

# Annual Report 2024



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Inside the 2024 feature exhibition,  
*Untold Oshawa.*





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	President's Report	<b>14</b>	Executive Director's Report
<b>5</b>	Volunteers	<b>15</b>	2024 Action Plan & Activities
<b>6</b>	Donors, Sponsors, and Community Partners	<b>17</b>	2024 Highlights
<b>8</b>	Mandate and Governance	<b>18</b>	Oshawa at 100+
<b>9</b>	Oshawa Historical Society Report	<b>19</b>	Curator's Report
<b>11</b>	Minutes, 2024 Annual Meeting	<b>21</b>	Archivist's Report
<b>12</b>	Financial Report, Oshawa Historical Society	<b>22</b>	Programming Report
<b>13</b>	Personnel	<b>23</b>	Engagement Report
		<b>24</b>	Financial Report, Oshawa Museum

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*The Oshawa Museum is situated on the traditional territory and treaty lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.*

*Our work on these lands acknowledges the signatory communities of the Williams Treaties, as well as the Mississauga Nation and other members of the broader Indigenous community, for their resilience, and their longstanding contributions to the area now known as Durham Region.*

Cover photo: Henry House at *An Evening of Lamplight*, 7 December 2024. Photo: Derek Cutting.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



First, I would like to express how honoured I am to be your 22<sup>nd</sup> President of the Oshawa Historical Society (OHS).

The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum began in 1957 by citizens concerned with the condition Henry House in Lakeview Park. Verna Conant, our 1<sup>st</sup> President, was very active in the community and passed away in 1992 at the age of 104. Verna was the wife of Gordon Daniel Conant, a lawyer from Oshawa, who later became Mayor, then Ontario Attorney General and for a time Premier of Ontario.

More recently, we experienced changes to our Board and, unfortunately, Board Member **Dr. Helen R. Haines** decided to step down due to work commitments. We miss her enthusiasm and ideas, as well as the positive influence she brought to board discussions!

On a happy note, however, we are very pleased to welcome two new members to our Board: **Dr. Pariss Garramone**, Associate Teaching Professor, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Ontario Tech University; and **Dr. Jennifer Newton**, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Trent University.

2024 was Oshawa's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a city. In celebration of this milestone, a new history book entitled ***Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History*** was released. Members of our long-term museum staff wrote the book after six years of conducting research and interviews. The book examines diverse, untold stories and perspectives that have not been included in earlier works of local history. This book can now be found in the libraries of every public school in Oshawa and every high school in Durham Region. It is hoped that chapters of the book will become part of the history curriculum in these schools.

The Board would like to thank all of our OHS members. Without your support and interest there would be no Historical Society or Museum. The Board asks that you please speak with your friends, family, neighbours, and co-workers and encourage them to also join the Oshawa Historical Society as members.

A big 'thank you' also goes out to Oshawa **Councillors Derek Giberson** and **Rick Kerr** for their unwavering active support of the Oshawa Museum, and of Oshawa's history and culture.

History is important. We need to document it, remember, and honour it. We need to make sure that it remains intact and accessible for our future generations.

Michael P. Leonard  
President, Board of Directors  
Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum  
*"Home To Our History"*



# VOLUNTEERS

There are so many Oshawa Museum events, projects and programs that couldn't happen without the help of volunteers. In 2024, 29 volunteers donated 533.7 hours of their time!

It should come as no surprise that our team of garden volunteers are four of the six people who earned the most hours last year! A special thanks to Pat Bayus, Trish Bruce, and Ann and Peter Lloyd. Throughout the year, you can see their continued efforts around Guy House and Henry House.

Pat Davies and Ann Thurn are another two volunteers who earned the most hours in 2024. Pat has been volunteering since 2010 and has donated over 1,000 hours! She works in the archives, transcribing documents written in cursive. Since many people can't read cursive anymore, this is a treasured skill! Ann has been volunteering since 2015. In 2024, she helped with many outreach events, including the Peony Festival, Watershed Festival, and the Durham District School Board Heritage Fair. With her help, 780+ students were engaged with at the Watershed Festival, learning about water conservation while doing Victorian-era laundry!



Madelyn and Ainsley helping with garden clean-up, September 2024.

We had four people transcribing audio files in 2024. This task can be tedious, and we are especially thankful for these volunteers because they help make content and files searchable and accessible for researchers. Additionally, our team of young volunteers spent three hours hauling about 500 excess bricks out of the garden last summer! The other garden volunteers were eternally grateful for their help with this project!

The 2024 Earl Hann Volunteer of the Year award recipient is Mya Kirk, who contacted the Museum about a placement opportunity in October, proving that a volunteer can contribute a lot in a comparably short time. Mya is on her way to becoming a teacher. She spent her placement helping with Guiding and Scouting programs, education programs, and special events. Even when her required hours were over, Mya stayed on and helped wherever needed. Whether it was welcoming visitors to Halloween at the Harbour, serving scones at Tea and Talks, or taking photos of people with Mother Christmas at An Evening of Lamplight, Mya has proven her worth many times over. She continues to volunteer into 2025, and we value her contributions.

From February to June, the Oshawa Museum hosted a co-op student from Anderson Collegiate Vocational Institute. Zara was on-site in the mornings, helping with tours and programs, reading through historic newspapers for blog content and the "Oshawa at 100" social media campaign, and developing social media campaigns for Volunteer Week and May is Museum Month. She also wrote a number of articles for the *Discover Historic Oshawa* website and scanned a collection of photographs documenting downtown Oshawa in the 1990s. Thank you Zara for your hard work throughout the semester!

