

In This Issue

- Introducing 2022 Staff
- 2022 Calendar
- Photographing History
- Upcoming Events
- Highlights
- Buzzing Around
- Thefts from Hillary House

Photographing History

By Grace Armstrong, Assistant Museum Curator

As the history of Hillary House spans 160 years, our collection is home to a wide variety of photographs that speak to the evolution of photographic technology and styles. Looking through the collection, I am always struck by the age of the photos and feel fortunate that we have access to such well-preserved glimpses into the past. Between the fashion, hairstyles, and the people in the photos, the images provide us with a lot of useful information. Including a look at some of the many pets of Hillary House, like Stiggins (below) and Bubbles (right).

The collection spans as far back as the 1860s to as recently



L-R Robert Michael Hillary, Mrs. Hall, Maude Hillary, and Edith Hillary holding baby Stuart with puppy Stiggins at her feet.

This issue of The Attic is generously sponsored by:

DELMANOR
Aurora
Inspired Retirement Living™

as the 1980s. Sorting through all these images, it is fascinating to see the different types of film that were most used during each period.

In the 1860s-1870s, the tintype was a common film process many used to create their still images. It is a type of photograph made by creating a direct positive on a sheet of metal coated with a dark lacquer or enamel. This was used as the support for the photographic emulsion. Handling these types of photos, you can definitely feel the added weight and stiffness that the thin sheet of metal gives them. The image above is an example of a tintype photo from our collection. You can spot Dr. Robert Michael Hillary on the far left, he is posing with his wife Edith (far right) and her family.



Mussen family photo with Robert Michael Hillary standing on the far left.

Continued on page 4

Summer Hours!

Come and visit Hillary House,
Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm.

While you're here, visit the Gift Shop.

As always, we gladly accept donations of new and gently used items such as gift ware, jewellery, home décor, and other household items.

Introducing the 2022 Team...



The AHS is excited to welcome new staff members Selin, Grace, and Alessandra to Hillary House alongside Curator/Manager Kathleen and Administrative Assistant Julie.

Selin Kahramanoğlu - Programming & Outreach Coordinator

Selin completed her Honours Bachelor of Arts (HBA) from the University of Toronto in 2017, studying World History, Material Culture, and French Language. She went on to complete the Combined Degree Program from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information in 2020, earning her a Master of Museum Studies (MMSt) and a Master of Information (MI). Selin previously worked with the King Heritage & Cultural Centre, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Art Gallery of Burlington, and the Royal Ontario Museum, among other cultural institutions.

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

Grace Armstrong - Assistant Museum Curator

Grace recently finished a postgraduate certificate in Museum and Cultural Management from Centennial College and will be attending the University of Toronto this fall in the Master of Information program with a concentration in Library and Information Science. She loves learning about history and cannot wait to delve more into the collections at Hillary House. Grace completed an internship at the AHS in the spring and is very excited to be joining the AHS for a third summer, this time as the Assistant Museum Curator.

Alessandra Falzone - Museum Educator

Alessandra is the social media coordinator, programming assistant, and co-tour guide for the summer season. She graduated from University of Toronto with a Bachelors of Science (BSc), double majoring in History and Biological Anthropology. She has finished a postgraduate certificate program with the University of Toronto, School of Continuing Studies in UX/UI Design and Research. Alessandra volunteered at Hillary House in 2015 and is excited to be back to contribute to the ongoing success of the Aurora Historical Society.

2022 Board of Directors

AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2022

Board of Directors 2022

President	Patricia Wallace
Vice President	Alan Lambert
Treasurer	Geoffrey Dawe
Interim Secretary	Geoffrey Dawe
Director	Ronen Grunberg
Director	Dan McGeown
Director	Martin Paivio
Director	Michelle Primeau
Town of Aurora	
Council Representative	Clr. Sandra Humfries

Committees

Grounds Maintenance	Alan Lambert
TOA Heritage Advisory Committee Rep	John Green

Staff

Curator/Manager	Kathleen Vahey
Programming & Outreach Coordinator	Selin Kahramanoğlu
Administrative Assistant	Julie Preston
Recording Secretary	Renay Partridge

Newsletter Production	Julie Preston
Newsletter Editor, Volunteer	Christine McLure
Newsletter Layout, Volunteer	Brenda Snape

We invite members to submit suggestions for inclusion in the newsletter. Please email community@aurorahs.com.

