



**AURORA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

EST. 1963

**Hillary House
National Historic Site**

The ATTIC

Fall 2020 Issue

We Remember

By Kathleen Vahey

As we approach Remembrance Day on November 11, the day we honour the bravery and sacrifice of the men and women who have served and continue to serve Canada, it is the perfect time to delve into the history of the Aurora War Memorial Peace Park and the monuments located there.

Following the end of the First World War, the citizens of Aurora and surrounding communities felt there should be something in town to appropriately commemorate the local men who made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives during the War. The communities of Aurora, King, and Whitchurch contributed more than 400 men and women into active service, 71 of them never returned home.



*Sir William Mulock,
1896. Library and Archives
Canada.*

The idea for a monument had been swirling around in town for a while but it wasn't until a former local politician stepped up to offer support that it really took off.

Sir William Mulock spent most of his childhood in Newmarket and was elected MP for York North from 1882 until 1905 which, at the time, encompassed the townships of King, East, West, and North Gwillimbury, Whitchurch, and Georgina,

as well as the villages of Holland Landing, Bradford, Newmarket, Sutton, Stouffville, and Aurora. Sir William pledged to give \$10,000 towards the building of a cenotaph if the citizens of Aurora, King, and Whitchurch could raise another \$10,000 to cover the

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Speakers Series 2021

If pandemic circumstances allow, we will resume our Speaker Series in January 2021. Watch our website for the most up-to-date information. Here is how we will kick it off:



January 27

Ian Proudfoot

*Children of Peace's Role in Bringing
Democracy to Canada*



February 24

William Finlayson

*Our Lands Speak: Archaeology of
Queensville, Vaughan,
Whitchurch-Stouffville,
and Pickering.*



March 24

Antony Anderson

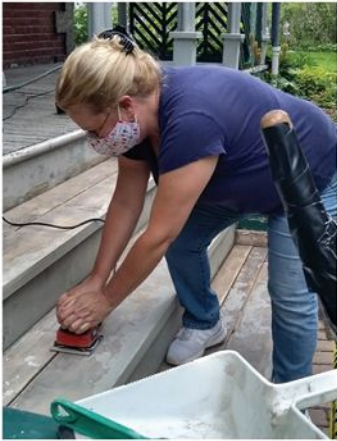
*The Diplomat: Lester Pearson
and the Suez Crisis*

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- Recipes from Hillary House Collection

President's Message

Patricia Wallace, AHS President



There IS good news. Really! We have all learned lessons and adapted to new ways of doing things as a result of this distressing period in history.

Our members, volunteers and community partners have done an impressive amount of work under the circumstances in these past few months as you'll

see in the following pages. Our small staff has done a fabulous job figuring out how to deliver online content, keep Hillary House open to visitors with strict safety protocols, and have used the downtime effectively by working on the Hillary collection.

I am heartened by the coming together (virtually) of the arts and culture community to support each other through the Town of Aurora Cultural Roundtable as well as other, less formal means.

Frankly, the AHS and Hillary House would be in dire straits without the emergency government supports available to us as an employer, a non-profit organization, and a museum. We continue to work to ensure we tap into all of the resources available to us. It's great to see our local elected officials reach out in support and in recognition of AHS's importance in the community and as a National Historic Site.

But we can't rest on this. These same federal and provincial emergency supports may not be there in 2021. Ongoing support from our local government is critical but that alone will not sustain operations. Community support is critical. We look forward to presenting a variety of interesting fundraising events in 2021, including the Hillary House Ball. In the meantime, you will soon be receiving our Annual Appeal letter. We hope you will consider a generous donation. Or visit www.aurorahs.com anytime and click the donate now button.

Wishing you all health and wellness as we look to RESTORE in 2021.

Patricia

Distinguished Visitors



The AHS welcomed Minister Christine Elliot and MPP Michael Parsa to Hillary House to promote the re-opening of Hillary House on July 16th.