# DONORS, SPONSORS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Oshawa Historical Society is grateful for the individual donors and local businesses/organizations who supported our programs and activities throughout 2024. Thank you for your support!

## DONORS

### \$1000+

Sandra Gaskell  
Arthur Lovell  
Eric Sangwine

### \$100+

Patricia Bayus  
Karen Brown  
J. Doris Cherkas  
Denise Drinkle  
Michael P. Leonard  
William F. Martin  
Jeffrey Milgram  
Peter Young

### \$50+

Craig and Kathleen Anderson  
and Maura and Bill Archer—  
in memory of Gordon Bryant  
Pat Andrey & Bill McCormack  
Mayor Dan Carter and  
Members of Oshawa City  
Council—in memory of  
Gordon Bryant  
Ron Getz  
Jim Jackson  
Bob McIntyre  
Ron Pierce

### \$25+

David Dowsley  
Helen Haines  
Pat Rout  
Michelle Ste. Marie—in  
memory of Gordon Bryant  
Tanya Zaver—in memory of  
Gordon Bryant

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI)  
Catholic Cemeteries & Funeral Services –  
Archdiocese of Toronto  
Canadian Automotive Museum  
Canadian Tank Museum  
Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority  
(CLOCA)  
City of Oshawa  
Durham College  
Durham District School Board  
Durham Storytellers  
Durham Yogi Community  
Ontario Tech University

Oshawa Civic Band  
Oshawa Little Theatre  
Oshawa Public Libraries  
Parkwood National Historic Site  
Postcards to the Front  
Robert McLaughlin Gallery  
The Costume People  
Trent University Durham  
GTA  
Union Cemetery

Pat Bayus, 2024's Earl Hann Volunteer of the Year  
Award recipient, with Jill Passmore at the 2024  
Annual Meeting, 21 May 2024.





## NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

Right at Home Realty – Janet Dowson  
Coldwell Banker 2M Realty – Robert T. Bell  
Cooper’s Auto Services

## EXHIBIT SPONSORS

Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA)  
Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

## EVENT SPONSORS

Right at Home Realty – Janet Dowson

**The Oshawa Historical Society is grateful for the granting agencies who have supported the Museum and Historical Society in 2024, including:**

The City of Oshawa

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Government of Ontario

Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada

Employment and Social Development Canada



Inside 2024’s feature exhibit, *Be Prepared*.

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In May 2024, Museum staff welcomed the City of Oshawa’s Events & Culture team for a tour of the Museum.

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# MANDATE AND GOVERNANCE

The Oshawa Museum is administered by the Oshawa Historical Society through a duly elected Board of Directors as an agent for the City of Oshawa. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Oshawa Historical Society detail the election process and the roles and responsibilities of the Board.

The 2024 Board of Directors consisted of seven members elected at the Annual Meeting by the Oshawa Historical Society.

## MANDATE

The Oshawa Historical Society was founded in 1957 and is an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society. The purpose of the Oshawa Historical Society is to bring together those individuals interested in the diverse historical aspects of Oshawa and to research, record, retain, preserve, and present historical information pertaining to the Oshawa area. The objectives of the Society are:

- ◆ Encourage the study and research of the history of Oshawa.
- ◆ Secure and preserve an accurate account of the historical, architectural and archaeological heritage of Oshawa.
- ◆ Promote public interest in the history of Oshawa.
- ◆ Maintain, as an agent of the City of Oshawa, a community museum and archives as a repository for artefacts and written records of historical interest to Oshawa.

## GOVERNANCE

The Oshawa Historical Society's governing body is the Board of Directors whose members are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting held in May.

Standing and ad-hoc committees assist the Board in their duties. These committees report to the Board and bring important matters to the Board for discussion and direction. The standing committees are: Finance and Audit Committee, Governance Committee and Human Resources Committee.

The day-to-day operations of the Oshawa Museum and the Oshawa Historical Society are the responsibility of the professional staff under the direction of the Executive Director.



# OSHAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT



Adam Arko was the speaker for January's Local History Speaker Series. He discussed Oshawa and Electric Railways.

This past year has been another great year of growth for the Oshawa Historical Society. Our end-of-year membership numbers were higher than the year before, and we are steadily rebounding after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another success for the Society is the Local History Speaker Series partnership with the Oshawa Public Library, now in its second year. By offering this event as a joint program, we are reaching a broader audience and engaging a wide variety of speakers. We look forward to continuing this rewarding partnership.

The Local History Speaker Series takes place on the third Tuesday of the month (Jan–May, Sept–Nov) at 6 PM, at the McLaughlin Branch of the Oshawa Public Libraries (65 Debwewin Miikan, formerly Bagot Street, Oshawa), in the lower level auditorium.