2022 Calendar of Events

We may look quiet and serene on the outside. INSIDE we are bustling with activity!
Here's a peak at what's going on ...so far. (P.S. We always need more volunteers. Ask how you can help.)
Calendar subject to change.

June

- 18** **Beginner's Hand Embroidery Workshop**
- 22** **Speaker Series**
Piano Stories with Penny
- 24** **Golf Tournament in support of Hillary House**

July

- 9** **Chair Yoga at Hillary House**
- 18-22** **Time Travellers Summer Camp**
- 20** **Speaker Series**
The Boys of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
- 23** **Yoga Movement & Meditation at Hillary House**

August

- 6** **Chair Yoga**
at Hillary House
- 20** **Sun Salutation Yoga**
at Hillary House
- 27** **Historic Walking Tour Yonge Street**
Aurora Public Library partnership

September

- 10** **Historic Walking Tour Wellington Street**
Aurora Public Library partnership
- 17** **Victorian Harvest Tea**
- 28** **Speaker Series**
TBA

October

- 13** **Hillary House Ball**
Throwback Thursday
- 22** **A Haunted Halloween**
at Hillary House
- 26** **Speaker Series**
TBA

November

- 23** **Speaker Series**
The Battle of the Atlantic
- 26** **Hot Chocolate on the Verandah**
Santa Claus parade
- 28** **History of the Salvation Army Exhibition**

December

- 3** **Holiday Wreath Workshop**
- 10** **Space of Healing Exhibition**
Aurora Cultural Centre partnership
- 11** **A Family Christmas**

Photographing History

Continued from page 1

It takes a trained eye to be able to distinguish a tintype film from other popular types of film of the same period, such as daguerreotype and ambrotype film. Although it is a different process for each one, they produce a similar-looking photo, making it difficult to tell the difference.

By the early 1900s, Kodak launched its infamous Brownie camera. Some consider it to be the most important camera ever made, mainly due to its affordability and accessibility. It was produced so cheaply that anyone, not just professionals or the wealthy, could own one and be able to use it with ease. As a result of this increase in access to photography, there was a shift away from the more formal posed photos of the past, with photos becoming more in the moment and candid.



Photos of baby Holly Hillary glued to a Doctor Hillary calling card.

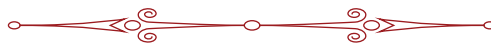
But what about colour film? Colour photography had existed alongside the invention and distribution of black and white film but wasn't perfected for commercial use until Kodak released their KODACHROME Film in 1935. It became the first commercially successful amateur colour film initially in 16 mm for motion pictures and 35 mm slides. 8 mm home movies were released later in 1936. Fujifilm then followed with its colour film in the mid-1940s.

Searching through our collection for some never-before-seen images for this article, I came across these adorable photos of baby Holly Hillary. This strip of the film has been glued onto the back of one of Dr. Hillary's calling cards. In addition to the many photos in our collection, there are also a few photo albums and scrapbooks that contain more Hillary family memories.



Nora and Holly Hillary in front of Hillary House

Photography is a great pathway to the past and our collection also lends itself to telling the history of film over the ages. Through these images, we get a direct sightline into what people looked like, their relationships, and more. However, we are also looking at the subjects of the photos through the lens of who photographed it, and their perspective is just as important. These photos highlight what was considered to be significant enough to photograph, document, and hold onto for many years. This could be a touching moment between family members, a rambunctious dog, or a newborn child; there is a lot worth capturing.



Recognizing Excellence in History Studies

The Aurora Historical Society is pleased to have presented the annual history award to a deserving graduating student from each secondary school in Aurora who showed exemplary dedication to their history studies.

Congratulations to all of the award winners! We wish you success in your future endeavours.



