

1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada, The

Learn about the 1837 Rebellion, the leading figures, why they rebelled, and what important Oshawa families were involved.

1937 Oshawa General Motors Strike, The

An unforgettable strike in the history of Oshawa would unfold at the General Motors plant in April 1937. Three thousand seven hundred workers walked off the job and would not return to the lines until a landmark settlement was reached. This was the inception of the union movement in Canada.

1940s Fashion

Like all things in the world during the war years, fashion was also affected.

Archaeology and its Role in History

Archaeology plays an important role in how we interpret the past at the Oshawa Museum. For far too long, the history of Oshawa began with Benjamin Wilson, an American from Vermont, who settled in Oshawa in 1790. Archaeological excavations at the Grandview and MacLeod sites have assisted us in challenging this 'traditional story' of settlement. The museum is also home to two collections from the late-historic archaeological sites: the Farewell Cemetery Collection and the Henry House Collection. These two sites date to the mid to late 1800s and they provide information about Victorian lives and culture.

Archaeology in Oshawa

Discover the two archaeological sites in Oshawa and the Ancestral Wendat First Nations who settled them.

At Rest: An Archaeological Investigation at the Harmony Burial Ground

In 1992 when the City proposed to expand Harmony Road, it was suspected that there were unauthorized burials located outside of the Farewell Cemetery's boundaries. Archaeological Services Inc. was contacted to assess this impact and were successfully able to relocate 36 graves dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries to a new location within the boundaries of the cemetery.

Around the House

Based on the Museum's 'Around the House' Education Kit, this presentation focuses on different architectural styles in the Victorian era, household gadgets available and typical domestic duties of the time.

Canada 150: An Oshawa Perspective

July 1, 2017 marked an important milestone in the history of Canada; 150 years since the British North America Act of 1867 came into effect. Discover how Oshawa participated in events leading to 1867 and how we celebrated this holiday years later.

Challenging the Narrative

Placing an emphasis on new original research is an important facet of our jobs; this research brings life to our collections, showing the importance of preserving these items for future generations. Today we need to work on decolonizing our collections and to fill in the gaps in our early collecting focuses. There are so many other perspectives to our history that, when combined with the traditional narrative, show what a rich history our area has.

Downtown Oshawa: An Armchair Walking Tour

Take a tour of Oshawa's historic downtown area while exploring the themes of art and culture, governance, education and religion.

Early Lighting

Although fires and candles have been around for over 5000 years, the art and profession of making them was perfected in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Early Stores of Oshawa

The general store served as the communication centre of town. People went to the store not just for supplies but also to hear or pass on the latest news and gossip. See photos and vintage advertisements from the Museum's archival collection and reflect on how we went from general stores to mega malls and box stores.

Education in Oshawa, 1800-1967: From the Perspective of Olive B. French

She set out to "write a history of the Oshawa schools from their earliest years with some of the people involved with them." Delve in to Oshawa's deep history of the education system as told by Olive French, a local author and historian.

Harmony Village: Remembering the Settlers & A Lost Cemetery

The journey three local researchers took to discovering who was buried in an unknown cemetery after it was found during construction of a church parking lot.

Herbs to You

The notion of naturopathy is a trend in modern society in terms of health care; however, this idea has been popular for thousands of years. See what kinds of herbs and flowers Victorian families in the Oshawa area grew for medicinal, culinary and miscellaneous purposes. Where did they learn about remedies and recipes? Who tended to these gardens? What do we grow at the Oshawa Museum?

I Spy

Did you know that old photographs are full of tiny details? With the help of modern technology, we are able to zoom in on these photos at high resolutions to discover the untold stories they hold. Using photos from the Oshawa Museum's archival collection, we examine a variety of photos to see early examples of photo shopping, photobombing and colourization.

If These Houses Could Talk Series: The Story of Henry House, Robinson House, and Guy House

Our *If These Houses Could Talk* series focuses on the new research of the Museum's homes when questions arose after a 2011 archaeological dig behind Henry House. Learn the history of the three Museum houses, discover stories of the families who made them their homes and find out how they became part of the Oshawa Museum.

