

---

# **Multicultural History Society of Ontario**

---

## **Reviewing the Year**

---

**2023/24**

---

## 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 2023/24 fiscal year.

It was a noteworthy year for the Society marked by new beginnings and, sadly, a notable ending. Settling in after our move to York University, we spent considerable time in 2023/24 forging new relationships with staff at the Archives of Ontario (AO) and, through the efforts of Professor Jean Michel Montsion, Director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, with professors and students in York's Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. Numerous meetings were held to promote our extensive archival collections, inform new acquaintances about our work, and explore opportunities for collaboration. As the year ended, we were working toward creating descriptions that provided better explanations for researchers of the connections between the MHSO fonds in the AO and collections in the MHSO Archives. We were also discussing the possibility of establishing a community-university research cluster on migration studies at the Robarts Centre and developing a podcast series using the Society's interviews.

New beginnings also came into play in preliminary work we undertook in 2023/24 on our By-Laws. This work was prompted by the need to ensure that our governance documents were brought into compliance with the Ontario *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* (ONCA) by October 19, 2024. Jean Yves Pelletier, Elizabeth Price and I started to prepare new, rather than revised, By-Laws, and in June 2024 we brought a first draft to a meeting of the Board of Directors for discussion.

The Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library made a public announcement in March 2024 that it would no longer be hosting the 37 newspapers that the MHSO had contributed to the former *Multicultural Canada* website, later SFU's Digitized Collections. The newspapers had been openly accessible for more than 15 years and the withdrawal of a resource that researchers had come to depend on caused much consternation. As a result, the Society began efforts to secure alternative online hosting.

In 2023/24, we received project funding through the Documentary Heritage Communities Program administered by Library and Archives Canada and the Digital Access to Heritage Program administered by Canadian Heritage to undertake collections management work and digitize oral history interviews. Near the close of the year, we received notice that the Ontario Trillium Foundation had approved funding for the design and development of a new, searchable, online catalogue for our archival holdings. We are grateful for this support. I also want to acknowledge the operating funding provided annually by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

None of our successes in 2023/24 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.

Professor E. Wayne Dowler  
President

## MHSO Achievements in 2023/24

### Undertaking Collaborations and Providing Advice

#### **Provincial**

We continued our partnership with the Ontario Heritage Fairs Association (OHFA) in 2023/24. We were represented on the OHFA Board, and we gave a prize at each of the regional fairs held in April and May.



A student project at the Kingston Regional Heritage Fair.

#### **National**

In 2023/24, we continued to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Coalition for Canadian Digital Heritage (CCDH). Our Development Manager, Elizabeth Price, contributed substantially to the development and finalization of the CCDH principles. The principles were subsequently endorsed by the Canadian Research Knowledge Network, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries and the Ontario Council of University Libraries.

### Collecting, Preserving and Increasing Access to Archival Material

In 2023/24, we continued our efforts to collect, preserve and increase access to primary source materials documenting immigrant, ethnic and Indigenous experiences.

#### **Collection Donations**

A number of years ago, photojournalist and travel writer Ruth Lor Malloy approached the MHSO 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 59,450 photographs were transferred to the Society. A further 4,997 were transferred in 2023/24.

### ***Collection Re-Arrangement, Re-Description and Digitization***

We continued work in 2023/24 on re-arranging and re-describing our collections in line with current archival practice. A 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.



Sikh Khalsa, Toronto City Hall, 2009, Ruth Lor Malloy Collection

The F+PPCM Program student, Marzieh Benyasin, concluded her residency with the Society early in 2023/24. Under our supervision, she worked on sections of the Ruth Lor Malloy Collection, implementing 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 2023/24, our Archivist, Dennis Moore, continued a multi-year collections management effort focused on the hardcopy newsletters and newspapers in our holdings. By April 2024, a comprehensive, item-level inventory had been produced for 1,467 hardcopy newsletters created by/for 55 ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous communities. Similar inventory work had also been undertaken for 492 hardcopy newspapers.

The MHSO digitized 2,019 oral history interviews recorded on 2,985 audiocassette tapes in 2023/24. Web and access versions were created from the digital files we received from the preservation specialist we engaged, and all of the files for the 2,019 interviews were named using a standardized file-naming convention we have established.

### ***Contextual Content for the MHSO's Digital Archive***

We undertook work in 2023/24 in support of future content uploads to our planned digital archive.



