
Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Reviewing the Year

2024/25

Message from the Chair/President

I am pleased to present the annual report for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. It outlines our achievements during the 2024/25 fiscal year.

It was a noteworthy year for the MHSO in terms of our governance. Building on preliminary work we had undertaken in 2023/24, we established new By-Laws to bring the Society into compliance with the Ontario *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*, as required, by October 19, 2024. Draft By-Laws that Jean Yves Pelletier, Elizabeth Price and I prepared were tabled at a meeting of the Board of Directors in June 2024 and, based on the direction we received, they were revised by staff and then reviewed by our lawyer over the summer. On September 27, 2024, they were approved by the Board with some minor changes. The new By-Laws were confirmed at the Society's Annual General Meeting on December 6, 2024.



The image chosen for the Diaporas research cluster.

Our collaborative relationship with York University deepened in 2024/25. This was most evident in the establishment of the community-university research cluster, Diaporas: Migration Memory Research Collective. The Society was very encouraged by the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approach endorsed in the rationale for the cluster. The determination to build on and move beyond a focus on individual ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous communities is, of course, in synch with our own perspective. I am reminded of the argument that the Society's founder, Robert F. Harney, made in 1987 when he was advocating for the establishment of a thematic chair in ethnic, immigration and pluralism studies at the University of Toronto:

For the foreseeable future, debates about immigration and its impact on the economy, about acculturation and ethnic persistence, about inter-ethnic and inter-racial encounter, and about relevant public policy will be at the centre of political discourse and daily experience in Canada. ... The Secretary of State's "ethnic chairs" program has so far encouraged individual ethnic groups in their work of heritage preservation. The program should also be a goad to multicultural learning and understanding and an encouragement to free inquiry about situations and policies that affect all Canadians.

In 2024/25, we received project funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation 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 2024/25 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
Chair/President

MHSO Achievements in 2024/25

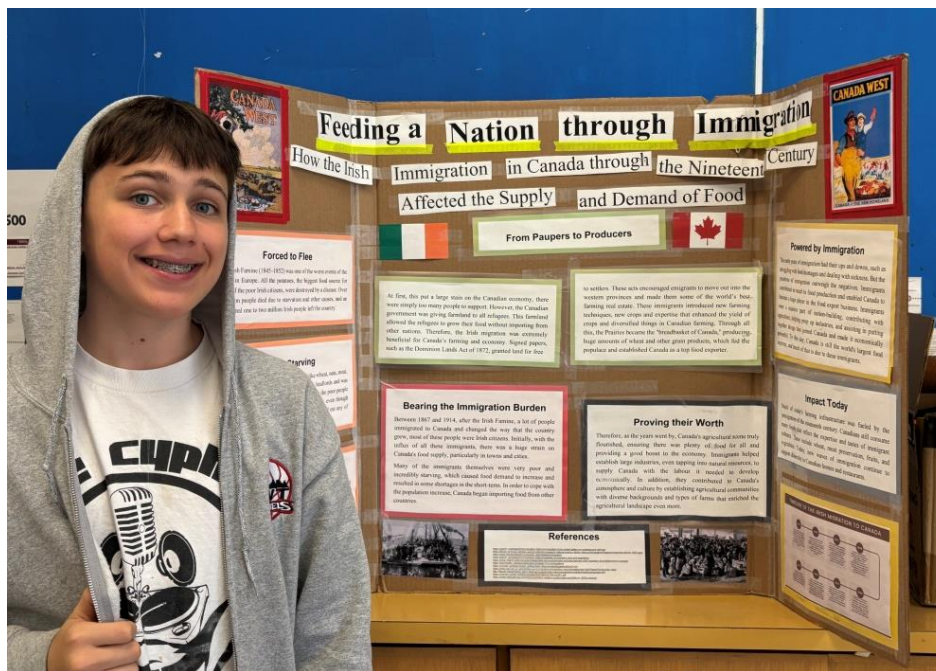
Undertaking Collaborations and Providing Advice

National

In 2024/25, our Development Manager, Elizabeth Price, continued to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee supporting the Coalition for Canadian Digital Heritage. The CCDH is a cross-sectoral coalition of memory organizations committed to expanding digital access to Canada's cultural heritage.

Provincial

We continued our partnership with the Ontario Heritage Fairs Association in 2024/25. We were represented on the OHFA Board, and we gave a prize at each of the regional fairs held in April and May.



The MHSO Award winner – a Grade 8 student from the Horizon Alternative Senior School – at the Toronto Region Fair.

Local

In January 2025, the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University formally approved the establishment, under its auspices, of the research cluster, *Diasporas: Migration Memory Research Collective*. The founding of the cluster was prompted by the Society's move to York and the resulting enhanced availability of our extensive archival collections for research. A

community-university collaboration currently composed of MHSO and York-affiliated members, the cluster is open to all scholars, public historians, archivists, librarians and community members who are intent on producing and disseminating knowledge of the histories and memories of migrant and diasporic communities in Canada and of their interactions with one another and the general society.