The Local History Speaker Series for 2024 saw the following speakers and attendance:

Date	Speaker and topic	Attendance
January 16	Adam Arko presents: Oshawa & Electric Railways	58
February 20	Eric Sangwine presents: Mostly True: A Unique History of Oshawa in Art	43
March 19	Nicole Adams, Local History Librarian, Oshawa Public Libraries, presents: Oshawa's Voices: Oral History Project Showcase	29
April 16	Dr. Natasha Dixon-Henry presents: "I Will Use My Freedom Well": Emancipation Day and the Practice of Black Freedom in Canada	39
May 21	Annual Meeting—Nicole Adams, Local History Librarian, Oshawa Public Libraries, presents: Oshawa School of Nursing	55
September 17	Sarah Ferencz, Archivist, Whitby Public Library, presents: Highlights from the Whitby Archives collection	41
October 15	Lorna Poplak presents: <i>The Don: The Story of Toronto's Infamous Jail</i>	72
November 19	Oshawa Museum Staff presents: <i>Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History</i>	70

The Oshawa Historical Society relies on its members and their continued support. By attending events, donating to the Oshawa Historical Society, sharing through word of mouth and on social media, and by renewing your membership annually, you keep history alive in Oshawa!

Oshawa Historical Society members explore the exhibit, *Untold Oshawa*, with Curator Melissa Cole, November 2024.



## OSHAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARD

The Oshawa Historical Society is pleased to support Oshawa students, their scholastic achievements, and their endeavours of post-secondary study with the Oshawa Historical Society Award.

This award is presented to a student in each of Oshawa's secondary schools. The student must be in the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) in Arts and Culture program, or entering post-secondary education to study Canadian history or Indigenous studies, Canadian studies, or museum studies. The value of the award in 2024 was \$100.

The Oshawa Historical Society has been offering a scholastic award to Oshawa secondary students since the 1990s, and we are proud to continue our support of excellence in academic achievement.

Congratulations to the winners of the Oshawa Historical Society Award in 2024:

Maxwell Heights Secondary School ..... Benjamin Gwozdz  
 Monsignor John Pereyma Catholic Secondary School ..... Sebastian Acevedo  
 Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School ..... Jacob Presutto  
 R. S. McLaughlin CVI ..... Mik Katchaluba

## ABOUT OSHAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

The Oshawa Historical Society was founded in 1957 and is an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society. The purpose of the society is to bring together those individuals interested in the diverse historical aspects of Oshawa and to research, record, retain, preserve, and present historical information pertaining to the Oshawa area.

As a member of the Oshawa Historical Society, you are demonstrating your commitment to local history by supporting an organization dedicated to preserving Oshawa's past.

Membership Benefits include:

- Free admission to our signature events, like *An Evening of Lamplight*, heritage walking tours, and discounts on events like the Tea & Talk series! OHS Members always get to visit the Oshawa Museum for FREE.
- First access to original research and articles on Oshawa's history in the quarterly newsletter, *Historical Happenings*.
- The Local History Speaker Series offers historical talks on many different topics of interest, offered in partnership with the Oshawa Public Libraries. Members get first access to talks with popular speakers, like Ron Brown!
- Exclusive access to member only events and exhibit previews, and first access to signature events, like *Scenes from the Cemetery*.
- Belonging to an organization that has been helping to make Oshawa a more livable and vibrant community for over 65 years.

Oshawa Historical Society memberships, as of December 31, 2024:

Membership Type	Number of Members
Complimentary	13
Family	50
Individual	84
Life	25
Organizational	2
Student	1
Volunteer	4
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>New Memberships</b>	<b>33</b>

### Oshawa Historical Society Membership Levels

Category	Cost
Individual	\$30/year
Family	\$40/year
Student	\$15/year
Organization	\$50/year
Life (\$200 tax receipt issued)	\$400 – one time due

Optional Print Fee: If you prefer to receive your newsletters and Annual Report through the mail, there is an additional fee of \$15 to help offset the cost of printing and postage.



# MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Held at 6:00 PM, Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at the McLaughlin Branch auditorium, Oshawa Public Libraries, 65 Debwewin Miikan (formerly Bagot Street), Oshawa.

1. **Welcome:** Michael Leonard, Oshawa Historical Society Treasurer, called to order the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Oshawa Historical Society. He introduced the board members in attendance and thanked outgoing President, Margaret Wilkinson, for her 8 years on the board. He drew attention to last year's minutes printed on page 11 of the Annual Report, and the minutes of the special meeting, held on January 16, 2024, printed on page 12 of the Annual Report.
2. **A motion was called to accept the Minutes** of the May 16, 2023 Annual Meeting and the January 16, 2024 Special Meeting, as distributed.  
*Moved by Stanley Stacey*  
*Seconded by Paul Burk*  
**Carried.**
3. Kat Akerfeldt, Executive Director of the Oshawa Museum, presented the **2023 Museum Activities Report.**
4. Doug Lavis, OHS Board Member, asked the Membership to review the information contained in the 2023 Annual Report. **A motion was called to adopt the 2023 Annual Report as written.**  
*Moved by Stanley Stacey*  
*Seconded by Merle Cole*  
**Carried.**
5. Doug Lavis read the Nomination Committee Report detailing the members put forth for positions on the Board of Directors. **A motion was called to approve the Nominating Committee Report, dated April 25, 2024.**  
*Moved by Steve Barker*  
*Seconded by Robert Bell*  
**Carried.**
6. Michael Leonard asked for a motion regarding the appointment of Jeffrey D. Milgram Professional Corporation as auditors for 2024. **A motion was called "to reappoint Jeffrey D. Milgram Professional Corporation as auditors for 2024."**  
*Moved by Sandra Gaskell*  
*Seconded by Peter Young*  
**Carried.**
7. Next, Michael Leonard called upon Jill Passmore, Visitor Experience Coordinator, to recognise the 2023 Volunteers. Jill recognized the 32 individuals who volunteered over 562 hours in 2023, thanking them for their contributions.
8. Next, Jill recognized the 2023 Earl Hann Volunteer of the Year Award recipient. **Pat Bayus is the Earl Hann Award recipients for 2023. Ainsley Passmore is the Youth Volunteer of the Year for 2023.**
9. Next, Lisa Terech, Community Engagement coordinator, was called on to present **Membership service pins/certificates and recognition** to the following long-standing members:  
5 Year: Pat Andrey-McCormack & Bill McCormack, Pat Bayus, Anne Bessie, Mary Perkins, Victor Shewchuk, Erika Suchan, Susan Kordalewski, Supervisor, Cultural Development (recognition)  
10 Year: Tom & Darcy Carvin, G.K. Henderson, Peter Young, Keri Semenko (recognition; Life member), Oshawa Art Association (recognition), Catherine Richards, Senior Manager, Special Events & Culture, Alexander Gates, Curator (recognition), Earl Wotton, Curator (recognition)  
15 Year: OGS, Durham Region Branch (recognition), Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (recognition), Sonya Jones, RMG (recognition)  
20 Year: Bob & Marlene Abrey  
25 Year: Allen County Public Library (recognition)  
30 Year: Sharon Henry  
45 Year: Eric Glenholmes (recognition)
10. Michael Leonard then called for **a motion to adjourn the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Oshawa Historical Society.**  
*Moved by Melody Walters*  
*Seconded by Robert Bell*  
**Carried.**

