
Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Reviewing the Year

2022/23

President's Message

I am pleased to present the annual report for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO). It outlines our achievements during the 2022/23 fiscal year.

It was a noteworthy year for the Society. In the spring, we moved our office and archives from the Columbus Centre, our home since 2008, to space we secured at York University. The move, which was welcomed by York's Vice-President Research & Innovation, has many benefits. It has enabled us to retrieve and make accessible significant portions of our archival holdings that had been in storage off-site for more than six years. It brings us closer to the MHSO fonds in the Archives of Ontario and makes it more convenient for researchers to explore the interconnected collections in our two institutions. And it enhances opportunities for the Society to collaborate with York University on various archival and educational initiatives. We thank officials at the Columbus Centre/Villa Charities Inc., notably the former



The outdoor exhibition, *Lieux de mémoire du Quartier chinois : évoquer un quartier vivant*, highlighted the resilience and vitality of Montréal's Chinatown through a focus on six emblematic places.

the digitization of interviews in our oral history collections. I also want to acknowledge the operating funding provided annually by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

None of our successes in 2022/23 would have been possible without the people involved in the Society's day-to-day operations. My thanks, as ever, go to Carl Thorpe, Elizabeth Price, Dennis Moore, Carolyn Braunlich, Dora Nipp and Winston Loui.

President and CEO, Pal Di Iulio, for years of collegial hosting. We are also grateful for the efforts expended by Professor Lorne Foster, Director of the Institute for Social Research, in negotiating the agreement with York and by Professor Jean Michel Montsion, Director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, in orienting us to the university.

Although the move forced the physical closure of our archives for almost three months, we continued to provide research assistance and support for educational programming via virtual service. Engagement with a number of out-of-province researchers and involvement in several out-of-province initiatives proved particularly exciting. We were pleased, for example, to lend support to le Centre des mémoires montréalaises for its innovative outdoor exhibition project.

In 2022/23, we received a project grant through the Digital Access to Heritage Program that will allow us to continue

Professor E. Wayne Dowler
President

MHSO Achievements in 2022/23

Undertaking Collaborations and Providing Advice

Provincial

The efforts of the Heritage Interpretation Working Group concluded in 2022/23 with the opening of the new Toronto courthouse on February 28, 2023. We served on the Working Group for seven years, advising Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General on the development of appropriate and meaningful heritage interpretation themes and approaches. The courthouse is located in St. John's Ward, a densely-populated immigrant neighbourhood in the 19th and early 20th centuries.



A montage of images in the new Toronto courthouse depicting the diverse history of the site.

In 2022/23, based on extensive experience with our own program, we advised the Peterborough Museum and Archives on the establishment of a virtual volunteering program.

We continued our partnership with the Ontario Heritage Fairs Association (OHFA) in 2022/23. We were represented on the OHFA Board, and we gave a prize at each of the regional fairs held in April and May.

National

In 2022/23, we served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Coalition for Canadian Digital Heritage. The Coalition continues the work of the former National Heritage Digitization Strategy. Previously, we served on the Content Working Group and then the Advisory Committee for that body.

Collecting, Preserving and Increasing Access to Archival Material

In 2022/23, we continued our efforts to collect, preserve and increase access to primary source materials documenting immigrant, ethnic and Indigenous experiences.

Collection Donations

Several years ago, photojournalist and travel writer Ruth Lor Malloy approached the Society about donating an extensive collection of photographs produced for her blog, *Toronto Multicultural Calendar*. The born-digital images depict ethnocultural community festivals and events in the city. We concluded

an agreement in 2015 and, as captions were written by the donor and a preliminary catalogue was produced, approximately 31,000 photographs were transferred to the Society. A further 30,900 were transferred in 2022/23.

Collection Re-Arrangement and Re-Description

We continued work in 2022/23 on re-arranging and re-describing our collections in line with current archival practice. A seven-month student residency arranged through Toronto Metropolitan University's MA Program in Film and Photography Preservation and Collections Management (F+PPCM), as well as work undertaken by our Archivist, assisted us in this effort.

The F+PPCM Program student, Marzieh Benyasir, served her residency with the Society in 2022/23. Under our supervision, she worked on sections of the Ruth Lor Malloy Collection, operationalizing an approach for addressing the overwhelming quantity of often very similar images. She evaluated 1,884 photographs from 43 albums/series

spanning the years 2006 to 2009. She selected 1,251 images from the 1,884 to be inventoried and described. The remaining 633 were 'removed' from that process based on issues of redundancy, technical considerations, and assessments of content and aesthetic, cultural and historical value.