Preserving and Increasing Access to Archival Material

In 2024/25, we continued our efforts to preserve and increase access to primary source materials documenting immigrant, ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous community experiences.

Collection Re-Arrangement and Re-Description, and Alternative Online Hosting

We continued work in 2024/25 re-arranging and re-describing our collections in line with current archival practice. We also made significant advances toward providing alternative online hosting for the

40 ethnocultural community newspapers that we contributed to the former *Multicultural Canada* website and that were subsequently housed in, and are now being removed from, Simon Fraser University Library's Digitized Collections. A student placement arranged through Durham College's Library Technician Program, as well as work undertaken by our Archivist and an on-site volunteer, assisted us in this work.

In 2024/25, our Archivist, Dennis Moore, continued a multi-year collections management effort focused on the hardcopy newsletters and newspapers in our holdings. By the end of June 2025, an item-level inventory had been produced for 1,528 hardcopy newsletters (17,978 individual issues) created by/for 59 ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous communities. Similar inventory work had also been undertaken for 520 hardcopy newspapers (30,805 individual issues) created by/for 47 ethnocultural, racialized and Indigenous communities.

With the assistance of an on-site volunteer, Jazmine Morales Herrera, we began work in May 2025 that will provide information for a comprehensive, item-level inventory for the community newspapers – an inventory that addresses all formats in our holdings. We are checking each of the approximately 300 microfilmed newspapers we possess to see if issues are missing and/or other problems exist as well as to identify problems with the condition of the microfilms themselves.

In September 2024, the MHSO concluded an arrangement with the Internet Archive for the hosting of, at minimum, 33 community newspapers. (This arrangement will potentially be temporary given our long-term plan to establish an online repository for the Society's and multiple other digital archives.) Bec Grzetic-Muffo, our placement student, then began creating the metadata for the newspapers, work that was required prior to a planned January 2025 upload to the site. Unfortunately, while this work was underway, we discovered serious problems related to the original scanning of the papers and the naming of the digital files. The problems relate to all of the newspapers but, given our limited resources, our Archivist worked to address them in the four papers that generated the most concern when the SFU takedown was announced – *L'Ami du Peuple*, *The New Canadian*, *The Canadian Jewish News* and *The Canadian Jewish Review*. The corrections he made include renaming files, reordering files based on sequential page numbering, cropping and separating doubled-up pages (i.e., two pages scanned together as a single file), removing duplicates and extraneous material (e.g., blank pages), and undertaking other changes to maintain consistency and order. The following had been completed by the end of June 2025, with uploading of the newspapers to the Internet Archive pending.

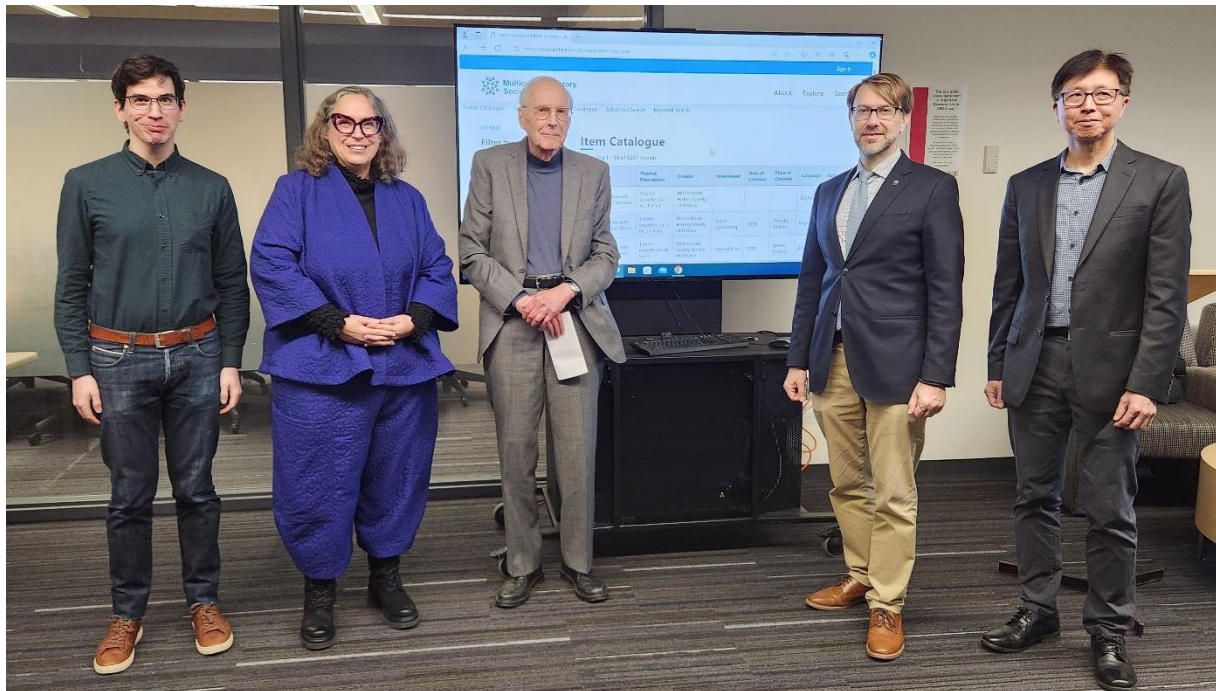
- *L'Ami du Peuple* – corrections were made to 1,280 files out of a total of 10,968 – 11.7%
- *The New Canadian* – corrections were made to 1,200 files out of a total of 47,227 – 2.5%
- *The Canadian Jewish News* – corrections were made to 4,158 files out of a total of 43,436 – 9.6%
- *The Canadian Jewish Review* – corrections were made to 3,401 files out of a total of 32,483 – 10.5%



