



DUNDAS
MUSEUM &
ARCHIVES

UPDATE
SPRING
2023



NEW FEATURE EXHIBITION!

Valley of the Dolls



FROM THE CURATOR

DUNDAS MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

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Ten years ago this November, cheers rang out across the building as the bright red ribbon fell to the floor! The Dundas Museum and Archives had been closed for an entire year as our renovation and expansion project came to a successful conclusion. The guest of honour, and the man holding the scissors, was none other than the Honourable David C. Onley, Ontario's 28th Lieutenant Governor. When I heard the news of Mr. Onley's passing this past January, I was

quick to pull up the video of him cutting the ribbon at our re-opening. It was a memorable day made even more so because, just like our first opening in 1956, we had the Crown's viceregal representative to help us kick things off. One significant difference with the 2013 event was that we were celebrating the substantial improvements the Museum had made in physical accessibility. What better guest of honour for our event than the Honourable Mr. Onley,

who had spent decades advocating for the rights of Ontarians with disabilities. The memory of David Onley and his advocacy is a guiding example as we continue to review ways to make this community museum more welcoming, accessible and inclusive. If you should happen to need assistance while visiting us, have a question about accessibility, or have some suggestions on how we might improve, know that the Board and Staff are always here to help and listen. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

- Kevin Puddister
Curator/General Manager



Clare Crozier's grandchildren Levi and Abi hold the ribbon for Lt. Gov. David C. Onley.

Click [HERE](#) to view the video of our 2013 re-opening.

ON NOW (and coming soon!)

1st Gallery:

TWO STACKS

An honouring of Sophia Burthen (Pooley)

March 13th to
June 10th 2023

Pirie House:

OUR FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT

Karen Logan's solo exhibit.

April 18th to
July 1st 2023

Feature Exhibition:

"THE RAGIN' CANAWL" *The Story of the Desjardins Canal*

Opens June 17th, 2023

EXHIBITIONS

New Feature Exhibition: Valley of the Dolls *Extended - now until May 27th!*

“Why are there so many dolls?”

This is a question that was once often asked at the Dundas Museum. From the late 1970s to the early 2000s, visitors were confronted with a vast presentation of dolls on permanent display. Resting in cases, on shelves, and even on the floor, these dolls were so numerous and so striking that they tended to entirely eclipse anything else of historical interest on exhibit in the galleries.

The reason for all these dolls was one person: Olive Newcombe, who served as the Museum’s Curator from shortly after its opening in 1956 to shortly before her death in 2001. Over her lengthy career, Olive collected and recorded thou-

sands of Dundas artifacts, images, and archival documents, preserving their precious stories. It was her decision as to what made it into the collection and what didn’t. And while Olive had a powerful passion for Dundas’ history, she also had a passion for dolls.

With an idea of preserving the history of childhood more generally, Olive amassed a collection of hundreds of dolls, many of which had no Dundas connection, and accessioned them into the collection. She added these dolls to an enormous display in the Museum gallery, enthralling and terrifying generations of

Dundas schoolchildren (some of whom swore never to return).

After Olive’s death, the dolls were eventually catalogued and packed away in the vault, occasionally joined by new acquisitions from local donors. They have remained there ever since... till now!

Off display for over twenty years, the dolls of the Museum have become a Dundas legend in their own right.

- Austin Strutt
Exhibitions Curator



These photographs from the late 1980s show the doll display as it once looked, in what is now the Archives Reference Room.

This veritable doll wonderland left such a strong impression on visitors that it is often the only thing they remember of the Museum from this period.

STAFF

Kevin Puddister
Curator &
General Manager

Severine Craig
Collections Manager &
Assistant General Manager

Kelsey Haas
Archivist

Marley Beach
Administrative &
Marketing Coordinator

Anna Patterson
Education, Events &
Volunteer Coordinator

Austin Strutt
Exhibitions Curator

Museum Attendants
Victoria Caravaggio
Richard Griffin
Kaya Ryszczak

TWO STACKS:

An Honouring Of Sophia Burthen (Pooley)

A Special Art Exhibition
Facilitated by Artist/Writer
Andrew Hunter

MARCH 31 -

EXTENDED!
'til June 10th, 2023



The Dundas Museum & Archives proudly presents Two Stacks: an honouring of Sophia Burthen (Pooley), a special art exhibition facilitated by artist/writer Andrew Hunter and in cooperation with the Slavery North Initiative at the University Massachusetts Amherst.

