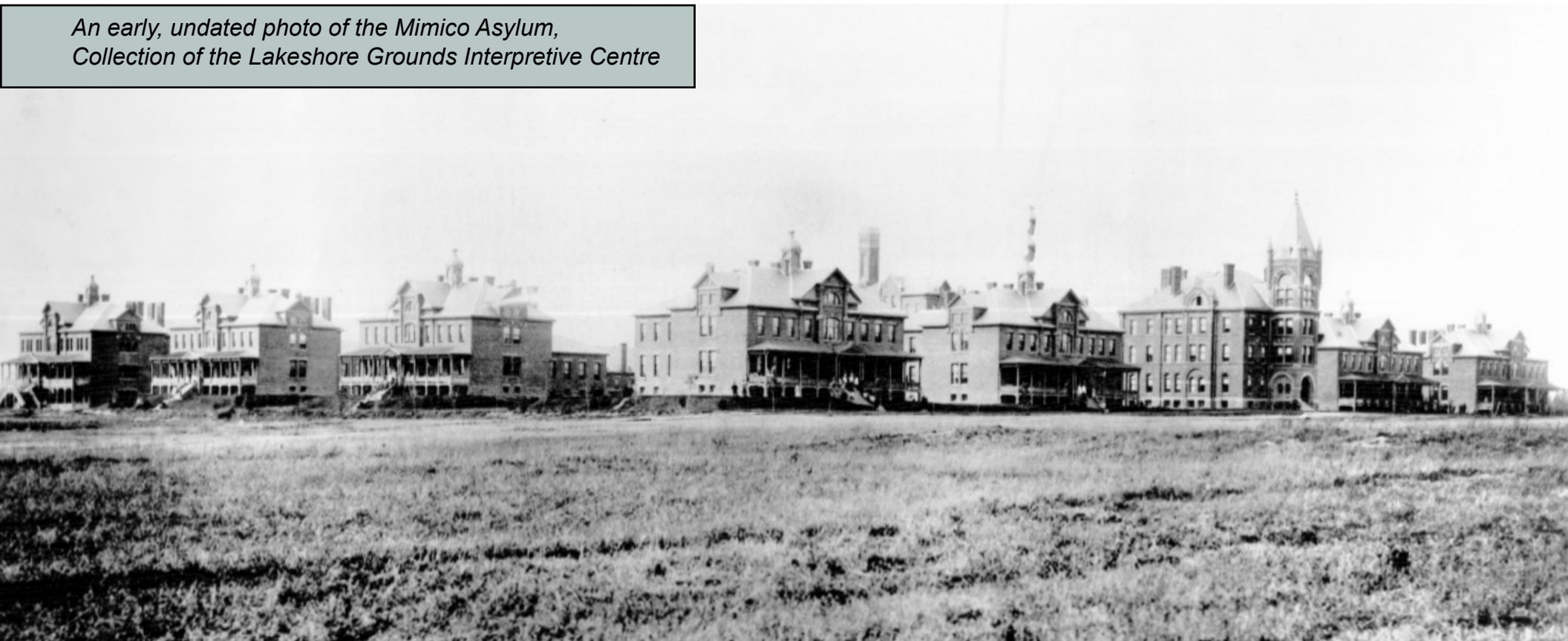
Although 13 of the 60 deaths faced by the institution in that year were attributed to pneumonia – a possible complication of influenza – no direct attribution is made to deaths by the pandemic. In fact, Beemer’s focus in 1920 was on an altogether different virus.

*An early, undated photo of the Mimico Asylum,
Collection of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre*

The Unexpected Answer

The Spanish Flu left a devastating mark on the world: the virus killed an estimated 50,000+ individuals in Canada between 1918-1920; at least 10,000 of these deaths occurred within Ontario. Worldwide the estimated impact of the virus ranges from 17-100 million deaths.

In mid-November 1919, the Mimico Asylum began to limit visits by family and friends with a complete quarantine in place roughly a month later. The cause of the restrictions was not the continued concerns of a new wave of influenza, but instead an outbreak of Smallpox that was present within the City of Toronto and surrounding communities.