Emil Fackenheim, later a renowned Jewish philosopher and Reform rabbi, was one of the internees in Canada.

Our virtual volunteering program continued under the direction of our Development Manager. In 2023/24, we produced 37 interview transcripts through the program, and we edited (either first or second edits) 56 draft transcripts. Thirty-one volunteers were active during 2023/24, and collectively they contributed more than 1,425 hours of their time to transcription and transcript editing work.

In 2023/24, a York University history student, Amar Ramić, serving an experiential education placement with the Society, produced an introduction to interviews in our core oral history collection with German and Austrian Jews who sought refuge in Great Britain during the Second World War and were subsequently interned in Canada as 'enemy aliens'. The 37 interviews, 32 with internees and five with Canadians who attempted to support them, were conducted by Paula Draper, a professional historian who has been involved in numerous Holocaust-related projects. The introduction will serve as a model for introductions to other identifiable groups of interviews.

### **Providing Services, and Undertaking and Supporting Programming**

In 2023/24, we continued to provide services, oftentimes virtually, and to undertake and support programming.

#### ***Research Assistance***

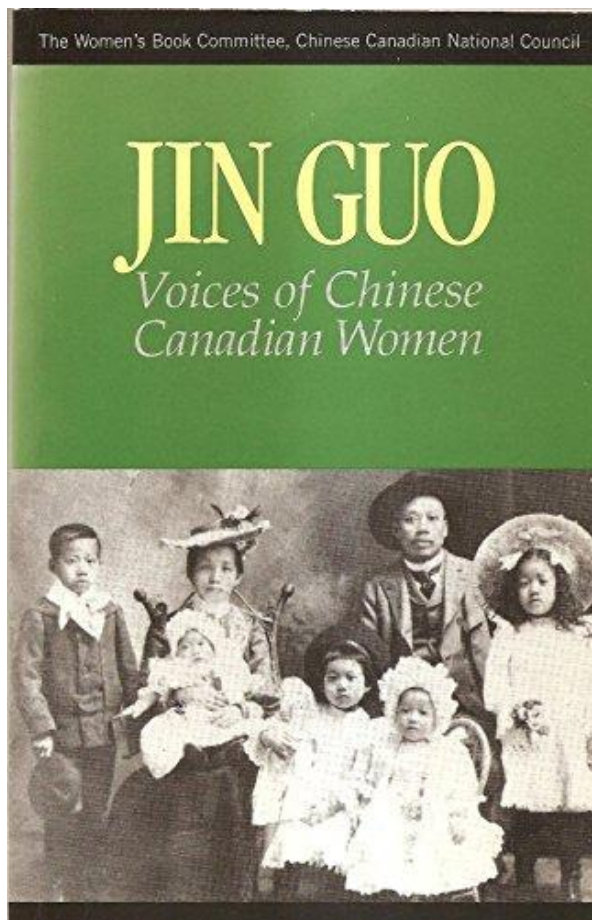
The oral history interviews, ethnic newspapers, historical photographs and textual records in our archives continued to attract researchers in 2023/24. In addition to making interviews available to the family members of narrators, we helped researchers access primary source materials on a wide range of subjects. Those our Archivist assisted included:

- a student in ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto studying Cantonese popular music, fandoms and diasporas, and intent on documenting 'cantopop' fan communities in the Greater Toronto area;
- the dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of New Brunswick conducting research on Armenian girls and young women who immigrated to Canada as domestics, particularly those who came in the aftermath of the Armenian genocide;

That is definitely my husband's grandparents! He is very eager to get that recording so that he can hear his grandparents speaking again. ... Thanks again for your help with this. My husband was very happy to hear his Papa again, and we are both in awe about how technology facilitates all of this!

