

# The York Pioneer Update

Annual Dinner May 22'07  
... *historic Campbell House venue*



*Painting of Campbell House from the museum's website*

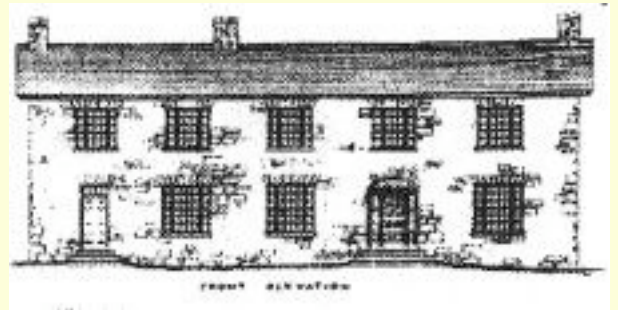
**Tues. May 22 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.**  
**\$55.00/person**  
Campbell House (University & Queen; Osgoode station)  
Choose from three main courses & two desserts. Hear a great guest speaker! Last year's dinner sold out -- don't be disappointed! **Deadline: May 14**  
Book early with Diane Reid at **(416) 483-0907**  
or  
[dreid@couttsranch.com](mailto:dreid@couttsranch.com)

## York Pioneer Launch

"The Wadsworth Letters: I Remember Them Well"  
**Sunday, April 15 2:00 - 4:30 P.M.**

Join Charles Wadsworth, in surprisingly good health at age 200, as he reads from his letters of 1815 - 1857. Charles joins us to mark the book launch of "The Wadsworth Letters" a joint project of the York Pioneers and Montgomery's Inn. The Wadsworths owned a mill on the Humber River near Weston in what is now Etobicoke.

Light Refreshments FREE to one and all.  
(drawing below from the Inn's website)



**MONTGOMERY'S INN (416) 394-8113**  
**4709 DUNDAS ST. WEST, ETOBICOKE**  
[www.montgomerysinn.com](http://www.montgomerysinn.com)

## CELEBRATORY WALKING TOUR

Campbell House was moved to its present site 35 years ago (picture at right, from the Campbell House website, shows the move).

A two-hour walking tour celebrating the move begins at Toronto's First Post Office (260 Adelaide Street East), Saturday, March 31, 12:30 p.m. sharp.

Cost is \$15/person.

Contact  
Muddy York  
Walking Tours at  
(416) 487- 9017  
or Campbell  
House at (416)  
597-0227



**York Pioneer Members**

**Acknowledged for Literary Efforts**

\* New YPHS board member  
Dorothy Duncan has published  
Canadians at Table: Food,  
Fellowship and Folklore.  
Dundurn, 2006

\* Jeanine Avigdor was  
mentioned in the  
acknowledgments of Dorothy  
Duncan's latest book, cited just  
above.

\* Katharine Williams had a  
short article on the Horner family  
(prominent Alderwood pioneers)  
published in a local newspaper,  
The Lakeshore Villages, vol. 3. No.  
3, August 2006.

*- thanks to  
Kathy Williams  
for the above items*

\* Marjorie Stuart, in her  
column in the newsletter of the  
Ontario Genealogical Society,  
recommended and cited two  
articles by Katharine Williams  
which Kathy wrote for the  
Etobicoke Historical Society  
newsletter.