# FINANCIAL REPORT, OSHAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REVENUE

The Oshawa Historical Society's revenue includes memberships, newsletter sponsorships, and income from Society events. The Society also benefits from a Heritage Organization Development Grant from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

<u>Total 2024 Revenue</u>	\$5,409
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## EXPENSES

Expenses include Society events and speaker honorariums, the OHS Award (recognizing the achievements of history students at Oshawa's secondary schools), and laying a wreath at the Memorial Park Cenotaph on Remembrance Day.

<u>Total 2024 Expenses</u>	\$1,415
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Net Excess of Revenues	
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Over Expenses For 2024	\$3,994
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The full 2024 Financial Statements, completed by Jeffrey D. Milgram Professional Corporation, are available upon request.



# PERSONNEL

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025



Michael Leonard  
President



Christopher Locke  
Vice President



David Tonkin  
Treasurer



Marshall Mayne  
Secretary



Dr. Helen Haines  
Director-at-Large



Doug Lavis  
Director-at-Large



Zachary Mansfield  
Director-at-Large

## OSHAWA MUSEUM STAFF, 2024

Kat Akerfeldt, Executive Director

Melissa Cole, Curator

Jennifer Weymark, Archivist

Jill Passmore, Visitor Experience Coordinator

Lisa Terech, Community Engagement

William Fiddler, Maintenance

Adam Arko, Registrar

Sarah Campbell, Registrar

Holly Huntington, Museum Registrar

Sangeev Thevananthan, Museum Assistant

Toluwani Adeniyi, Visitor Host

Calleigh Barton, Visitor Host

Eileen Bethune, Visitor Host

Caitlan Madden, Visitor Host

Kes Murray, Visitor Host

Mintie Pitamber, Visitor Host

Mia Vujcic, Visitor Host

Aya Yagnaya, Visitor Host

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Thank you for joining us as we look back on another historic year at the Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum, the home of Oshawa's history.

Though the OHS and OM celebrate Oshawa's history every day, 2024 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of Oshawa as a city. We celebrate not only the history being made in 1924, but the more than 10,000 years of human activity in this area, and the history being made every day here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



To celebrate this milestone, in November, the Oshawa Museum released a new book: *Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History*. So far, at time of writing this report, *Untold Oshawa* has been placed on the shelves of every public primary and secondary school in Oshawa (and every secondary school in Durham Region), has just had its fourth print run, and has been joined by an eponymous exhibit and educational programming at the Oshawa Museum. We are extremely proud of this publication, and its reception by the community.

Each year, the Oshawa Historical Society produces an Action Plan, which named five strategic objectives. In 2024, these were:

- To be a dynamic and essential part of the community and cultural landscape in Oshawa.
- To present relevant and meaningful exhibits, collections, and content.
- To foster a culture of inclusivity and recognize the value of diversity.
- To continue to be resilient and flexible.
- To provide inspiring and efficient spaces and facilities for museum functions, the community and our visitors.

These objectives helped the Society's Board of Directors and Museum staff and volunteers to make decisions about goals, strategies, and resource requirements throughout the year. You can read more about how we fulfilled these objectives on page 15. The staff and volunteers have done wonderful work this year in collecting, researching, and sharing the history of Oshawa. I encourage you to read each page of this report and appreciate the dedication, knowledge, and energy that was necessary to fit all of this good work inside of a year.

We are indebted to our donors, sponsors, and granting agencies. They are named on page 6, and I thank each of them for their support, particularly the individual donors who champion the Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum. Their support is not only financial—it's advocacy for the value of the work we do. That is what built the Society and the Museum, and what drives us today.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant support of the City of Oshawa for the Oshawa Museum. The City of Oshawa is the Museum's largest annual funder, and both Council and City staff are a source of resources and spirit throughout the year. We look forward to building on this partnership for many years to come.

# 2024 ACTION PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

In 2024, the Oshawa Historical Society's action plan included five objectives, with strategies, actions, and specific goals associated with each.

Objective 1: To be a dynamic and essential part of the community and cultural landscape in Oshawa.