Weathering the Storm

The once-in-a-century storm that cut a devastating swath through many Ontario towns on May 21st not only left many Aurorans without power for an extended period but did significant damage to homes and property. The historic district of Aurora was particularly hard hit with large limbs torn from trees or uprooted altogether causing damage to homes. Surprisingly, the only tree damage on the Hillary House property is at the very back of the property with three large trees downed in the wooded area. While we are grateful there was no damage to the house or barn, our thoughts are with those who are still dealing with the aftermath of the storm.

Upcoming Events

Click on the event for more information and to purchase tickets.

June
18

**Beginner's Hand
Embroidery
Workshop**

June
22

Speaker's Series
Piano Stories with Penny

June
24

Golf Tournament
in support of Hillary
House

July
9

Chair Yoga
at Hillary House

July
18-22

**Time Travellers
Summer Camp**

July
20

Speaker's Series
The Boys of the British
Commonwealth Air
Training Plan

July
23

**Yoga Movement and
Meditation**
at Hillary House

August
6

Chair Yoga
at Hillary House

August
20

Sun Saluation Yoga
at Hillary House

August
27

**Historic Walking
Tour Yonge Street**
partnered with Aurora
Public Library

Hillary House will also be bustling with children as the AHS hosts campers from Royal Rose Art Gallery and the Town of Aurora's Art & Dance camps on select Wednesdays & Thursdays throughout the summer.

Highlights from Hillary House

Participants at the Easter Egg Decorating Workshop in April let their creativity flow.



AHS President Patricia shovels mulch, donated by the Town of Aurora to cover our garden beds and volunteer Lesley works at removing troublesome weeds.

The AHS is looking for volunteers to help grow and maintain the gardens at Hillary House National Historic Site. With supervision, volunteers will assist with performing general gardening practices outdoors such as preparing planting beds, planting, weeding, mulching, pruning and deadheading, and watering. Contact the AHS office for more information.



New crafters learn the basics of cross stitching at the Introduction to Cross Stitch Workshop in March.



Guests to Hillary House celebrate Mother's Day with a high tea. Thank you to AHS volunteers, and the Aurora Legion Ladies Auxillary, Hurst Bakery, and Flowers by Terry who helped make the event possible.



Growing Up Aurora Exhibition

Coming Soon...
July-November

Back in the good old days...

Think back to when you were young. What comes to mind? Is it a memory of a talent show with school friends, a championship hockey game, visiting a fair in your hometown, or that special dinner at your favourite restaurant? Every adult has memories from their childhood that are tied to where they grew up and children today are making new memories every day. This exhibition explores what it was like growing up in Aurora over the past 70 years using stories, photographs, and memories straight from Aurorans. Although there have been many changes to Aurora over the years, you'll be surprised by what has stayed the same.



Lynda Wright shared this photo of her time with the Aurora Town Band. Visit the exhibition to hear more of her story.

The Great Canadian Giving Challenge!

This June, every \$1 you donate through CanadaHelps is an automatic entry for the Aurora Historical Society to win \$20,000.

You can click on the link below, or call the Aurora Historical Society office today at 905-727-8991.

A big thank you to all the 2021 AHS Donors and Volunteers! You truly make a difference.

**Donate
Now**

The Aurora Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of:



Congratulations

to those who were recognized at the Town of Aurora's Community Recognition Awards.

A special shoutout to AHS members, supporters, and dedicated volunteers:

- Lissa Dwyer – *Green Award*
- Rosalyn Gonsalves – *Lifetime Achievement Award*
- Linda Welch – *Arts & Culture Award*



Town of Aurora Recognition Award Winners.

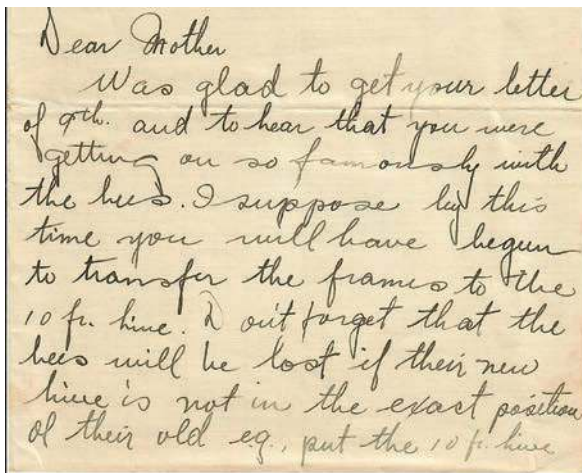
Photo courtesy of Neighbour Aurora.