Smallpox had spread through the institution previously, with **a temporary quarantine** being issued in 1904 to limit its spread. In 1919, with a population over the official bed capacity and the virus present in homes only a short distance away, Beemer brought the restrictions into place. In addition, all staff and patients who were considered to be at risk were vaccinated (no specification is given as to which individuals were deemed to be at higher risk).

When the virus failed to breach the institutional walls, Beemer attributed the accomplishment to the combination of quarantine measures and vaccination – but an additional, unintended benefit also resulted:

“The quarantine regulations imposed on account of the small pox were beneficial in an entirely different way, namely in affording equal protection to the patients against the epidemic influenza which became so serious in the early months of 1920” (*Annual Report of the Ontario Hospital, Mimico for 1920, p. 76*).

And with those words, the question of the impact of global pandemics on the Hospital was brought to an anticlimactic conclusion. No further mention is made of the Spanish Flu in the annual reports after 1920 and, as mentioned, no note of the 1957 or 1968 pandemics was found in the available sources. In many ways the outcome is a relief: it is comforting to think that the population of the institution – be they patients or staff – escaped the spread of the virus within the campus itself.

Never quite content with a simple answer though, I had to probe the reports further.

The Next Question

When reading the annual reports – whether they be for Mimico or one of its sister institutions – there are a host of recurrent topics that are given considerable attention which seemingly have no direct connection to mental health care but are instead the product of an institutional world. Fire risk and the technology adopted to combat it is one example; the “general health” of the institution is another.

Mental health institutions were purposefully isolated worlds. In the nineteenth century they were explicitly intended to run as self-sufficient villages under the adopted philosophy of moral treatment – and this model remained at the core of their later developments. Although their boundaries became increasingly permeable, they were, in many ways, cut off from the surrounding community.

Reading the repeated fear from superintendents surrounding the spread of disease across the institutional population year after year in the annual reports, I expected to find that the isolation and tight quarters would negatively result in petri dish-like conditions for virus transmission during the wider influenza pandemics.

We Need Nature

Instead, it seems that this isolation protected Mimico – and the neighbouring institutions across Ontario – from more devastating results. But the yearly concerns of disease had to stem from somewhere.

“Somewhere” on the larger scale would, of course, be represented by innumerable case examples of viruses or bacteria spreading through institutions during the history of the institutionalization of mental health care. But my interest is in the local question: what drove the persistent concern of infectious disease at Mimico?

Initial evidence suggests that it is a larger, multi-year battle with two separate bacterial diseases: Typhoid and Tuberculosis. But a deeper dig into the reports is still needed to understand their full impact (and I’ve already *far* exceeded the word count allowance Nadine gave me for this issue...) – stay tuned for more in the next edition of *Shore Stories*.

Jennifer Bazar

Nature has always had a calming effect on me, especially when I am in Colonel Samuel Smith Park. Weather permitting, it has become a daily routine for the past 11 years. My first avian encounter in the Park was with a group of Goldfinches who played hide and seek with me in the pine trees. They made me laugh - and that started my birding journey.