Strategies:

1. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will provide excellent learning experiences that demonstrate the Oshawa Museum's value, contributions, and connections to the community.
2. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will seek out and engage in meaningful partnerships and collaborations that build community and awareness of Oshawa's heritage, arts and cultural facilities.
3. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will encourage the development of events, exhibits, and programming that build the profile and understanding of Oshawa's diverse community.

Some of the actions undertaken within these strategies included working with Fleming College Conservation students to treat a number of artefacts, guiding several history and journalism students on various projects, assisting other organizations with their centennial projects, hosting a secondary school co-op student, and participating in community-led events such as CLOCA's Purple Woods Maple Syrup Festival, Doors Open Oshawa, Peony Festival, Convergence, and the Professors of Funk Christmas Show. Two new walking tours were written and led, to be added to the regular calendar of walking and cemetery tours. Planning began for 2025 events and programming.

Objective 2: To present relevant and meaningful exhibits, collections, and content.

Strategies:

1. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will develop and deliver excellent on-site, in-class, and virtual experiences, with a focus on Oshawa's centennial and Oshawa's untold stories.
2. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will continue to explore digital engagement opportunities to expand accessibility and awareness of the museum's activities.
3. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will engage in a meaningful dialogue with community members and stakeholders to develop a collection and exhibit plan that will reflect Oshawa's needs.

Throughout 2024, a great deal of work was invested in researching, writing, and editing *Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History*. Substantial time was also spent on preparing the *Untold Oshawa* exhibit. Staff contributed to the City of Oshawa's March 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and commemorative booklet. This was in addition to the numerous on- and off-site education programs hosted for schools and community groups, and the new and original content continuously added to the Oshawa Museum blog and the *Discover Historic Oshawa* website. A new online exhibit, *Reflections of Oshawa: 100+ Years of Cityhood*, was developed and launched. Objects were added to both the museum and archival collections throughout the year, particularly from Simcoe Street United Church. Planning began for 2025 exhibits.



Objective 3: Foster a culture of inclusivity and recognize the value of diversity.

Strategies:

1. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will connect its collections, exhibitions, and programs with new audiences that reflect the diversity of Oshawa's community.
2. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will organize and make available educational opportunities for all staff, board members, and volunteers on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.
3. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will strengthen its recruitment and hiring practices and policies, with the aim to diversify its board and staff.

In the summer of 2024, the Museum obtained funding to hire summer staff to assist with the renewal of the Indigenous Gallery at Robinson House. The Museum also obtained funding to hire another summer assistant, and a longer-term intern in the Archives. A Collections Re-Description Policy was developed and accepted by the Board of Directors. The volunteer application process was streamlined, and a Volunteer Coordinator Manual was produced.

Objective 4: Continue to be resilient and flexible.

Strategies:

1. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will review revenue generating activities to support a sustainable future.
2. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will review and revise the current membership program, aiming to increase the value of Society membership and the number of members.
3. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will practice good governance to ensure effective and efficient management.

Staff continued their professional development through continued training and an annual review process. All staff had the opportunity to attend emergency first aid training. The Museum's Emergency Plan was updated. The Museum hosted a film crew on a two-day shoot, which kick-started work on a Filming Policy and offering venue rentals. The Executive Director made monthly reports to the Board of Directors on the Historical Society and Museum's activities and financials.

Objective 5: Provide inspiring and efficient spaces and facilities for museum functions, the community and our visitors.

Strategies:

1. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will pursue facility expansion in the form of a new build visitor's centre.
2. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will lay out a clear and transparent process, with the assistance of City staff and members of Council, regarding the facility expansion project.
3. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will continue to investigate funding sources for facility expansion project.
4. The Oshawa Historical Society and the Oshawa Museum will improve wayfinding tools at the Museum site.

In 2024, with the cooperation of the City of Oshawa, improvements were made to the HVAC system at Robinson House, the windows, doors, and outside woodwork at Henry House, and the front door of Guy House. Members of the Board of Directors and Museum staff appeared before the Economic Development Committee regarding the New Spaces project, with strong support from the community.

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



3171

Visitors to Guy House



2542

Students participating  
in education programs



OVER

950

Items donated to the  
archival collection



4952

Guests engaged with at  
on-site and outreach events

533



Hours contributed by our  
dedicated volunteers



177

Archives  
research  
requests

Objects donated to the  
artefact collection

60



7

NEW or relaunched  
on-site, outreach or  
online exhibits



15,186

Social Media followers



OSHAWA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

— Collections. Spaces. People. —

# OSHAWA AT 100+

In 2024, Oshawa celebrated 100+ years of cityhood, and the Oshawa Museum was proud to join in the celebrations.



The Oshawa Museum launched *Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History* at the November Local History Speaker Series. This book was the result of over six years of research and writing. At the official launch, Oshawa Historical Society President, Michael Leonard, introduced Mayor Dan Carter, who delivered remarks and offered congratulations on behalf of the City of Oshawa.



Melissa Cole, Curator, was part of the City of Oshawa's official 100+ Anniversary event, held at the Regent Theatre, March 8, 2024. She delivered a talk on the rich history of the City of Oshawa. The event was illustrated with a slideshow, and was accompanied by the creation of a commemorative booklet, both of which heavily featured images from the Oshawa Museum archival collection.



*Untold Oshawa* opened as an exhibition in Robinson House. The on-site exhibit explores many of the themes that are discussed in the book *Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History*.