In 2022/23, our Archivist, Dennis Moore, undertook substantial collections management work focusing first on hardcopy newsletters and other assorted periodicals in our holdings, and then on hardcopy newspapers. As a result of his efforts, by April the newsletters had been reviewed and a comprehensive, item-level inventory produced for 1,259 titles created by/for 55 ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous communities. Similar inventory work was also undertaken for 242 hardcopy newspapers.

Contextual Content for the MHSO's Digital Archive

We undertook work in 2022/23 in support of future content uploads to our planned digital archive.

Our virtual volunteering program continued under the direction of our Development Manager, Elizabeth Price. In 2022/23, we produced 49 interview transcripts through the program, and we edited (either first



Khalsa Day parade celebrating the Sikh new year, 2009, Ruth Lor Malloy Collection.

or second edits) 58 draft transcripts. Thirty-six volunteers were active during 2022/23, and collectively they contributed 1,677 hours of their time to transcription and transcript editing work.

Providing Services, and Undertaking and Supporting Programming

In 2022/23, we continued to provide services, oftentimes virtually, and to undertake and support programming.

Research Assistance

Despite the service disruptions caused by our move, the oral history interviews, ethnic newspapers, historical photographs and textual records in our archives continued to attract researchers in 2022/23. In addition to making interviews available to the family members of narrators, we helped researchers access primary source materials on a wide range of subjects. Those our Archivist assisted included:

- a professor of sociology at Acadia University investigating early 20th-century labour migration networks, focusing in particular on African Caribbean migration to the Atlantic provinces;
- a freelance writer from Seattle conducting research on the Finnish community in Toronto prior to the First World War – mainly the experiences of tailors and maids – for an historical novel on Finnish immigrants to Canada and the United States;
- a professor of Indigenous studies at Lethbridge University exploring Indigenous engagement with and resistance to the Canadian-American border since 1924 and trans-border Indigenous activism;
- an assistant curator at Myseum of Toronto conducting research on South Asian and Muslim women for a multi-year initiative, The 52: Stories of Women Who Transformed Toronto;

This has been an unbelievable surreal experience! I can't tell you how much it has meant to us to be able to hear our mother's voice again. It was also surprising to hear her story which even my siblings, who are ten years older than me, did not know in detail. We are beyond thankful and grateful to you and your service to have given us this irreplaceable heartfelt experience. It has special meaning for me as my mother collapsed suddenly on September 5, 1997 and passed. ... This gift of hearing her voice was like having her here with me again. Lots of happy tears. Thank you for what your service has provided in reuniting families. It is priceless.

Daughter of Lucy Amberg



- a professor of history at the University of Guelph examining harvest cooking and women's roles in food preparation on tobacco farms in Norfolk County;
- a student in history at York University investigating how Italian Canadian immigrants, through their restaurants, cafes, grocery stores and banquet halls, and their work as food suppliers and importers, changed food culture in Toronto and the GTA after the Second World War;

- an urban planner with ERA Architects Inc. conducting research on pre-Confederation Black histories related to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood of Toronto;
- a student in Italian studies at the University of Toronto studying Italian Canadian author, radio personality and community activist, Gianni Angelo Grohovaz;
- an archivist at McMaster University comparing the Society's extensive interviews (over 18 hours) with Jewish union leader and political activist, J.B. Salsberg, with several interviews, focused on his involvement in the Communist Party of Canada, conducted almost ten years later; and
- a journalist serving on the Board of Back Lane Studios attempting to confirm and augment



information on several Chinese restaurants in Toronto for the organization's Mapping Our Memories project.

Educational Programming

In 2022/23, interviews with our CEO, Dora Nipp, and Board director, Professor Mark McGowan, were highlighted in, and in fact provided pivotal content for, a documentary film, *Beyond the Grand White Walls*. The film explores the experiences of household staff and workers, primarily members of ethnocultural and racialized communities,

Spadina House ca. 1905 during the time that it was the residence of the Austin family.

whose labour was essential in maintaining a grand lifestyle at Spadina House in Toronto.

We mounted two exhibitions – *Reflections: Images of Chinese Women in Canada* and *Many Rivers to Cross: The African Canadian Experience* – at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences held at York University in May 2023.