The AHS welcomed MP Tony Van Bynen for a tour of Hillary House on August 28th.



Board of Directors OPPORTUNITY

The Aurora Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to heritage preservation, public education and enrichment. The AHS owns and operates Hillary House National Historic Site.

We are seeking passionate and dedicated individuals to join our volunteer Board of Directors who will use their skills and experience to help the organization move forward in a responsible and relevant manner. Business or volunteer experience in 1 or more of the following areas is desired:

- General Business Management • Fundraising • Governance • Finance
- Property Management • Marketing • Heritage Preservation • Museum Management • Community Engagement

Directors are required to be actively engaged in the work of the organization, attend monthly Board meetings, and support special projects.

Applications must be received by the Nomination Committee no later than December 31, 2020. Directors will be installed at the Annual General Meeting in February.

Please send your resume to: president@aurorahs.com
For more information, you are welcome to contact us at:
905 727-8991

www.aurorahs.com
15372 Yonge Street, Aurora ON L4G 1N8

Focus on Artifacts

By Kathleen Vahey

New in the Hillary Collection

We were very excited to receive two new artifact donations this summer from Cathy, a Hillary descendant. She is the great-granddaughter of Norman Thorquil Hillary, son of Robert William Hillary and brother of Robert Michael Hillary.



This is a silver egg cruet (a stand with small egg cups and spoons made to hold eggs) which was a common part of Victorian and Georgian dinnerware sets. The spoons have an "H" for Hillary engraved on them.

This is a silver spirit or tipping tea-kettle and stand that has a burner underneath it. It is called a 'spirit' kettle because the burner often used spirits to fuel a flame which kept the water hot. Water from the kettle would be used for topping up a teapot. This kettle is special to Hillary House because it has two unique engravings. On one side of the kettle it says, "To Annie on her birthday, 18th June 1882" and on the other side it says, "From her Affec. [affectionate] Husband R.W. Hillary". We know from our records that this kettle was given to Annie Hillary for her 50th birthday which she celebrated while living at Hillary House. It has returned after being with various Hillary's for over 100 years!



Back in the day...

Do you know what this is?

This medical artifact doesn't look too different in shape from what we use today, usually before surgery.



Artifact answer:

A wire-mesh anaesthetics mask.

Dr. Sidney Yankauer introduced this type of mask to the medical community around 1904. The 'drop method' of administering anaesthetic involved placing a mask, such as this one, over the patient's nose and mouth, and then placing gauze over the mesh. Next, liquid anaesthetic, such as ether or chloroform, was applied onto the gauze so that the patient breathed in evaporated anaesthetic as well as air.

Welcome to Emerging Museum Professionals

The AHS was fortunate to have two summer employees join our team for the summer season, thanks to a federal grant from Canada Summer Jobs.

Grace Armstrong, a fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in Media Theory and Museum Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Grace worked on marketing, program planning, and creating engaging social media posts including Transcription Tuesday, Trivia Thursday, and Guess the Artifact.

Selin Kahramanogh, a recent graduate of the Master of Information (Archives and Records Management) and

Master of Museum Studies programs at the University of Toronto. Selin worked on managing the Transcription Project, rehousing over 200 archival documents, and accessioning newly donated medical artifacts.

Also, we welcomed an intern from Fleming College for the Fall/Winter semester.

Sydney McGovern has recently completed the Museum Management and Curatorship post-graduate program at Fleming College. She is working on a collections inventory and updating object records in our collections database.

Gift Shop

by Julie Preston

In July, our whole inventory was put up for auction on www.maxsold.com in preparation for a refresh. We also put out the call to donate previously-loved items to add into the auction and got a great response. Volunteer Sharon Sutton worked tirelessly to organize this fundraiser and because of her efforts it was a great success.

Thanks to our volunteers, donors and buyers the AHS made \$3,200!



The Gift Shop is open Monday to Friday, 10:00am – 4:00pm and on Saturdays from November 21st to December 19th, 11:00am – 4:00pm. Your purchase is another way of supporting Hillary House.