Other activities that marked the centennial included: an Art in the Hall exhibit, called *Made in Oshawa*, a pop-up exhibit in Guy House about Oshawa's cityhood celebrations, a new online exhibit called *Reflections of Oshawa: 100+ years of Cityhood*, and *Scenes from the Cemetery* event featured a centennial theme.

# CURATOR'S REPORT

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One of the main objectives of the Oshawa Museum is to present relevant and meaningful exhibits, collections, and content.

In 2024, as the City of Oshawa celebrated 100 years as a city, the Oshawa Museum continued to deliver excellent virtual and on-site experiences through various exhibits that featured contributions and stories from our community members. Our exhibits shared stories to mark the City of Oshawa's centennial, and the Oshawa Museum participated in the official celebration on March 8, 2024.

In the winter, curatorial staff were focused on writing material for the City of Oshawa's centennial booklet and making preparations for the exhibit *Made In Oshawa*, which was the feature exhibit at Oshawa City Hall's Art in the Hall, featuring artefacts that were made locally. Highlights included Oshawa's first steelpan, items from Smith Potteries, a Pedlar People shingle, and glass samples made by W. E. Phillips (later Duplate / PPG).

The feature exhibition, *Untold Oshawa*, opened in the fall of 2024, to accompany the publication of the same name. This exhibit tells a more inclusive story, including the histories of some of Oshawa's early Black settlers, a look into the impact of labour unions in Oshawa, and a focus on the experiences of women and children. As you walk through this exhibit, many stories lack objects, and spaces have been left empty, highlighting gaps in the collection which we hope to fill in.

Through the generous assistance of grants through Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works, the Oshawa Museum was able to hire two summer students: Museum Assistant Sangeev and Museum Registrar Holly. Sangeev assisted with research related to the renewal of the exhibit *A Carrying Place*. He focused primarily on the Wendat in Oshawa and Wendake, Quebec. Holly's project focused on the inventory and digitization of the textile collection.



*Made in Oshawa*, outreach exhibit for City of Oshawa Art in the Hall, early 2024.

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Inside *Untold Oshawa*, decorated to celebrate Hanukkah, December 2024.

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2024 summer students, Sangeev and Holly.

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Since the Oshawa Historical Society was founded in 1957, the museum has continually added to its holdings of artefacts through acquisitions, donations, and fieldwork. In total, 60 objects were accepted and processed by curatorial staff. Here are just a few of the additions to the Oshawa Museum's collection:

- Oshawa Railway spike, from when the tracks were removed on Simcoe Street South
- Oshawa animal licence, dog named Danny
- Oshawa Sea Scout memorabilia
- O.C.V.I. football jersey, 1963
- 14<sup>th</sup> Oshawa Company flag (Girl Guides)
- Barber pole (Llewellyn Disney, Simcoe Street South)



In 2025, the Oshawa Historical Society and Oshawa Museum will engage with community members and stakeholders and seek input to develop a collection and exhibit plan that reflects Oshawa's needs and will allow us to strategically develop the collection to ensure it is representative of our community today and for the future.

The Museum has a great line-up of exhibits planned for 2025. *Untold Oshawa* will remain open until December. Two pop-up exhibits will be hosted in early 2025: *Beyond Words: Indigenous Languages of Canada* and *CFUW 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*. A new Welcome Gallery at Guy House will open in the summer.

# ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

The highlight of 2024 was the completion of a project that began in 2018 with the publication of *Untold Oshawa: An Expanded History*. The release of the book was the final project developed by the Oshawa Historical Society to celebrate the City of Oshawa's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The focus of the book is stories that had not previously been written about, and did not have a strong presence in the archival and museum collection. Research for the project has taken years, and required developing relationships with members of the community and outside organizations.

The Archives was once again fortunate enough to receive some fantastic new additions to the collection. Included in these new additions was a sizeable collection of land deeds and other historical legal documents from the Creighton Law Firm. With the invaluable assistance of the Registrar, this collection of over 400 documents has been completely organized, catalogued, and digitized, and a comprehensive finding aid has been completed. We also accepted a sizeable donation of material related to Simcoe Street United Church. This Church and its congregation are one of the oldest in Oshawa, and this collection is an important addition to the archives.

Two large digital photograph collections were donated to the archives. Interestingly, both of these collections include aerial photographs that show the change, growth, and development of Oshawa. The A. J. Groen and Bonke collections are fantastic additions and are part of the growing digital component of archives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

With the assistance of the Young Canada Works Internship program, we were able to hire a Registrar. Along with working to provide assistance accessioning new collections, the Registrar focused on developing a Collections Re-Description Policy, which was passed by the Oshawa Historical Society Board of Directors on October 3, 2024. This policy addresses the language used to describe collections and ensure that no problematic language is included in any collection record.

Partnerships continue with Durham College's Faculty of Media, Art and Design, as well as with Flora Fung of the Durham District School Board. These partnerships introduce the archival collection to new audiences and provide hands-on experience of the work we do at the Oshawa Museum.



Five Points Mall, c. 2004;  
Groen Collection, Oshawa Museum  
digital archival collection.

# PROGRAMMING REPORT

The Oshawa Museum saw a solid year of programming through 2024. Some previously popular programs, like Grandpa Henry's Picnic, haven't quite recovered from their COVID-19 interruption, but Halloween at the Harbour was widely attended. We saw growth in what the heart of the Oshawa Museum is—local, relatable stories.