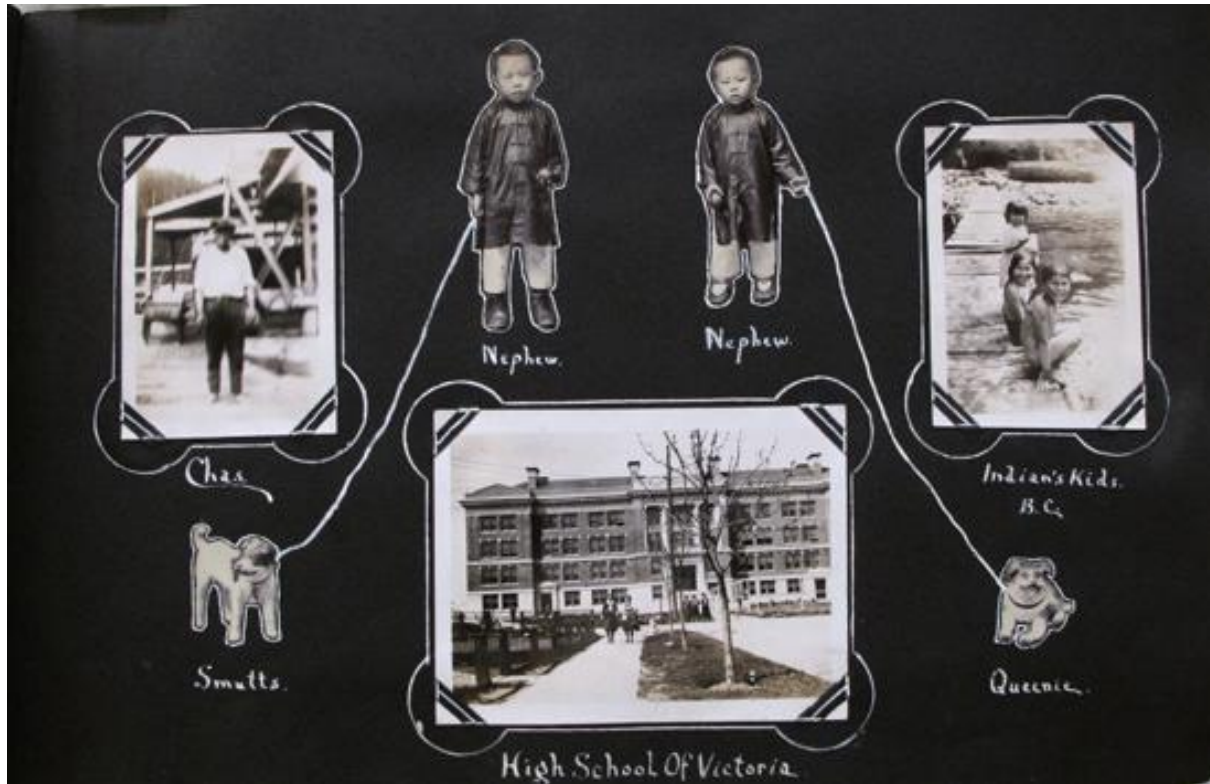


Four panels in the 27-panel exhibition, *Reflections: Images of Chinese Women in Canada*, on view at the Congress in May 2023.

Support for Educational Programming

In 2022/23, we provided images and interviews for use in cultural heritage and public history initiatives such as the following:

- the outdoor exhibition, *Lieux de mémoire du Quartier chinois : évoquer un quartier vivant*, mounted by le Centre des mémoires montréalaises as part of the City of Montréal's Dialogue with Chinatown project;
- the Legacy Awards honouring African Canadian talent, historical and contemporary icons;
- the online publication, *Photography in Canada, 1839-1989: An Illustrated History*;



A page from Lillian Lock's scrapbook, ca. 1920s, Keith Lock Collection, included in *Photography in Canada, 1839-1989: An Illustrated History*.

- the monograph, *Vanished Lands: Memory and Postmemory in North American Lithuanian Diaspora Literature*; and
- a heritage interpretation digital kiosk installation at the new Toronto courthouse.

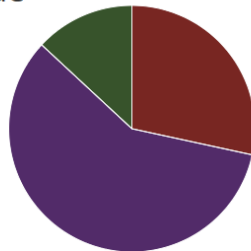
We also supported programming in the formal education system in 2002/23 by making groups of African Canadian and West Indian interviews available to Professors Melissa Shaw and Ben Nobbs-Thiessen for use in courses they teach at McGill University and the University of Winnipeg.

Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Financial Report

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

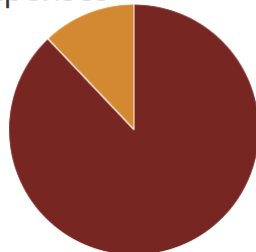
Revenue



- Receipted donations \$47,051.00 (28.40%)
- Non-receipted donations \$0.00 (0.00%)
- Gifts from other registered charities \$0.00 (0.00%)
- Government funding \$96,935.00 (58.51%)
- All other revenue \$21,684.00 (13.09%)

Total revenue: \$165,670.00

Expenses



- Charitable programs \$95,291.00 (87.92%)
- Management and administration \$13,098.00 (12.08%)
- Fundraising \$0.00 (0.00%)
- Gifts to other registered charities and qualified donees \$0.00 (0.00%)
- Grants made to non qualified donees (grantees) \$0.00 (0.00%)
- Other \$0.00 (0.00%)

Total expenses: \$108,389.00