SHOP LOCAL!

Quilters! Here's a great project. We have panels of Stonehenge OH Canada! by designer Jennifer Adomeit. The panels are 112 cm x 61 cm. \$10 ea. The coordinating fabric is \$10/metre. (see photos) We believe this pattern is discontinued so snap it up fast. A great gift for the quilter in your life.



Many lovely items have been donated since re-opening the gift shop, both new and gently used including silver jewelry, barware, teacups, local honey, Bunnykins and Peter Rabbit ware, artwork, and much more. We are still accepting donations. Call the office for more info.

Victorian Harvest Tea Launches Culture Days in Aurora

On Sunday, September 27th the Aurora Historical Society hosted a Victorian Harvest Tea on the lawn at Hillary House. The weather turned from an overcast morning to a lovely, warm day and the beautiful trees with their fall colours provided a picture-perfect backdrop. Croquet and badminton were also on offer. This event was part of Aurora's Culture Days activities, a national celebration that seeks to eliminate barriers to access and participation in arts and culture while encouraging appreciation.

Thank you to all of the AHS supporters who came out to enjoy a tray of goodies, cups of tea and apple cider, and to all of the volunteers who made this event a smashing success. Keep your eyes peeled for more tea events in 2021!



We would also like to thank our sponsors:

The Town of Aurora, Pine Farms Orchard, Catharina's Kitchen, Hurst Bakery, and North South Management.

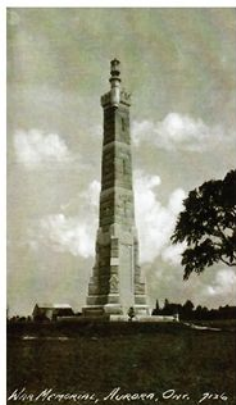
We Remember

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remaining costs. The Aurora War Memorial Association was formed with H.W. Fleury as chairman, and they set out to raise the necessary funds.

A passionate fundraising campaign began over the three communities which included mailed-out appeals to local residents and those who had moved away, door to door canvassing, and targeted asks of prominent citizens. Through all of this hard work, the funds were raised and Sir William not only gave \$10,000 to the effort, he even purchased the land where the cenotaph would be constructed. Interestingly, this land had previously belonged to Capt. William Graham, an Empire Loyalist and military leader who had fought in the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

Construction on the cenotaph began in the spring of 1925, with the ceremonial cornerstone being laid by no other than the man who had encouraged the project, Sir William Mulock. Built in the Gothic Scottish Baronial style, the Stanstead granite war memorial stands over 73 feet tall, features a reportedly 900-pound electrified bronze lantern at the top, and has the names of all 71 men from Aurora, Whitchurch, and King who died in WW1, 24 of them being from Aurora. The official unveiling took place on October 3, 1925, by Lieutenant Governor Henry Cockshutt in front of an impressive crowd of approximately 3000.



Aurora War Memorial.
Photo from 'Postcards of Olde Aurora' by Bob McRoberts

After the end of the Second World War, there was another push from the community to honour those who had fought and died in service to the country, and in 1960, the Altar of Sacrifice was erected at the base of the cenotaph. It lists the 55 names of those who lost their lives in WW2 from Aurora, Whitchurch, and King.

The most recent addition to the park was brought to Aurora in 2017. The LAV III Monument is located just to the north of the WW1 and WW2 memorials and pays tribute to the 40,000 Canadians who served during the conflict in Afghanistan and the 162 Canadians who lost their lives.



Aurora Memorial Peace Park, 2020.

The 2020 Aurora Remembrance Day ceremonies will look a bit different this year because of COVID-19 restrictions. The service at the cenotaph is by invitation only to comply with capacity limits, but a live-stream will be available on the Town of Aurora Facebook page and YouTube channel, along with the Aurora Legion Facebook page on November 11 at 10:45 am.