**TWO GREAT (& FREE) OUTINGS**

**Market Gallery Exhibit, St. Lawrence Market *March 3 - June 10***

**The Spadina Expressway Affair      Wed to Fri :10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Sunday: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**THA HERITAGE SHOW CASE: City Hall Rotunda, all day, Friday, April 20'07**

**Time to Renew Your membership**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_



**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Single \$18      Family \$21      Life \$200**

**Make cheques payable to YPHS**

**Box 45026, 2482 Yonge Street**

**Toronto, Ontario, M4P 3E3**

**[yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com)**

**THANK YOU for your support!**

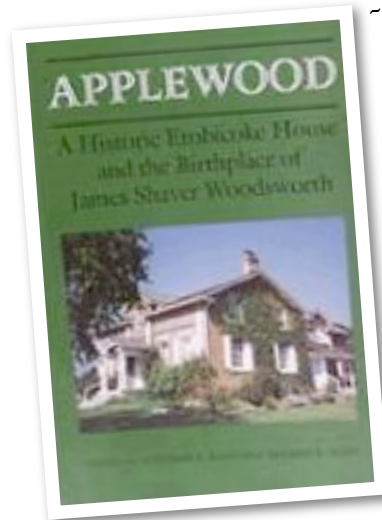
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year we decided to do something a little different for the Annual Meeting of the York Pioneer and Historical Society. Rather than meeting in our usual place, the North District Public Library, we held our meeting at a historic site. Applewood House, or the Shaver Homestead, in Etobicoke was both an interesting and attractive place to get together for the Society's first event of 2007. The house, dating from the mid 19th century, is a beautifully restored historical building which is well furnished with Canadian antique furniture. Mr. Douglas Willoughby provided an excellent historical sketch of Applewood's history, including how the house was preserved through the initiative of local citizens. What was most remarkable about the story is that the project was done without government grants, and the programming of the restored house for weddings (365 in 2007) and office space pays the bills for operation, maintenance and redecorating. This is a great success story and a bit of inspiration for our own group as we continue to consider how to better use the Eversley Church in King Township. Another highlight of the event was an impressive table of home-baked treats and

accompanying refreshments prepared by our talented volunteers.

For this year's YPHS Board of Directors I am pleased to welcome two new board members, Dorothy Duncan and David Raymont. I would also like to say thank you and welcome back to our many returning board members who continue to be the backbone of our Society and who contribute so much of their time and energy to our activities and administration.

*-George Duncan-*



Left: illus. from the Applewood Shaver Homestead website

### NOTE:

**Next Board Meetings: March 25, April 29 & June 10, 2007**

**Please contact any board member if there is something you wish us to address.**

**THE UPDATE IS PUBLISHED FOUR OR MORE TIMES A YEAR. PLEASE CONTACT EDITOR AUDREY FOX AT (416) 656-0812 OR [AUDREY.FOX@MAC.COM](mailto:AUDREY.FOX@MAC.COM)**

**You can also reach us at our new e-mail address:**

**[yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com)**

**The York Pioneer and Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.**

## Toronto's Mayoral Elections

by Katharine Williams

As we all know, November 13' 2006 was "election day" in the City of Toronto and surrounding areas. Over 170 years ago, approximately 9,000 Torontonians were also concerned about the outcome of their first municipal election. Many factors led up to this historic event. Two men, each powerful in a different way, and each enemies of the other, were to have a profound influence on the city and province.

John Strachan, wealthy and dignified, was part of the ruling class by virtue of his membership in the Executive and Legislative Councils. A self-proclaimed aristocrat, and archdeacon, he helped to run Upper Canada.

Strachan's rival was William Lyon Mackenzie, an eloquent speaker and writer, as well as a defender of the poor and a fighter for justice. It is he who dubbed the ruling elite, "The Family Compact". Mackenzie's revolutionary opinions were published in his newspaper, *The Colonial Advocate*. From his printing press, located several blocks from John Strachan's mansion, came scathing editorials targeting Strachan as the "Governor's jackal", among other stinging criticisms.

Mackenzie's writings caused Torontonians to consider choosing sides. On one side was the Family Compact (also known as the Tories), rich and powerful and hoping to stay that way. On the other side were some liberal-minded citizens (referred to as "Reformers" by many) who suggested as early as 1822 that the town become a city with the democratic right to hold general elections. For the most part Reformers were ordinary citizens, such as farmers and small business merchants, but some were wealthy and respected men like Jesse Ketchum and Robert Baldwin, a doctor's son.