New, Searchable, Online Catalogue

In 2024/25, the MHSO created a new interface for community and academic researchers that addresses current needs and growing expectations for enhanced access and functionality in archival service delivery using new technologies. Specifically, we designed and developed a new, searchable, online catalogue for our extensive archival holdings that allows researchers to browse those holdings, retrieve specific record descriptions, and sort and extract different types of resources in a variety of meaningful ways. By the end of June 2025, item-level descriptions for 5,299 oral history interviews had been entered into the catalogue.

The catalogue was launched on November 29, 2024 in the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies. Our IM/IT consultant, Winston Loui, demonstrated the operation of the catalogue at the launch, and those in attendance – some 30 people including three archivists from the Archives of Ontario, the MPP for Humber River – Black Creek and a number of York University professors and students active in the Diaporas research cluster – complimented us on what we had achieved.



Online Catalogue Launch – Dennis Moore (MHSO Archivist), Professor Carolyn Podruchny (Acting Director, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies), Professor E. Wayne Dowler (MHSO Chair/President), Tom Rakocevic (MPP, Humber River – Black Creek) and Winston Loui (MHSO IM/IT Consultant).

Contextual Content for the MHSO's Digital Archive

We undertook work in 2024/25 in support of future content uploads to our planned digital archive.

Our virtual volunteering program continued under the direction of our Development Manager. In 2024/25, we produced 53 interview transcripts through the program, and we edited (either first or second edits) 31 draft transcripts. Twenty-seven volunteers were active during 2024/25, and collectively they contributed more than 1,522 hours of their time to transcription and transcript editing work.

Two on-site volunteers, Conor Hassaram-Leblanc and Shiyang Sun, contributed 120 hours of their time in May and June 2025 checking and creating contextual content for the 300-item Nishnawbe Aski Nation oral history collection and the 500-item But Women Did Come historical photograph collection.

Providing Services, and Undertaking and Supporting Programming

In 2024/25, we continued to provide services, oftentimes virtually, and to undertake and support programming.

Research Assistance

The oral history interviews, community newspapers, historical photographs and textual records in our archives continued to attract researchers in 2024/25. In addition to making interviews available to the family members of narrators and to assisting York University students enrolled in courses on Italian Canadian and African Canadian history, we helped researchers from various locales access primary source materials on a wide range of subjects. Those our Archivist assisted included:

- a student in history at the University of Pavia in Italy pursuing interests in microhistory and urban cultural studies in an investigation of housing policies and dwelling experiences of migrants in post-war Toronto;
- a student in social justice education at the University of Toronto examining the experiences, identities and politics of Vietnamese refugee women, employed in service industries, who settled in Canada between the late 1970s and early 1980s;
- a social justice activist seeking information on Palestinians who came to Canada after the 'Nakba', the dispossession and displacement of Palestinian Arabs in the 1948 Palestine war;
- an artist exploring, for an historical art installation, the history of community leaders and activists in the Toronto francophone community from the 1960s to the late 1990s;
- a professor in the Department of History at the University of Illinois Chicago conducting research using the Chinese Canadian newspaper, *Hung Chung She Po*;



Sudetenland in 1938.