Buzzing around Hillary House

By Alessandra Falzone, Museum Educator

Honeybees and their pursuits have been a buzz (pun intended) in the mainstream media for several years. Although it might seem diminishing to call all the attention on bees 'trendy', interest in bees is not entirely new. Honey bees, species *Apis mellifera*, are critically important to an intricate ecosystem and global food structure. Bees have been kept for their honey to add sweetness to drinks and food since the Mesolithic Period (around 15,000BCE) and honey was even used for its antiseptic properties by the Ancient Egyptians.

Hillary House had its own apiary and apiarist in the form of Stuart Hillary, son of Dr. Robert Michael Hillary. He kept the apiary along the back of the shed which he used to collect honey. Although we are uncertain as to when he began beekeeping, by 1916 it is clear he had a hobby with bees. In a letter to his mother Edith, while away training for WWI, Stuart outlines and imparts careful instruction to manage his bees;



*“Dear Mother
Was glad to get your letter of 9th. And to hear that you were getting on so famously with the bees. I suppose by this time you will have begun to transfer the frames to the 10 fr. Hive. Don't forget that the bees will be lost if their new hive is not in the exact position of their old e.g., put the 10 fr. Hive on the platform the 8 fr. Hive is on. I think they would do better in the larger hive!”
(HA2020.1.137)*

Honeybees were brought to Canada 400 years ago by European colonists. Varieties of the native North American honeybee couldn't be relied on to harvest honey or beeswax in any great quantity, so the European species was imported. Prior to the modern beehives' invention in 1851 by American Lorenzo Langstroth, bees were kept in skeps made of grass or straw used since antiquity. This innovation saved the destruction of the beehive and oftentimes the colony, as it was common to kill the hive to

harvest the honey and then purchase another colony from the US. These modern beehives included an 8mm 'bee space' where the bees could move about the colony and would naturally not fill with comb or propolis (bee glue). Stuart was worried that if the bees were not moved into the larger hive, then they would have filled this 'bee space', grew another queen bee, started to leave his hive in search of someplace larger, and begun swarming.

For Edith to go about moving the bees, she wouldn't have had to wear beekeeping attire, which included a tie on the sleeves with rope to stop the bees going up, and a bee hood which was a netting that went over headwear. This was because bees only swarm at the end of May into early June, of course depending on her sensibilities she might have chosen to gear up!

The Hillary's would have been grateful for the honey and wax the apiary provided for them. Honey might not have been readily available to the Hillary's the way modern groceries always stock honey year-round. The honey would have kept for as long as the supply was available because honey is part of a handful of foods that do not spoil in their natural state. We know Dr. Robert Michael Hillary kept a large vegetable garden, a chicken for eggs, and a cow for their dairy needs. Having access to home-grown foods on their property would've helped feed the family while Dr. Hillary was awaiting patient payments.

Candles could have also been made from the beeswax collected from the apiary. Although electricity was available in Ontario, at the time of Stuart's letter only about 59,000 homes were connected to the grid. Candles would still have been used and beeswax candles being of the highest quality, and highest value, the Hillary's would have been lucky to have this commodity in their own backyard. Beeswax candles burn without smell, and give off a very good, strong, long-lasting white light unlike a tallow, and would've been an exclusive alternative to the ubiquitous paraffin wax candle.

Bees continue to be important at Hillary House as they help pollinate the numerous flowers found around the grounds and they will continue to be welcome to flit among the flowers buzzing away about their beesness!



Sad but True

By Patricia Wallace, President

Sadly, Hillary House was the victim of theft recently.

As you know, Hillary House sits low on the property with a large wooden fence partially blocking the view from Yonge St. Like any property partially hidden from public view, this could pose a security risk. As such, the house and barn have been alarmed and monitored for years. (I just love getting woken in the night because a bat has set off the motion detectors.)