Like Remembrance Day, the Aurora War Memorial Peace Park and its monuments remind us to show our respect and gratitude to those serving and former members of our armed forces. It is an important place to visit, any day of the year.

For more information on the Aurora War Memorial Peace Park, see Jacqueline Stuart's "*An Aurora ABC: Stories from Aurora's Forgotten Past*", available for purchase in the Hillary House Gift Shop.

Christmas?

YES! Well, sort of. This year we had hoped to see the return of favourite Christmas activities at Hillary House from days gone by. Maybe next year.

Here Is What's Happening...

Hillary House – Open for tours Monday to Friday from 10 am – 4 pm by appointment only. (All Covid-19 precautions in place.) A lovely Christmas tree with period decorations will be up in the Ballroom.

A perfect place for family pictures.

The Christmas Spirit – Garden Aurora will do their usual décor on the exterior of the House and the restored sleigh will be on display. You are welcome to come and take pictures on the grounds anytime.

Shopping – The Gift Shop will be **open** for unique Christmas shopping. Stop by or call ahead. Browsers welcome. (Your safety and ours comes first.) We also offer contactless pick up if you're interested in something you've seen featured. Watch our Facebook page for featured items.



Transcription Project

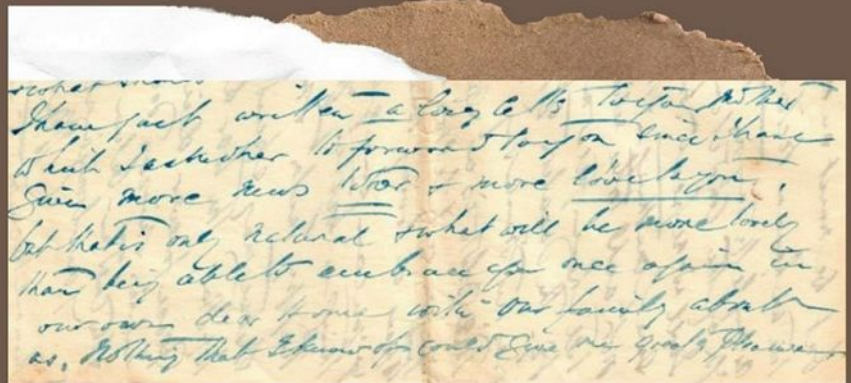
By Kathleen Vahey

This spring, in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AHS began to look for ways to engage the community virtually. As a result, the Transcription Project was launched. A dedicated group of volunteers have spent over 200 hours meticulously reviewing handwritten letters from our extensive archives, deciphering almost-impossible looking words, and uncovering stories and experiences of the Hillary family that have been long tucked away.

Some interesting things were discovered as part of this project. For instance, Stuart Hillary's experiences overseas during WW1 including his impressions of France and how frequent accidents were at the training camp; Dorothy Hillary's musings while staying with her

Uncle Norman and Aunt Annie in Winnipeg, and Robert Michael Hillary's experiences overseas during WW1 as a medical officer and how he and the family dealt with the death of Stuart at the front.

This letter was written by Dr. Robert Michael Hillary on March 13, 1917. He is writing to his wife Edith.



I have fact written a long letter to your mother which I asked her to forward to you on since & have given more news to her & more love to you, but that is only natural & what will be more lovely than being able to embrace you once again in our own dear home with our family about as nothing that I know of could give me greater pleasure

Wedding Bells

The Hillary House grounds became the scene of two small weddings this fall.

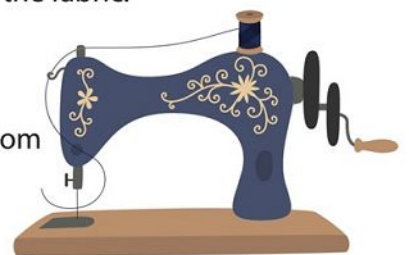
Congratulations

Allana & Mark
Jessica & Winston

Calling all Sewers!