Andrew Hunter spent years researching the life of Sophia Burthen (Pooley), a Black girl kidnapped from her family and enslaved in this area in the late 18th and early 19th century. His 2022 book 'It Was Dark There All The Time: Sophia Burthen and the Legacy of Slavery In Canada' explores the fragmentary details of Sophia's life as the basis for an insightful discussion of race, colonial trauma, and Canadian identity.

This travelling exhibition features the works of significant contemporary

Black and Indigenous artists from across North America, including: Tim Whiten, Anique Jordan, Ebtí Nabag (with Reighen Grineage), Shelley Niro, Kosisochukwu Nnebe, Camal Pirbhai & Camille Turner, Jeff Thomas, Chantal Gibson, C.S. Giscombe and Syrus Marcus Ware. The collection of pieces reflects on the life and legacy of Sophia Burthen (Pooley) and the practice of enslavement that remained legal in Canada until the 1830s.

Sophia's story is the only surviving firsthand account of slavery in this area. Born in New York, Sophia was stolen from her family along with her sister and sold to Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant. After several years Brant sold her in turn to Samuel Hatt of Ancaster. Samuel was the brother of Richard Hatt of Dundas. According to

her own account, Sophia was enslaved by Hatt for seven years before being told that if she made her escape there would be no attempt to bring her back.

Sophia's story exists today because she was able to live past the age of ninety, at which time she had her account published in Ben-

jamin Drew's 1856 book 'The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada'. The existence of her remarkable story only serves to highlight how many others have been lost.



Two stacks of "pancakes",
dyed with black walnut ink,
encased in glass.

By artist Tim Whitten.

EDUCATION & EVENTS



Above: The cardboard town brought to life by visitors during the Inside/Outside Festival.

Below: Exhibitions Curator Austin Strutt with the Eccles Auto Service sign advertising Family Day Fun.

We had a wonderful start to 2023 with our Inside/Outside Family Day Festival, with over 400 of our community members coming out to celebrate.

So far this year we've also welcomed the Girl Guides of Canada and classes from Providence Christian School. If you would like your classroom to visit the Museum, please visit our [Education page](#) to submit a request for programming!

We hope to see everyone out at the **Made in Dundas Family Festival**. Returning last year after a brief hiatus, it was our biggest yet, and we can't wait to bring you crafts, activities, music and more again this year. Mark your calendars for

Saturday, May 27th!

- Anna Patterson
Education, Events &
Volunteer Coordinator



Other events coming up...

April 22: Exhibit Opening- Our Fragile Environment, Karen Logan

May 13: Curator Conversations- Two Stacks with Andrew Hunter



Deadline to register is June 16th - contact jennifer@turnkeytravel.ca.

MUSEUM FUNDRAISER

Considering travel this fall? Turnkey Travel is offering another fabulous trip, this time to Portugal! Enjoy a 10-day exclusive group experience, with breathtaking seaside landscapes, fascinating historic villages, and remarkable food & culture. A portion of the proceeds will go towards supporting the Museum.

COLLECTIONS

ARTIFACT HIGHLIGHT: Schoenhut Piano Company

On display in our current Feature Exhibit, Valley of the Dolls, are examples from the Schoenhut Piano Company. The company was founded in 1872 in Philadelphia as the A. Schoenhut Company by German immigrant and woodcarver Albert Schoenhut. The company expanded, making wooden dolls and other figurines from 1903 to 1935. In 1911, they innovated the first wooden dolls with

posable spring joints. Despite this, the company went bankrupt in 1935, making examples of these dolls exceedingly rare today due to the short production period. The DMA is fortunate to have three Schoenhut dolls in its collection and two of their beautiful toy pianos. See them for yourself during our current Valley of the Dolls exhibit- extended until May 27th!