Industrial Oshawa

Oshawa's industrial roots run deeper than General Motors. The earliest industries were set up in the early 1800s as early settlers established saw and gristmills, agricultural tool manufacturing factories and tanneries. Here we introduce local industrialists, their success, failure, and impact, on the development of Oshawa.

Lakefront Memories

After a chance meeting with a past resident of Henry House, Oshawa Museum staff decided it was time to begin recording oral histories of those who lived at the Oshawa lakefront prior to 1960. The result was the 2001 publication, 'Lakefront Memories: A Memory Book Project,' which embodies the true spirit of community history by preserving the personal stories of the people in the community.

Outreach Presentation List

Letters from the Trenches: William Garrow and World War I

In 1995, the Museum received a donation that included almost two dozen letters to and from William Garrow, a local man from Oshawa who enlisted for WWI when he was just twenty-one years old. This presentation includes letters, documents his life in the trenches, on the move, and provides a perspective that cannot be found in any textbook. It also compares his experiences to three other local citizens of Oshawa – a white nursing sister, a black soldier, and a drafted white soldier.

Lights, Cameras, Lenses

The invention of cameras and photography were revolutionary. They changed the way that people see the world. We have been exposed to cultures we did not know existed, we have made amazing discoveries; history has been captured on film. In this presentation, we identify various types of early photography and some of the earliest photographers in Oshawa.

Mourning After: The Victorian Celebration of Death

In the Victorian era, the term ‘mourning’ came to mean more than just grieving for the loss of a loved one, it comprised all of the ways that the Victorians expressed that grief. They created an extensive mourning culture employing elaborate dress, jewelry, funeral trappings, photographs and myriad of commemorative items. Through themes such as, *Furniture to Funerals*, *Secure the Shadow*, *Memento Mori* and *Under the Black Veil* we compare and contrast the practices that are still alive today.

Once Upon a Time: The History of the Oshawa Historical Society

The presentation highlights the accomplishments of the Oshawa Historical Society, which celebrated its 60th Anniversary in 2017.

Oshawa’s Black History – One Family’s Story

This under-researched area in Oshawa’s history gained momentum after a request from Trent University in 2011. Inquiry into the Port Oshawa Pioneer Cemetery revealed that there was a black family living in Cedardale in the late 19th century and they are buried in that cemetery. This on-going research has traced 5 generations of a family, from Vermont to Quebec, to Oshawa, and finally California.

Outreach Presentation List

Oshawa and its Cornish Roots

A number of Oshawa's prominent families arrived in the mid-1800s, with many of those arriving from Cornwall. Amateur historian, Samuel Pedlar, called it the "great Cornish exodus" and his family was one of those families that settled in Oshawa and prospered. We will be highlighting a few of Oshawa's prominent citizens with Cornish roots.

Oshawa's Cultural Communities

Oshawa has always had a diverse multicultural population. The first weeklong celebration of our heritage began in 1972. Learn the truth about what new immigrants experienced in Oshawa and how they influenced other cultural communities in Oshawa.

Oshawa's Fires

Every city has had its share of tragic fires, but of course, the ones that happen in your own hometown seem that much more harrowing. This presentation provides firsthand accounts of the Museum's own fire in Guy House and looks back at memorable fires such as the Oshawa Arena, Woolworths in downtown Oshawa and the Oshawa Times.

Oshawa's Theatrical History

Oshawa was home to many downtown theatres in its past. From the days of Vaudeville until the mid-1980s, people had been seeing plays, concerts and movies in theatres like the Marks, Odeon, The Regent, and Borsberry Music Hall.

Oshawa's Undiscovered History

Working at a museum, you learn something new every day, and there is always a yearning to know more. However, what if there is a huge roadblock in your way? Some of our 'Museum Mysteries' have taken years to solve and even more are still mysteries to us. This revealing presentation might just leave you with more questions than answers!

Prominent Citizens

This list of prominent citizens from Oshawa includes early settlers, mayors, movers, shakers, industrialists, inventors and adventurers. Look back at some of the most important people in Oshawa.

Religion and Churches in Oshawa

In the early days the Oshawa district and surrounding townships were sparsely settled, surrounded by dense forests therefore it was not possible to build a church in the area until there was more settlement. Therefore, itinerant preachers met the religious needs of people who first settled here. Find out which famous evangelists travelled through Oshawa, what denominations were first to establish congregations here and how our most notable churches have evolved in the twenty-first century.