We have some lovely donated fabric that is perfect for placemats to sell in our Gift Shop. If you would like a sewing project, contact Julie in the office and she will set you up with the fabric.

Please contact Julie at 905 727-8991 or community@aurorahs.com for more information.



Membership Update

by Julie Preston

Reminder – Renew your membership for 2021. **How?**

Go to our website for more information or contact community@aurorahs.com or call 905 727-8991.

Thank you to all AHS members who continue to support AHS.

Memberships help maintain and restore Hillary House, the 158-year-old gem in the heart of Aurora and provide heritage programming and exhibitions.

In Memoriam

Kate Revington – (July 9, 1956 – May 29, 2020) Kate and her family joined as members in 1997 and continued their support throughout the years. We extend our condolences to her husband, Daniel and two sons.

The Aurora Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of:



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Thank You To Our Volunteers!!

The continued support of our dedicated volunteers and local businesses is an integral part of the Aurora Historical Society and we appreciate all that they do!

A big thank you to our many volunteers of 2020:

Marjorie Bare, Al Oliver, Allison Collins-Mrakas, Angela Trevivian, Brenda Snape, Christine McLure, Cindy Scythes, Elizabeth Evans, Gloria Reszler, Helen & Wayne Burlanette, Joan Gardner, Lissa Dwyer, Sharon Sutton, Sandy Bundy, Sonia Koczekan, Vikki Mikkola, Ted McClenny and more.

A special thank you and welcome to four new volunteers who helped out for the first time this summer:

Alessia Spagnuolo, Nadia Gargaro, Elizabeth Evans, and Elizabeth Bishenden.

Thank you to Rent Source, Zander's Sod, Nutrilawn, Aurora Home Hardware and New Roots Garden Centre for their support. We receive many great comments on our beautiful grounds.

A big thank you goes out to Wood Brothers Drywall who donated materials and their time and did a fabulous job re-plastering of the walls in our Gift Shop. Also, thank you

to Benjamin Moore Paints who kindly donated the paint.

The Town of Aurora again helped immensely at Hillary House by providing our hanging baskets, putting up our new banners, fixing our picnic tables, and providing mulch for our gardens.

Much appreciation to Market Brewing Company for the supply of Bare Hands sanitizer to help keep us safe.

Thank you to our Transcription Project volunteers: Adrienne Levy, Betsy McIntyre, Cara Colangelo, Donna Gage, Elisha Gennara, Elizabeth Mick, Faygie Noble, Helen Roberts, Jacqueline Stuart, Jasmine Gavigan, Jennifer Zsolt, Jessica Tse, Julia Marren, Kate Tarini, Kathee Roy, Lissa Dwyer, Pamela Pal, Pippette Eibel, Sharon Mitchell, Terri Briggs, Tricha Rasmussen.

Thank you to our Committee Chairs, John Bare and James Hoyes for their coordination of various projects.

Thank you to our Board Members who tirelessly step up to take on new projects, in addition to providing strong leadership as Directors.

Recipe Corner

From the Hillary House Collection

We heard from long-time member, Joan Patterson, who said the Lemon Meringue Cake was her favourite, and here it is!

This recipe came from May Victoria Schofield (1851-1943) who was the mother of Robert Michael Hillary's wife, Edith.

Lemon Meringue Cake

1st Part:

- yolks of 4 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 6 tbsp. milk
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup flour
- ½ tsp. vanilla

Pour into 2 cake pans
(suggest grease and flour 2 – 8" pans)

2nd Part:

- whites of 4 eggs beaten (till stiff)
 - 1 cup sugar
- Put on top of each layer. Bake slowly at slightly less than 350°F - Time 25-30 minutes.

Make the following filling:

- 1 lemon
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1 egg yolk
 - 3 tbsp. corn starch
 - 1 cup water
- Mix and cook – stirring constantly – until thick in double boiler and when cool, put between layers.



AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020

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