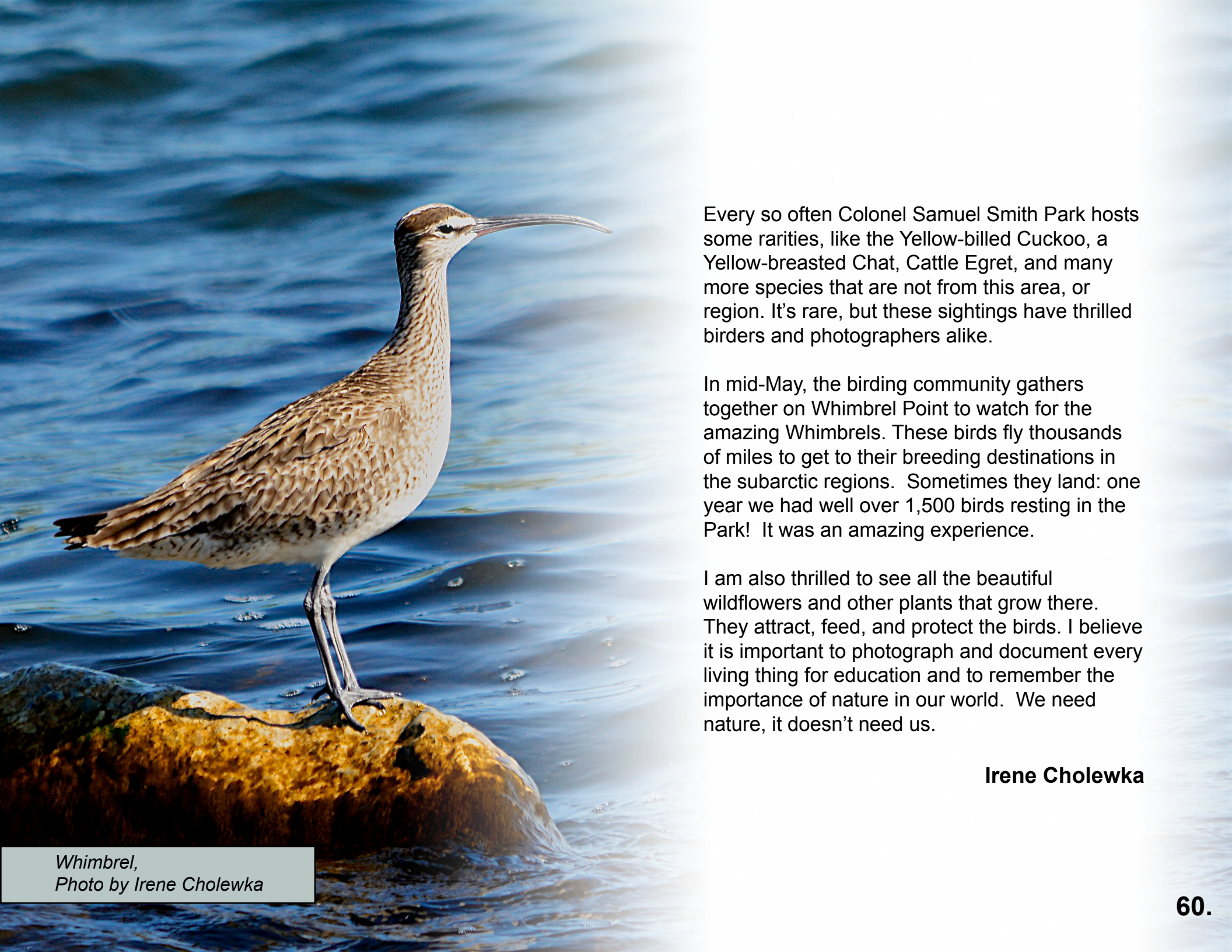
Every time I go to Colonel Samuel Smith Park, there is always something new to see.

So, here it is now, nearing the end of May and I am sure that spring migration is well underway. But with many of us staying home to stay safe this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, watching migration will be a bit different.

Every Spring, the Park comes alive with the beautiful sights of jewel-coloured warblers and the constant calling of the Red-necked Grebes. The Park is host to many diverse species of birds, reptiles, and mammals.

*Red Necked Grebes,
Photo by Irene Cholewka*





Every so often Colonel Samuel Smith Park hosts some rarities, like the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a Yellow-breasted Chat, Cattle Egret, and many more species that are not from this area, or region. It's rare, but these sightings have thrilled birders and photographers alike.

In mid-May, the birding community gathers together on Whimbrel Point to watch for the amazing Whimbrels. These birds fly thousands of miles to get to their breeding destinations in the subarctic regions. Sometimes they land: one year we had well over 1,500 birds resting in the Park! It was an amazing experience.

