



DUNDAS  
MUSEUM &  
ARCHIVES

UPDATE  
SPRING  
2024



# DUNDAS CENTRAL

*A SCRAPBOOK OF MEMORIES*



DUNDAS  
MUSEUM &  
ARCHIVES

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# FROM THE CURATOR

The Desjardins Canal opened to great fanfare in August 1837 after years of fundraising and construction. Through a very labour-intensive process, a turning basin and approximately 4.5km canal was cut through the muck of Cooté's Paradise to the Burlington Heights. This would allow shipping from the great lakes to access the Port of Dundas more easily. In order to hold the silt and soil back from clogging the route, canal workers drove massive wood pilings into the mud.

When the Museum reopened from its major renovation and expansion in 2013, I was fortunate to tour the Royal Botanical Garden's Tys Theysmeyer through our gallery spaces and the original Desjardins Canal display. Tys offered that canal pilings would wash up from time to time on shore at the fishway, and that he would set one aside for us in the future.

Fast forward 10 years! Our Exhibitions Curator Austin Strutt is developing a large Feature Exhibition on the "Ragin' Canawl" and we reconnected with the RBG to finally retrieve an historic piling. Measuring an impressive 18.5' and weighing roughly 200lbs soaking wet, the piling had degraded over its estimated 200 years of use. The hand-hewn axe marks were still visible, but rot had taken hold in some areas and buried inside were ants... so... many... ants! Our hopes of unveiling the piling in our feature exhibition were dashed, but we knew this object would still make a great contribution to the permanent gallery.

To prepare the piling to enter the Museum safely, we employed the services

of a pest control company and several months of drying in the sun. The piling was then shipped up to Millgrove Sawmill where it was kiln-dried to remove excess moisture. Lastly, it was coated with a hardening agent and returned to the Museum.

Finally, after nearly a year from when we first picked it up near Princess Point at the fishway, Museum staff carefully installed it above the Desjardins Canal Turning Basin model in the permanent gallery for all to enjoy. Next time you're into the Museum, be sure to check out this impressive piece of Dundas' maritime history!

- Kevin Puddister  
*Curator & General Manager*



Kevin Puddister and Austin Strutt pose with the Museum's newest artifact, May 2023.



The canal piling in its new home, suspended above the Desjardins Canal model, May 2024.

# PROGRAMMING

## Black History Programming

This February nearly 300 local students and educators participated in our Black History Month programming by going on guided walking tours of Dundas. Emerging from the Museum's broader effort to learn about the historical Black experience and its profound impact shaping the Valley Town's history, the walking tour features stories about Dr. Anderson Ruffin Abbott, Sophia Burthen Pooley, and many others.

So, if you happened to notice groups of kids looking intently at Eva Skin & Beauty Centre on King Street West, they weren't booking their next spa; they were actually learning about W.G. Brown's barbershop, which he operated in that same building for an astounding 60 years from 1868 to 1928. Black History happens all year: feel free to contact us to book a guided tour or consider doing our self-guided tour!



*Matthieu Vallières guiding students from St. Augustine's Catholic Elementary School on the Black History Walking Tour.*

## Inside/Outside Family Day Festival

What do you get when you give kids unrestricted access to a copious amount of cardboard to build a fort? Chaos, that's what!

On Family Day the Museum was responsible for the "inside" portion of the Inside/Outside Family Day Festival with Dundas Valley Sunrise Rotary Club. Alongside the building of the giant box fort in the Pirie House, folks participated in less chaotic activities like paper doll collages and a 21 foot-long community mural as well as enjoyed free popcorn and hot chocolate.

Nearly 600 people attended—the largest draw for this event ever! This shows the extent that the museum serves as a community hub. It's also a reminder that volunteers help us make these events possible. We are grateful for them. If you would like to become a Special Events Volunteer, don't hesitate to reach out!

- Matthieu Vallières  
Programming Coordinator

**MADE IN DUNDAS:  
Family Festival!**

**Saturday, May 25th  
11 am - 3pm**

## STAFF

**Kevin Puddister**  
Curator &  
General Manager

**Severine Craig**  
Collections Manager &  
Assistant General Manager

**Austin Strutt**  
Exhibitions Curator

**Marley Beach**  
Administrative &  
Marketing Coordinator

**Kelsey Haas**  
Archivist

**Matthieu Vallières**  
Programming Coordinator

**Museum Attendants**  
Richard Griffin  
Dakota Owens

# EXHIBITIONS

## You're Invited: Historical Wedding Dresses

Dearly beloved... We are gathered here today to view a remarkable assemblage of wedding dresses from the collection of the Dundas Museum and Archives. Though they were sometimes worn only for a day, wedding dresses are often amongst the most cherished of heirlooms. This exhibition, running from February 9th to May 11th 2024, featured examples from the Dundas Museum's vast collection of wedding attire. Donated over the years by local families, these stunningly preserved dresses bring to life over two centuries of fashion and social custom, with a particular focus on the identities of the women who wore them.



Jean Bertram Pirie, 1907.