*Granddaughter-in-law of Eero and Kaarina Ahvenniemi, Finnish settlers in Sudbury*

- a social documentary photographer conducting research on Peter Bosa, the first Senator from Ontario of Italian origin and one of the first non-anglophone/non-francophone immigrants to be appointed to the Senate;
- a freelance writer from Kirkland in Washington State seeking biographical material on several women interviewed in the *Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* project for use in a memoir on the Lore/Lee family of Victoria and Vancouver;
- a student in history at McGill University investigating housing (boarding houses, apartments, tenements, etc.) for Jewish, Italian, Chinese and Caribbean immigrants in St John's Ward in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Toronto;
- a professor in the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, based in Rethymno, Crete, investigating the monitoring of Macedonian immigrants by Greek associations in Canada, 1950-1989;
- a student in the Research Centre for the History of Transformations at the University of Vienna exploring the migration of Poles to Canada in the 1980s, many moving first as asylum claimants to Austria and then here as refugees;
- the interim director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto conducting research on the history of food distribution infrastructure in Toronto including public markets and their demise and on peddling and the commercial class struggle between pedlars and grocers;
- a student in history at York University, originally from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in northern Greece, studying Greek migration to Canada after the Second World War;
- a filmmaker, director and producer examining the history of Black music in Toronto created by musicians and artists who immigrated to Canada from the West Indies in the 1950s and 1960s;
- a lecturer in humanities at l'Université catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France looking for evidence of immigrant women's efforts to influence immigration policy after the Second World War and of ethical considerations related to their decisions to migrate;
- a community historian from Calgary, Alberta exploring the histories of the Polish Canadian community in northeastern Ontario and the Polish White Eagle Society;
- a student in education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education intent on documenting the histories of survivors of the Irish famine beyond their arrival in Canada;
- the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 conducting research on Black railway porters for updates to its permanent exhibition; and



- a student in history at McGill University investigating the impacts that the internment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War had on their families and the wider community.

### Educational Programming

In 2023/24, our CEO, Dora Nipp, spoke at a viewing of her film, *Under the Willow Tree: A documentary exploring the lives of Pioneer Chinese Women in Canada*. The viewing was hosted by Black Lane Studios and the Revue Cinema.



*Family Stories, Treasured Memories* on view in the Cobourg & Area Museum.

In mid-May, our exhibit, *Family Stories, Treasured Memories*, began a five-month showing at the Cobourg & Area Museum. It complemented the museum's primary exhibition, *Immigration: Our Stories – Our Community*, which featured 10 short videos of immigrants and their families who have made Northumberland County their home.

### Support for Educational Programming

In 2023/24, we provided images and interviews for use in cultural heritage and public history initiatives such as the following:

- the multi-faceted initiative, *Standing in the Doorway: Lived Histories and Experiences of the Chinese Community*, undertaken by the Markham Museum and York Region District School Board to mark

the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act ... the initiative, which included a website, a travelling community exhibition and an interschool pop-up exhibit, was subsequently awarded the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming and the Canadian Museum Association's Outstanding Achievement in Audience Outreach Award;

- the travelling exhibit, *The Suitcase Project*, when it was mounted by the Steveston Museum in the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society Building in Steveston, British Columbia;
- the 'Women of the Music' episode in the four-part documentary series on Black Canadian music, *Sounds Black*; and
- articles on African Canadian and Chinese Canadian subjects in publications ranging from the *Canadian Encyclopedia* to the *Journal of Architectural Education* to *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*.



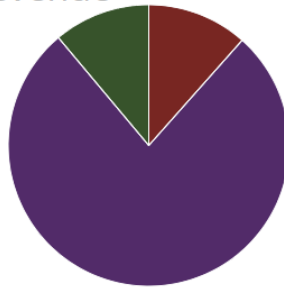
*The Suitcase Project* on view in the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society Building in Steveston, British Columbia.

# Multicultural History Society of Ontario

## Financial Report

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

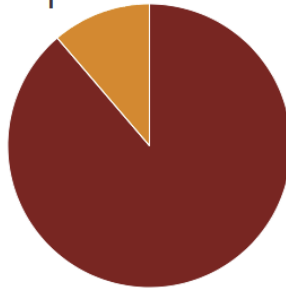
### Revenue



|   |                                       |              |          |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| ■ | Receipted donations                   | \$21,743.00  | (11.56%) |
| ■ | Non-receipted donations               | \$0.00       | (0.00%)  |
| ■ | Gifts from other registered charities | \$0.00       | (0.00%)  |
| ■ | Government funding                    | \$145,484.00 | (77.33%) |
| ■ | All other revenue                     | \$20,897.00  | (11.11%) |

Total revenue: \$188,124.00

### Expenses



|   |                                                          |              |          |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| ■ | Charitable programs                                      | \$132,941.00 | (88.73%) |
| ■ | Management and administration                            | \$16,878.00  | (11.27%) |
| ■ | 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: \$149,819.00