**Community groups who visited the museum: 25**

**Outreach programs: 22**

**Community program participants: 1,814**

Guiding and Scouting groups clamoured to see *Be Prepared* before it closed, with 15 groups attending between January and June. Retirement homes like to see new and relatable content for their residents. The Oshawa Museum was hosted by Amica Whitby, Cedarcroft, Lakeridge Heights, Seasons Retirement, and Whitecliffe Terrace for programming at their sites.

**Community event partners: 14**

**Events: 40**

**Participants: 2,393**

We partnered often with Patty Davis at The Costume People in 2024. Many know her as the Museum's costumer. In April, we hosted a 1920s cloche hat-making workshop at the Museum as part of the Museum's centennial programming. Patty and Museum staff presented special programming at retirement homes, the Oshawa Senior Community Centres, and Whitby Public Libraries. In the summer of 2024, Patty and

Museum staff presented at the Costume College Conference in Los Angeles, on transforming the Victorian-era "Dressing Mrs. Passmore" presentation into a 1924 version. The lecture included what resources and advertisements to use and what it's like to partner with small businesses.

Museum staff led 40 on- and off-site education programs in 2024. High school workshops on working with primary sources and the First World War put the wheels in motion for *Untold Oshawa* programming, which is coming out this year. Most important to elementary teachers was the museum's First Nations program, *A Carrying Place: Archaeology and First Nations in Oshawa*. On-site classes benefit from experiencing the *Carrying Place* exhibit and seeing the replica cutaway of a longhouse. During classroom visits, students can understand the past through objects from the education collection, specifically objects from the Grandview and MacLeod sites. We discuss local First Nations from a fact-positive, archaeology-based perspective.

**School groups who visited the museum: 14**

**Programs held in-school: 26**

**Program participants: 2,542**

Two new walking tours happened in 2024: the St. Gregory Catholic Cemetery Tour and the Hollows Tour. Thanks to the 169 people who came out to the various walking tours in 2024.

**Museum events: 21**

**Event participants: 745**

We ended the year with the annual Evening of Lamplight. Museum staff and volunteers enjoy these festivities and seeing members at their favourite events. The snowy weather didn't deter the 103 people who saw the Oshawa Civic Band play in Robinson House, visited Mother Christmas, and viewed the special Hanukkah display as part of the new *Untold Oshawa* exhibit.

Thank you to all the students, visitors, and members who participated in our 2024 events and programs!

# ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Oshawa Museum continues to work with community partners to help meet our mandate of preserving and promoting Oshawa's history. The popular *Scenes from the Cemetery* was held in September, marking the sixth year this event has taken place. This dramatic Union Cemetery tour features volunteer actors from Oshawa's creative community who tell the stories of historic and departed Oshawa residents. We are indebted to the creativity, talent, and passion of 2024's cast, including Laurie Scattergood, Felix Hamilton, Linda Chapman, Deborah Lobban, Doug Craven, Paul Dobbs, Peter Mazzucco, and Rick Kerr. This event is made possible through the hard work and participation of Oshawa's Union Cemetery staff, the Oshawa Little Theatre, and *Scenes'* Creative Director, Rick Kerr. As this year was Oshawa's centennial, *Scenes* featured a centennial theme, with this year's characters demonstrating the growth of Oshawa into the city we know it today.

The Oshawa Museum continued to see strong follower growth and engagement across its social media channels. The weekly #ThrowbackThursday photos continue to be a follower favourite. These historic photos often lead to discussions and memories about Oshawa, past and present. Various campaigns were developed and delivered for special events, like Heritage Week, Volunteer Week, and May is Museum Month.

The largest campaign for 2024 was #Oshawa100, the goals of which were to share information about Oshawa's cityhood celebrations, to increase knowledge about Oshawa throughout the last 100+ years, and to create meaningful engagement with our audience around the last 100 years, and earlier, acknowledging First Nations and Indigenous Peoples who were here before colonization. The week leading up to March 8, and every Monday following through to the end of the year, saw a new post showcasing remarkable people, places, and objects related to Oshawa at 100+ years. Blog posts were also written about the anniversary. Finally, a new online exhibit was launched in May 2024: *Reflections of Oshawa: 100+ Years of Cityhood*. This online exhibit built on what was created in 2014 for Oshawa's 90 year anniversary, brought it up to present day, and it will remain a resource available to visitors and researchers wanting to know more about Oshawa's diverse history, as told by those who call our community home.

In 2024, the Oshawa Museum Blog remained a strong resource. Throughout 2024, 46 articles were shared, showcasing many different stories from our city's past, and we appreciate the staff, students, and guest authors who contributed content.

The top five blog posts of 2024 were:

1. *What to Expect When You're Expecting: Victorian Edition*
2. *Oshawa's Newspapers, Past & Present*
3. *What's in a Sock? The World War I Sock*
4. *Keeping Warm: The Ways the Victorians Did!*
5. *Do You Remember the Horse Drawn Milk Wagons?*



*Reflections of Oshawa: 100+ Years of Cityhood*, online exhibit, available via: [reflectionsofoshawa100.wordpress.com](https://reflectionsofoshawa100.wordpress.com)

The Oshawa Museum is on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, and YouTube, with the same easy-to-find handle across all platforms: @OshawaMuseum.



# FINANCIAL REPORT, OSHAWA MUSEUM

## REVENUE

In 2024, the Oshawa Museum received financial support for museum operations through grants from the City of Oshawa, the Government of Ontario, and the Government of Canada. Employment grants were received from Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs.