Two years ago, in an effort to increase security using the principle of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), we invested in permanently wired flood lights on a timer to highlight the house in the dark hours as an additional deterrent.

Thieves being what they are will look for your weak spots. We had some temporary weak spots recently ...and they struck.

The vintage lawn furniture had just been taken out of winter storage and was stacked by the barn (convenient to the driveway), waiting for the lawn to be cut. This was stolen on the Monday night after the big storm. Incredibly, thieves (we assume the same ones) came back the next night and stole the antique wheelbarrow and the historic 8-foot-long wooden bench from the back porch. This irreplaceable item normally lives on the well-lit front verandah but had been moved to allow for ongoing restoration work. This bench has been sitting outside of Hillary House for over 100 years, untouched. Our records

indicate it was given to the Hillary family by the Anglican Church in the early 1900s as seating for spectators at the tennis court.

These thefts were likely pre-planned as you wouldn't have been able to see these things by just driving by, thus, the thieves would also have taken measures to hide their identity.

Of course, these incidents have been reported to the police and insurance, however, realistically there is little hope of anything being found or returned. While the lawn furniture was vintage, it was not antique, nor was it original to the house. It can be replaced but at a cost. The wheelbarrow and the bench, with their provenance, cannot be replaced.

These incidents have left us sad, angry, and a bit unnerved. We have received many messages from the community and our members expressing shock and outrage, along with suggestions for greater security. A feasibility study is being undertaken for added security.

We thank the community for your support, as we endeavour to continue to add value to the community. To support operations at Hillary House, please consider a donation.

**Donate
Now**



An Update from the Aurora Museum & Archives

By Lauren Ulbricht, Collections & Exhibitions Coordinator at the Aurora Museum & Archives



AURORA
MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

As the Aurora Museum & Archives remains closed for renovations, we have been busy creating online exhibits accessible from anywhere! There are currently five exhibits focused on Aurora's history.

Wardrobes of Aurora: Dressing for Birth, Death and Everything In Between debuted online on May 18th in celebration of International Museum Day. Highlighted are the clothes from the back of the wardrobe; the pieces you carefully take out every few years just to look at, the clothing you pass on to your children. Each piece tells us about the families who once lived here, the important moments that shaped their lives, and how, while styles have changed, sentiments have not. We are also proud to display the Hillary flag in this exhibition.

Also available on our website: *St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church: Celebrating 150 Years*, *Town Park: A Community Story Book*, *A Legacy of Sport*, and *The Plow in the Crest*. These exhibits and more can be found at auroramuseum.ca.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is currently running a community campaign for an upcoming exhibition. We are asking for folks who immigrated to Canada and are connected to Aurora to share their story with the Museum. A connection to Aurora could be current or past residency, participating in a group based in Aurora, owning a business in Town, etc. The information shared with us will be used to create a 2023 exhibition in our newly renovated space. You can share your story at: auroramuseum.ca/whats-on/.

Many Thanks to:

Our awesome volunteers and supportive local businesses!

Spring Clean-up team: Al, Nathan, John, Marjorie, Mike, Owen, Amy, Cristian, Nate, Scott.

The Town of Aurora for lending a bin for clean-up, the lovely hanging baskets that decorate the verandah, and for providing our grass cutting.

Sonia who ensures that our indoor plants stay healthy

Our amazing event volunteers: Alison, Angela, Michelle, Sonia, Sandy, and Pat! We couldn't host our events without your support.

Wendy for taking care of our Gift Shop and making it look inviting, drawing in many shoppers!

Lesley for braving the hedges along Yonge Street to pull out the invasive Garlic Mustard.

Volunteer Opportunities

- * Board of Directors – Director
- * Board of Directors – Secretary
- * Garden Volunteers
- * Tour Guide Volunteers
- * Gift Shop Volunteers
- * Event Volunteers
- * School Programs Volunteers
- * Administration & Special Project Volunteers
- * Collections Volunteers
- * Remote Volunteers

For more information contact community@aurorahs.com