Mary Bain Bertram, 1907.

### Which dresses are your favourite?

It is so hard to choose, but the two dresses which form the centrepiece to the exhibit hold a particular fascination for me. Both are extremely beautiful dresses worn by members of the Bertram family in February of 1907. The weddings of Jean Bertram Pirie and Mary Bain Bertram were the social events of the season in Dundas. Their gowns may seem similar at first, but they are covered in extremely subtle ornamentation and design elements which make each unique. Both dresses represent the height of Edwardian finery and elegance, but what makes them so exciting to display is that each one is paired with a full-length portrait from the wedding day which is printed life-size on fabric banner. Being able to see Jean and Mary in their nuptial finery as if they were standing right next to their dresses is a very powerful experience which, for me, helps to bridge the span of a century and bring these dresses to life.

- Austin Strutt  
Exhibitions Curator

## Happening in the Pirie House:

### Monday Mornings:

NIA Dance Fitness

9:00-10:00am

[mary@borntomove.ca](mailto:mary@borntomove.ca)

### Tuesday Evenings:

Overflow Yoga

8:00-9:00pm:

[overflowyoga@gmail.com](mailto:overflowyoga@gmail.com)

### Wednesday Evenings:

Mindfulness &

Movement

7:00-8:00pm:

Dance Fitness Class

[aguyatt7@gmail.com](mailto:aguyatt7@gmail.com)

### Saturday Mornings:

Mindfulness &

Movement

9:30-10:30am:

Dance Fitness Class

[aguyatt7@gmail.com](mailto:aguyatt7@gmail.com)

# EXHIBITIONS

## Dundas Central: A Scrapbook of Memories

Good Morning Class! School is in session at the Dundas Museum from May 24th to Sept 14th. Join us for DUNDAS CENTRAL: A Scrapbook of Memories, an all new exhibit exploring the long history of Dundas' oldest public school. Built in 1857, Dundas Central School has been the stomping grounds for generations of Dundas youth. Its storied halls have witnessed countless young pupils enter the world of education from before the Confederation of Canada, through World Wars, the great Depression and a transforming valley community.



## Okay Class, time for a Pop Quiz!

1. What was Dundas Central School originally known as?

- A) The Union School
- B) The General School
- C) The Ward School
- D) The Provincial School

2. The building was designed by local architect James Scott, who designed what other Dundas building?

- A) St. Augustine's Church
- B) The Dundas Post Office
- C) Dundas Town Hall
- D) The Carnegie Library

3. What famous individual was expelled from Dundas Central over practical jokes?

- A) William Lyon Mackenzie
- B) Sir William Osler
- C) Dave Thomas
- D) Rev. Mark Young Stark

4. In 1907 Miss Margaret Carey changed places with her friend while the teacher was out of the room. When the teacher returned, what was her punishment?

- A) 10 minute time out
- B) Sitting on the floor with no chair
- C) Writing an apology
- D) The strap

- 
1. Answer: A – It was known as the Union School because it combined both Public and Grammar (High) Schools in one building.
2. Answer: C - James Scott designed the Dundas Town Hall in 1848, and the two buildings share many architectural similarities.
3. Answer: B - Sir William Osler was expelled from Dundas Central after a series of practical jokes, including herding a flock of geese into a classroom, disassembling desks and reassembling them on the roof, and yelling obscenities at the principle through a keyhole.
4. Answer: D - The strap was the most common punishment for all classroom offenses in the early 1900s, including everything from "roughhousing" to "carelessly folding paper during class".

# ARCHIVES

## ARCHIVAL HIGHLIGHT: *Valley City Manufacturing*

Since September, we in the archives have been hard at work processing the papers of the Valley City Manufacturing Company.

Processing this collection has been a challenging (but rewarding!) experience: we started with more than thirty bank-sized boxes

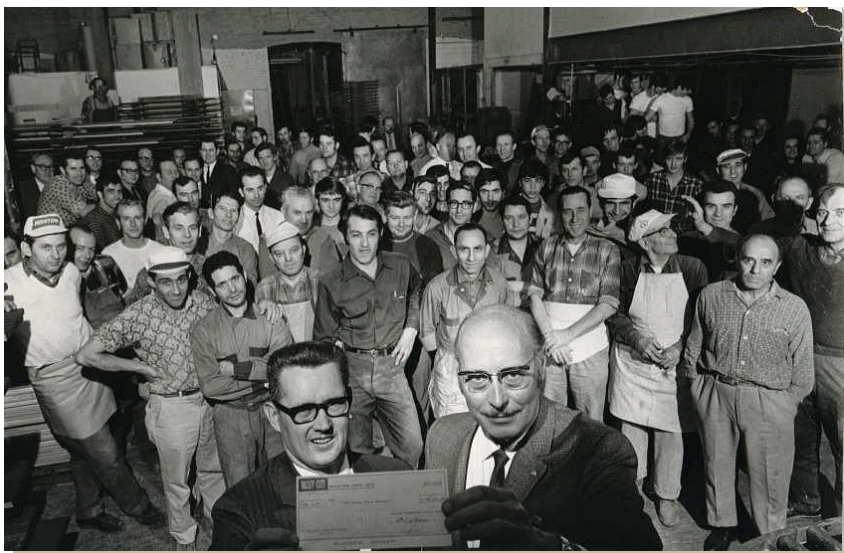
of prospective archival material, which included more than three thousand photographs and two thousand architectural diagrams of products created by Valley City (along with thousands of other documents). We have spent several months cataloguing, sorting, and preserving these

materials in preparation for their addition to our archives.