- an historian, based in Bavaria, Germany, studying the Sudeten Social Democrats who fled to Great Britain and Canada after the Sudeten territory was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1938;
- a resident of Marynin, Poland (near Warsaw) interested in the oral testimony of Maria Magdalena Nejmark, who was incarcerated in Auschwitz during the Second World War;

- a student in history at the University of Calgary examining Vietnamese Canadian agency within the context of Canadian nationalism and immigration/multiculturalism policy;
- a student in history at Wilfrid Laurier University investigating the immigration of Hungarians and Czechs after the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968, and the reception/treatment that these immigrants received in Canada;
- a student in history and cultural heritage at the University of Helsinki in Finland conducting research on Finnish women affiliated with the socialist movement in the early 20th century, their understandings of nature—particularly weather and climate—and how their histories and these understandings relate to settler colonialism;
- a student in language and literacies education at the OISE/University of Toronto studying the development of heritage languages programs within the Chinese diaspora in Canada, with a specific focus on racial and linguistic hierarchization in education policy discourse;
- a student in history at McMaster University exploring the post-war history of Toronto's Black communities, paying explicit attention to how the analytically distinct concepts of race and ethnicity function individually and collectively to curate Black identity;
- a student in human rights and humanitarian aid at the Federal University of Paraná in Brazil investigating the activities of the Ukrainian Aid Committee in Brazil and Canada, focusing in particular on their efforts to support Displaced Persons after the Second World War;
- a research associate at the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University and student at Stanford University studying Soviet and post-Soviet Jewish resettlement in Canada;
- a lecturer in humanities at l'Université catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France conducting research on female migrants to Canada, 1940-1970, with a specific focus on the ethical constructions of their migration processes; and
- a research assistant for a professor of law at the University of Ottawa exploring property ownership for non-binary and trans women of colour, and Chinese, South Asian and Afro-Black women in Canada during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Recording the introductory episode for the podcast.

Educational Programming

In 2024/25, the Diaporas research cluster started work on a podcast series. The intention is to highlight interviews from the MHSO's archival holdings in each episode. Our Archivist and Development Manager provided detailed information to cluster members on the Society's interviews with narrators in the Italian, Portuguese, Irish, Egyptian, Ukrainian, and Sephardic and Latin American Jewish communities in Canada. They also made contextual information and copies of interviews available. Topics that relate to multiple ethnocultural communities will be addressed – for example, the ethnic press – because cluster members believe that, through the dialogue that this practice engenders in individual episodes, experts

on different communities will engage in richer and more complex, complete, and compelling discussions that reach and engage broader audiences.

Our exhibit, *Family Stories, Treasured Memories*, was on view at the Cobourg & Area Museum throughout the summer of 2024 until mid-October. 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 2024/25, we provided images and interviews for use in cultural heritage and public history initiatives such as the following:

- the documentary film, *Exclusion: Beyond the Silence*, produced by Ballinran Entertainment, which explores the long-term, intergenerational trauma – as well as the personal and cultural impacts – caused to Chinese Canadian families by Canada's discriminatory immigration policies;
- the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre's video, *Memories of Powell Street*, focusing on the heart of the Japanese Canadian community in Vancouver before the Second World War;
- the Korean Canadian episode in the 20-episode youth documentary series, *Kapsur*, produced by mflaval FILMS and Kavalo Productions, which follows young francophones, aged 12 and 13, living in remote areas across Canada;



- the virtual presentation by a community historian, Rick Green, *From Oblivion to Triumph – How Two Vancouverites Meeting in Free China Changed Canadian History*, about Operation Oblivion, a secret Second World War mission that involved Chinese Canadian volunteers who were inspired by two Vancouverites meeting in China;
- the publication, *From Factory Worker to Senator: The Biography of Peter Bosa*, by Vincenzo Pietropaolo, which recounts the life story of the first Friulian-born citizen of our country to become a member of the Senate of Canada; and
- the exhibition, *A Synthesis of Lyrical Excellence and Martial Agility – The Stage Art of Ng Kwan Lai* 文武兼擅 – 吳君麗戲劇藝術剪影, originally presented by the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and remounted virtually in the web portal *Hong Kong Memory* by the Hong Kong Public Libraries.

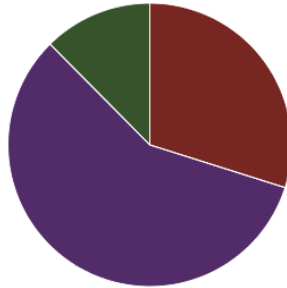


Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Financial Report

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

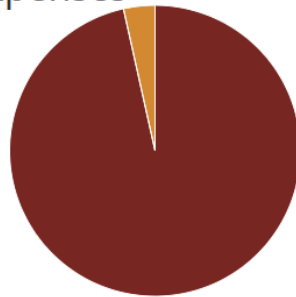
Revenue



■	Receipted donations	\$39,844.00	(29.88%)
■	Non-receipted donations	\$0.00	(0.00%)
■	Gifts from other registered charities	\$0.00	(0.00%)
■	Government funding	\$76,933.00	(57.70%)
■	All other revenue	\$16,566.00	(12.42%)

Total revenue: \$133,343.00

Expenses



■	Charitable programs	\$130,846.00	(96.51%)
■	Management and administration	\$4,726.00	(3.49%)
■	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: \$135,572.00