Remember When... Oshawa's History: 1790 – 1924

Oshawa's earliest past predates history. First Nations tribes like the ancestral Wendat and Mississaugas of Scugog Island had been living here for hundreds of years before white settlers of European heritage arrived. Travel through time with us as we mark milestones up until 1924, when Oshawa became a City.

Remember When... Oshawa's History: 1924 – Present

Part two of Oshawa's history focuses on not only our past, but where we are going in our future as well. See how the Oshawa Hospital has changed, why GM was striking, what famous bands came to Oshawa and how our past affects what we teach in the future.

Stories from the Homefront: Oshawa During WWII

Stories from the Homefront is the Oshawa Museum's second oral history project. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of D-Day, this project sought to preserve community memories to gain a better understanding of the impact of the war on the local level, connecting these experiences with the larger picture of experiences on the national and international scene. Using photos and archival resources as well as reminiscences from local Oshawa residents, *Stories* tells the story of life on the homefront.

Streets of Oshawa: Their Names and Histories

People who are familiar with Oshawa's streets might not give a second thought when they approach the intersection of Ritson Road and Adelaide Avenue; to some it may just be a crossing of two major arteries. If you dig a little deeper though, you might be surprised to learn the stories behind these two names, and the names of other streets in our city.

The Life and Times of Verna Conant

Verna Conant is one of the City's most celebrated citizens. Mrs. Conant grew up as the heir to the E.D. Smith Fruit Company. She realized her passion for philanthropy only after she had married and had a family of her own. We will discuss what it was like to grow up in the shadow of her father and what life was like as the married homemaker of a politician in the 1920s. Finally, we will pay tribute to Verna Conant and her many contributions to the City of Oshawa over half a century.

The Lives of the Dead: The Port Oshawa Pioneer Cemetery

The Oshawa Harbour Pioneer Cemetery is the oldest graveyard in Oshawa, and it contains the remains of Oshawa's earliest settlers. Names on the headstones will be familiar to those who know of Oshawa's Pioneers, such as Henry, Robinson, Guy, Wilson, Farewell and Smith. Research was undertaken to find out more about the lives of some of the people who are buried here. These are the stories of their lives.

Victorian Christmas Traditions

Do you want to know what Christmas was like in Oshawa? A little less Dickensian, but traditionally Victorian, Christmas traditions of the last two hundred years abounded here. Explore the shops and stores that locals shopped at for gifts and food; find out what kind of gifts were typically bought for different family members.

Victorian Clothing Styles in Oshawa

The Victorian period began at the commencement of Queen Victoria's reign in June 1837 and ended at her death in January 1901. The Victorians experienced tremendous changes in the economic, social, cultural and political arena during their age. This also included the area of fashion trends and clothing styles.

Village of Cedardale, The

The story of Cedardale starts with the same stories told about the start of Oshawa.

War of 1812: An Oshawa Perspective, The

Oshawa was in its infancy in 1812. Many people who were involved had been living here for less than a decade. Learn how this War affected Oshawa and the families involved.

Outreach Presentation List

Wish You Were Here: Selections from the Museum's Postcard Collection

Postcards played an important role in altering forms of postal communication in the late nineteenth century. Our archival collection contains many early postcards depicting early landmarks. Compare the postcards to places of today. The messages on the reverse are just as informative as the pictures on the front. Find out how long women used to spend in the hospital after delivering babies, what was considered a good birthday gift and just how many words could you fit on the back?

Wars and Remembrance

Citizens of Oshawa have been involved in most major world wars and conflicts. For these military engagements, for those who fought for freedom and who gave their lives for the cause, it is important to take time and remember all that they have done for their country and for the world. The following presentation talks of all the different ways Oshawa specifically remembers.

Women in War: Oshawa's Nursing Sisters of the First World War

2014 marked the 100th Anniversary of the start of the First World War. The Great War was the turning point in the history of warfare: it saw the shift from cavalry to airplanes, from bayonets and trenches to machine guns and tanks. Chemical warfare was introduced and Canada emerged as a country on its own. The Oshawa Museum focused our research and exhibit work on the role of three Nursing Sisters who called Oshawa their home.