A highlight in processing the collection has been viewing the photographs taken of staff and events through the years. While the furniture plans exemplify the type of craftsmanship Valley City

was known for, the photographs provide snapshots into the culture of the company. As an outside observer, it is a fascinating look at the camaraderie shared between Valley City employees and the clear effort the company put into rewarding their hard work over the years.

- Nia Langdon  
Archives Assistant\*



*Employees of Valley City Manufacturing, 1968*



*Employees at Valley City Manufacturing, 1976*



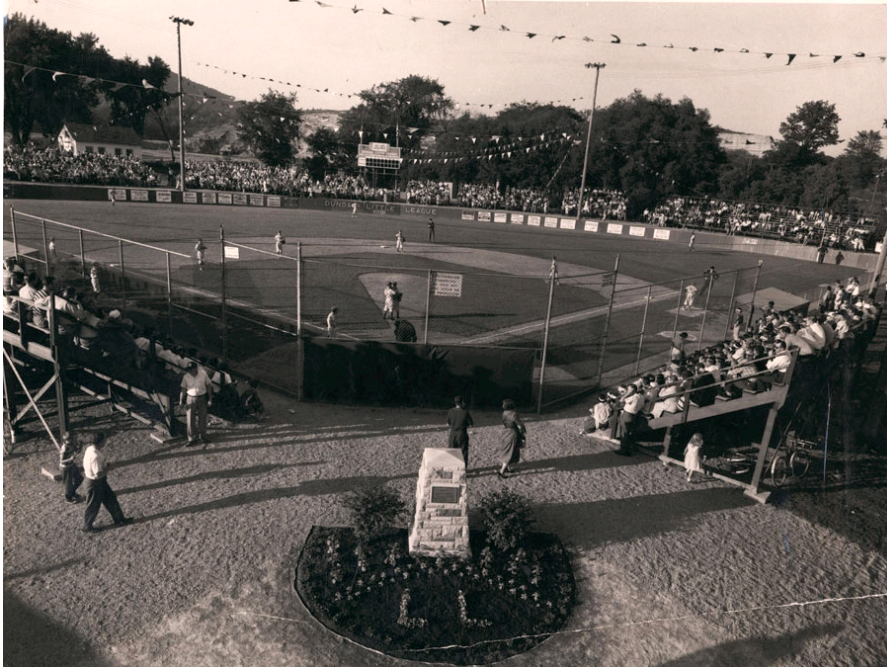
*Valley City Manufacturing Baseball Team, 1980*

Nia Langdon's position as Archives Assistant was made possible through the Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage program, administered by the Canadian Council of Archives and funded by the Government of Canada.

Canada

# COLLECTIONS

## ARTIFACT HIGHLIGHT: *Dundas Little League*



P-3961: Photograph of a Dundas Little League Game, c.1960s

The Dundas Little League began in 1954 with a group of volunteers. Their first baseball diamond was built on King Street East in the late 1950's and the League has been going strong ever since.

These items are a small number of Dundas Little League artifacts the Museum has collected through the years. Be sure to get in touch if you have any memories or memorabilia from Dundas Little League you would like to share!

- Severine Craig  
Collections Manager &  
Assistant General Manager



2023.012.002: Catcher's Mitt



2023.005: Dundas Little League Pin



2018.012.009: Dundas Little League Patch, 1963

H.G. Bertram  
FOUNDATION

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



## ON NOW (and coming soon!)

### 1st Gallery:

#### LEGO DUNDAS

March 12th -  
June 15th, 2024

#### DUNDAS TENNIS CLUB: 100 years

June 19th to  
August 10th, 2024

#### ROCKTON FAIR

August 21st to  
October 12th, 2024

#### 1st DUNDAS SCOUTS

October 16th to  
November 16th, 2024

### Pirie House:

#### HISTORIC PRINTS

Archival Images from the  
Collection of the DMA

March 28th to  
May 25th, 2024

#### DUNDAS PHOTOGRAPHY INITIATIVE: Through Our Lens

May 29th to  
August 3rd, 2024

#### LAUREN WOODS

August 7th to  
October 3rd, 2024

### Feature Exhibition:

#### YOU'RE INVITED

Historic Wedding  
Dresses

February 9th -  
May 11th, 2024

#### DUNDAS CENTRAL A Scrapbook of Memories

May 24th -  
September 14th, 2024

## 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](https://support.dundasmuseum.ca)

Your donation supports  
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## 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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