By 1826 members of the Family Compact were running out of patience with the harsh reviews published in *The Colonial Advocate*: the electoral system was unfair and undemocratic; too much land (including vast acreage held by the church and the army) occupied by wealthy landowners; too much power being held by too few.

The situation came to a head, when on the night of June 8, 15 sons of the wealthy elite broke down the door of Mackenzie's newspaper office in an attempt to shut down the controversial newspaper. They had waited until they knew Mackenzie was out of town - his young apprentices and family members were hopelessly outnumbered and defenceless during the surprise attack. The infamous "Types Riot" ended with the type (small blocks of metal with raised letters on one end) being thrown into Toronto Harbour.

Jesse Ketchum advised Mackenzie to sue the perpetrators. Perhaps the fathers of the guilty men thought that one of their peers, the presiding Chief Justice William Campbell, would be lenient towards the 15 aristocratic males. They were proven wrong when Judge Campbell awarded Lyon about \$3000 in damages. Ironically, the 15 young men went on to become lawyers, judges and politicians themselves!

On March 6, 1834 the Town of York was incorporated under the name City of Toronto (meaning the "place of meeting"), with the passage of "4th William IV. Chap. 23". As well as the name change, this act essentially extended the limits of the Town of York, with the prime intent of the act stating that provisions would be put in place for elections of: mayor, aldermen and common councilmen. Barely three weeks after "4 William IV" was passed, the first municipal election in the new City of Toronto was held on March 27, 1834.

Realizing the citizens would be better served with some boundary limits, Toronto was divided into five wards, all named after patron saints. St. Lawrence was named after the patron saint of Canada, while St. George, St. Andrew, St. Patrick and St. David represented the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales respectively. An "open" election was held -- that is anyone was entitled to vote after meeting various conditions, including property holdings, age and sex (women were unable to vote then). All voters made their selections known on a verbal basis (no secret ballots then either). The Court House on the north



side of King Street, just west of Church Street was one venue used for voting, as well as in some of the city's most popular hotels, such as the Ontario House, Falvey's, Wright's, and Elliott's.

Forty-one gentlemen ran for a one-year term, as either Reformer or Tory vying for the position of alderman and common councilman; two of each were to be elected in each of the five wards. (It appears that aldermen and common councilmen shared much the same duties). The mayor (then called chief magistrate) was selected from the 20 newly elected officials, in order to head up the new council.

Although the members of the Family Compact were most likely quite concerned with this new electoral approach, they may have felt quite confident they would hold on to power. Imagine their surprise when the Reformers elected 12 and the Tories 8.

Dr. John Rolph was elected to the city's first council, and although listed as a Reformer, seemed to be acceptable to most of the Tories; indeed, he appeared to be all set to wear the mayor's chain of office. However, after finding out he did not have total support, he left in a huff and never did serve.

Another blow was dealt to the Tories, when William Lyon Mackenzie, surely the most reviled of all the Reformers, was chosen to head up the new council, thereby becoming the city's first mayor. For its city hall, the newly established Toronto inherited what had been used for years as little York's Town Hall. Portions of the building were also used as a market. The St. Lawrence Hall now sits on this site.



His Worship Mayor Mackenzie gave the new city its coat of arms: a shield with an Indian leaning on one side and Britannia leaning on the other, topped by a beaver perched on a crown. Updated versions of Toronto's crest now appear in City Hall. As we have seen, the city's first election was a hotly contested and hard fought event affecting 9,254 Torontonians. Today, the citizens of Toronto can reflect on an early community's strength, spirit of the people, sense of heritage and its traditions of 172 years ago. Let us hope that Toronto's politicians elected last November live up to the expectations of Mayor Mackenzie when he recommended a motto for Toronto - a motto that still stands today: "Industry, Intelligence, Integrity".

## TORONTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The THA's AGM is Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm at the Historic Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 106 Trinity St., near King and Parliament Street. The AGM is an opportunity to renew acquaintances and make new ones and to hear a speaker.

This year Karolyn Smardz Frost speaks about her new book, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*.

This is the first entirely new biography of a fugitive slave since the

Civil War and is being published simultaneously in the U.S. and Canada.

You are in for a delightful talk about Karolyn's 20 years of researching the story of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn.

For this meeting THA is working in partnership with the Schoolhouse, so we are expecting a large crowd. To reserve a seat for the evening, you must be in attendance at the brief

AGM which will be held in the actual School Room, beginning at 7:00 pm sharp.

***Our connection to this event?***

**The YPHS is a member organization of the THA ~ and a photo of Blackburn's horse-drawn cab, credited to the YPHS collection, is in Karolyn's book.**

**Karolyn will sign & sell her book this evening.**

**COTTAGE VISIT**



**July '02 Cottage being moved**

**June 16, 2 p.m., come to the Tollkeeper's Cottage, on the northwest corner of Davenport & Bathurst, for a tour & refreshments. Below is a little history.**

The cottage is owned by a nonprofit local history group, The Community History Project (CHP), founded by Jane Beecroft in 1983. CHP research has established that Tollgate #3 operated from at least 1850 (although probably earlier); experts have tentatively dated the cottage itself to 1835. An 1875 painting by Arthur Cox shows the tollhouse on the east side of Bathurst; a later sketch by artist Marmaduke Matthews shows it on the west side, by then missing its front porch and a rear addition.

By 1895, the cottage was sitting near Howland Avenue, two blocks east of its original site, destined to become a family home. Over the years, the cottage was drywalled inside, windows covered over and others cut in, and its roof and exterior covered with asphalt siding.

In 1993, the Howland lot was about to be redeveloped; luckily, a neighbor knew the history of the cottage and contacted CHP. Over

the next three years CHP research verified that the humble "shack" was, indeed, a rare tollkeepers cottage, believed to be the only one in Canada. As important, it was determined that the cottage is an extremely rare example of vertical plank construction. The cottage's planks are two inches thick and are up to 36 inches wide, vertically aligned.

The developer sold the "eyesore" (as many area residents dubbed it) to CHP for a dollar; the city permitted the fragile structure to be moved to the TTC's Wychwood car barn yards (near St. Clair Avenue) in 1996.

The next six years were an ongoing struggle to insure the cottage against fire, secure it against vandals, lessen the weight on its fragile frame and raise funds to move it to a permanent site. Thousands of hours of research and manual labour were poured into the cottage and a deal was made with the city to return the cottage close to its original location. (The small park site is leased for a nominal \$2 a year.)

On July 7, 2002, a joyful parade of CHP members, volunteers, local politicians and area residents accompanied the house movers who carefully and slowly moved the cottage out of the Wychwood site, south on Christie and east on Davenport to its new home. Many hours later, the little cottage was gently lifted onto its new foundations.

*For more details about the restoration of the cottage, go to [www.tollkeeperscottage.ca](http://www.tollkeeperscottage.ca)*

**YPHS Calendar**

March 25 Board Meeting  
 April 15 York Pioneer Launch, details on front page

April 29 Board Meeting

May 22 Annual Dinner, see front page

May 26-27 Doors Open at Scadding Cabin.

June 10 Board Meeting

June 16 2 p.m. Tollkeeper's Cottage. Details at left. FREE

**HELP NEEDED**

EDNA RIGBY



Please contact Edna if you can help at Scadding Cabin during the Doors Open weekend or during the CNE tel. (416) 494-0503

DIANE REID



Be sure to call Diane (at right in picture) if you plan to attend our great dinner at Campbell House.

Her numbers are on front page.

MELANIE MILANICH



Melanie is keen to connect the YPHS with other historical groups. If you have e-mail addresses for

groups that would like to receive our newsletter, let her know at

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