Other museum revenue was raised through pay-what-you-can admissions to the museum, education program fees, special event revenue, and gift shop sales. Fundraising revenue came to the museum through individual donations, event and exhibit sponsorship, and in-kind donations to the museum collections.

In 2024, total revenue rose by 5.31% compared to 2023, due primarily to museum sales revenue, including shop sales, venue rentals, and special event ticket sales. There was a drop in the amount of government grants. This is following a one-time project investment grant in 2023.

Museum Sales Revenue	\$31,289
Fundraising Revenue	\$7,340
Other Earned Revenue	\$9,743
Government Grants	\$542,444
<u>Total 2024 Revenue</u>	\$590,816

## EXPENSES

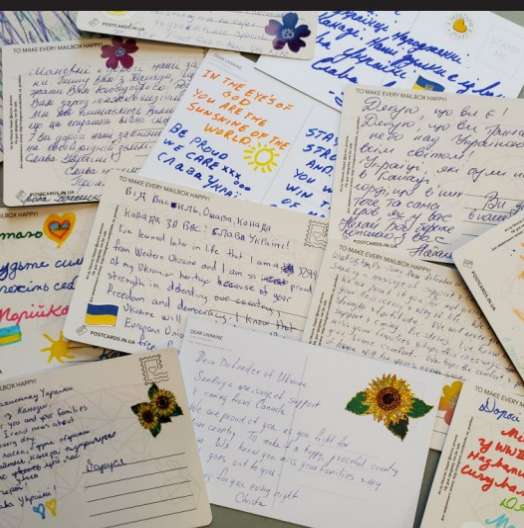
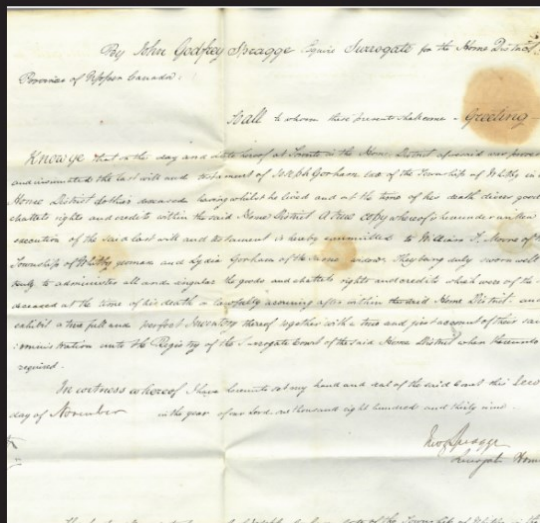
Oshawa Museum's expenses for 2024 include operating expenses for the museum buildings, payroll, and costs associated with museum exhibits, events, and programs.

In 2024, payroll expenses rose by 3.19% from 2023, and overall expenses rose by 0.95%.

Payroll Expenses	\$484,536
Museum Expenses	\$62,275
Administrative Expenses	\$27,546
Professional Expenses	\$42,467
<u>Total 2024 Expenses</u>	\$616,824
Net Excess of Revenues Over Expenses For 2024	(\$26,008)

The full 2024 Financial Statements, completed by Jeffrey D. Milgram Professional Corporation, are available upon request.



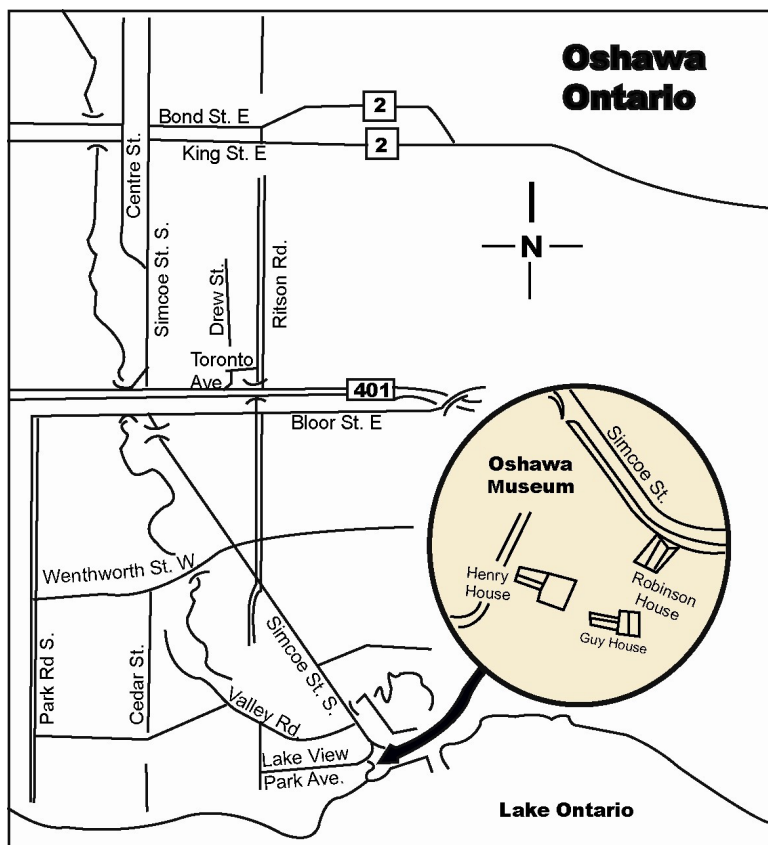






**OSHAWA**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

— Collections. Spaces. People. —



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