I am also thrilled to see all the beautiful wildflowers and other plants that grow there. They attract, feed, and protect the birds. I believe it is important to photograph and document every living thing for education and to remember the importance of nature in our world. We need nature, it doesn't need us.

Irene Cholewka

*Whimbrel,
Photo by Irene Cholewka*

Behind the Screens

Curious to know more about our contributors? Join us “behind the screens” as we introduce the writers and article contributors to this issue of *Shore Stories* listed in the order that their article appears.

Shore Stories is a collaborative zine and we deeply appreciate the time and creativity shared by our friends, colleagues, and contributors.

We’d love to hear your thoughts. If you have feedback, questions, or would like to contribute to a future issue, please let us know! Send us an email to info@lakeshoregrounds.ca.

Thanks for reading!

From your friends at the
Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre



Lakeshore Grounds
Interpretive Centre

Designed and Edited by Nadine Finlay

Terry Smith



Terry is a founding member of the community group **Friends of Sam Smith Park**. The group came together fifteen years ago to defend the environmentally sensitive areas of Colonel Samuel Smith Park.

Terry is a passionate believer in the power of easily accessible nature to support mental, emotional, and spiritual health, especially for stressed out city dwellers. Through FOSS, Terry works to promote a more passive appreciation of the Park’s natural areas and the wildlife that call it home, honouring the therapeutic heritage of the Lakeshore Grounds, a place for quiet healing.

Alex Sein



Alex is a Humber student, studying in the Bachelor of Commerce program. You may recognize him by his distinctive moustache or impressive collection of pins and buttons. Alex is a natural-born storyteller who has traversed Toronto, guiding tours for TIFF, Humber College, Tour Guys, Urban Adventures, and of course the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre.

From a keen personal interest in movies and TV, working with TIFF, and as an extra in several productions, Alex usually has the most up-to-date information on what is filming in the area!

Jennifer Bazar



Jennifer is the Curator of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre and is, like everyone, currently adjusting to life in social isolation and working remotely. In recent weeks, Jennifer has followed all the classic pandemic patterns: she gave up quick on the “I will clean everything” vibe and is instead fumbling through home haircuts, learning to bake sourdough, and tending to a recently planted balcony farm.

Her greatest joy though has come from volunteering as a foster home for rabbits awaiting adoption through **Rabbit Rescue Inc.**

Nadine Finlay



Nadine is the Assistant Curator of the Lakeshore Grounds Interpretive Centre, and has recently graduated from the University of Toronto with her Master of Museum Studies and Master of Information on June 4th. You can read about her academic and professional work on her website: nadinefinlay.ca.

While social isolating, Nadine is tending to her indoor jungle of houseplants which are rapidly taking over every horizontal surface in her home.

Sheriza Anne de Guzman



Sheriza is a culture and heritage enthusiast, and recently completed an internship with the Interpretive Centre. To further her knowledge in the arts and culture, Sheriza studied Arts Administration and Culture Management at Humber this past year.

Originally from the Philippines, Sheriza lived in Singapore for eight years before coming to Canada. The thing she is most looking forward to is the amazing opportunities and wonderful experiences that this country has for her and her family.

Jim Tate



Jim is very happily retired. With the joys of retirement, he supports the Interpretive Centre as a volunteer, with specific interests in the film history of the campus. He is known for his keen eye in spotting scenes and angles that feature the Lakeshore Grounds.

His current claim to fame is that he is still 1-0 with Jennifer in ongoing the “Great Location Debate” which they engage in regularly when trying to pair photographs and film scenes to specific locations on the grounds.

Irene Cholewka



Irene is a local freelance nature photographer sharing her passion for wildlife with others through her photography. Her photos have been published in various nature magazines and travel booklets - and Irene’s photography has been featured in our Third Floor Gallery in 2017!

You can follow Irene at [@irenecholewka](https://www.instagram.com/irenecholewka) on **Instagram**, or see more of her work online at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ravynne40>



Experience History

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lakeshoregrounds.ca/shore-stories