- Severine Craig
Collections Manager/
Assistant General Manager



Happening in the Pirie House:

Tuesday Noons:
(April, May, June)
Rotary Club
of Dundas

12:00-1:00pm
caldwell@silomail.com

Tuesday Evenings:
(April 25 & May 2,9,16)
Overflow Yoga

7-8pm: Yoga Flow
8-9pm: Beginner Yoga
overflowyoga@gmail.com

Saturday Mornings:
Mindfulness &
Movement

9:30-10:30am:
Dance Fitness Class
aguyatt7@gmail.com

ARCHIVES

In the Mail: A Curious Postcard from Mary Pirie

This real-photo postcard of Mary Robieson Pirie riding an ostrich is new to the Archives! Appropriately enough, this postcard and several letters written to Mary recently arrived by mail at the Museum from Janet Ross.

Although this photograph is unusual for our collection, similar photos are common, as there were ostrich-based tourist attractions in the southern United States during the late nineteenth century.

High demand for exotic bird feathers in fashion – and the decimation of bird populations in the wild – led to the rise of ostrich farms in California, Arizona, Arkansas, Texas, and Florida beginning in the mid-1880s. Some of these farms also operated as tourist attractions: offering tours of the operations, ostrich-cart rides and races, and photographs posed with taxidermy ostriches.



This photograph of Mary R Pirie on an ostrich appears to have been taken at one of the more famous destinations: Cawston's Ostrich Farm, in South Pasadena, California. Cawston's advertised its feathers regularly in women's magazines c.1900-1915.

Although it is mostly concealed, on the ground below Mary's ostrich a platform can be made out.

As demand for the feathers waned in the 1930s, many of the farms began to close.

Mary R Pirie was born in Dundas on December 17, 1873 to parents Margaret Ann Booth Pirie and George Mitchell Pirie. A talented watercolour artist, the Museum has several of her paintings in our collection as well as a collection of her letters and photographs. The postcard and letters recently donated to the Museum will be added to that collection.

- Kelsey Haas
Archivist



Mary R Pirie sitting on a taxidermy ostrich. An unidentified woman stands to her left.

Postcard of Mary Pirie from the collection of the Dundas Museum and Archives.

Additional history of ostrich farming from:

- Spennemann, Dirk H. R. 2021. "'Your's Truly': The Creation and Consumption of Commercial Tourist Portraits" *Heritage*, no. 4: 3257-3287. <https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage4040182>
 - Beyelia, Nicholas. 2019. "For the Birds: Edwin Cawston and the Farm That Invigorated Los Angeles" Los Angeles Public Library. <https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/blogs/lapl/birds-edwin-cawston-and-farm-invigorated-los-angeles>
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H.G. Bertram
FOUNDATION

The DM+A is grateful for the support from our
FRIENDS of the MUSEUM
and these major supporters



My name is Rachel Springer and I'm currently studying Museum & Cultural Management at Centennial College. I majored in Sociology and History and have a love for archival research, museums, and history, which brought me to museum studies. I currently volunteer at the Gardiner Museum so I am very excited to be a part of Dundas Museum & Archives- a community museum where I can gain a great deal of hands-on experience. Although I will only be here for a short 7-week period, I will be working on archival projects where I will be inventorying, cataloging and getting to see museum procedures first hand. I look forward to learning more of Dundas' rich history while getting to work alongside talented and passionate museum staff and community members.



My name is Kylie Tung, and I'm thrilled to be the new intern at Dundas Museum and Archives! I'm pursuing my post-graduate certificate at Centennial College, focusing on Museum and Cultural Management. From what I've seen so far, Dundas is a beautiful and welcoming community that is rich in history and culture. The museum provides an invaluable resource for exploring the history and heritage of the area, and I'm excited to learn more and contribute to the preservation and sharing of its stories. I feel incredibly grateful to be a part of this community. I'm looking forward to working with the team here and getting to know the visitors and members of this beautiful community. So if you see me around the museum, please don't hesitate to say hi!

OUR VISION

A welcoming space where the community can engage with Dundas' past.

RENT

The DMA Education Centre is available to rent for your event!
[Contact us today.](#)

DONATE

In-person, by mail or at support.dundasmuseum.ca

Your donation supports our ongoing work and collections.



DUNDAS
MUSEUM &
ARCHIVES

HOURS

Tues	10:30 am	4:30 pm
Wed	10:30 am	4:30 pm
Thu	10:30 am	8:00 pm
Fri	10:30 am	4:30 pm
Sat	1:00 pm	4:00 pm
Sun & Mon	Closed	

VISIT US

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