

Welcome to

MUSEUM ON THE BOYNE

Agricultural Exhibit Hall



The Alliston Agricultural Society built the main building in 1914 as an agricultural exhibit hall where craft and food entries were displayed during the annual fall fair in Riverdale Park. During the First World War, 1914 to 1918, the building was also used as a drill hall and recruitment centre.



In 1937, the Lions Club leased the building from the Town for the annual fee of one dollar and renovated the building into a dance hall by installing the hardwood floor that remains in place throughout the original exhibit hall. Upwards of one thousand residents attended the inaugural dance on April 27, 1937. Dances were held weekly from April through to the late fall and continued into the early 1940s.



In 1945 the building was leased to the Dorothea Knitting Mill, a knitting mill in Toronto that manufactured berets, scarves, toques, gloves and mitts for the Armed Forces. The sole function of this local mill was to finish gloves and mitts that were shipped from the Toronto mill. The company

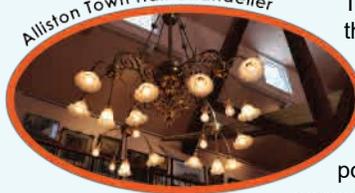
eventually added equipment to produce men's sweaters. After years of instability due to a faulty heating system, a decline in workers and cheaper imports flooding the Canadian market, the Alliston branch of the Dorothea Knitting Mill closed in 1954.

In 1959 the Town of Alliston passed a by-law establishing a 'Historical Museum' in Alliston. A museum board was established consisting of two people appointed by Town of Alliston Council, and one person appointed by each of the councils for the Townships of Adjala, Essa, Tecumseth, Tosorontio and West Gwillimbury. The Town of Alliston offered this building and the newly named South Simcoe Pioneer Museum unofficially opened in 1960. Following a very successful first season, a grand opening was held the following year.

Subsequent to the amalgamation of several municipalities in South Simcoe and the establishment of the Town of New Tecumseth in 1991, the museum board consisted of appointed council members and citizens appointed from the municipalities of Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Essa, Innisfil and New Tecumseth. In 1996 the building underwent major renovations to better protect the artifacts within the building and to meet the criteria for government grants. In 2005 the museum's name was changed to Museum on the Boyne to better reflect the mandate and to avoid confusion with Simcoe County Museum.

Inside the Museum

Alliston Town Hall Chandelier



The chandelier is one of six that hung in the Opera Hall on the upper level of the former Alliston Town Hall. Manufactured c.1895, each weighed two hundred pounds, measured six feet across, eight feet high and included ornate curled brass pieces and twenty-five gas fired mantles (eventually electrified) with etched glass-fluted shades. In 1966 the museum's chandelier was loaned to the Ontario Hydro Museum (OHM) in Toronto on a temporary exchange. Upon closure of the museum, the chandelier was sent to the Ontario Agricultural Museum (OAM) in Milton and upon its closure the chandelier was sent to the National Museum of Science and Technology (NMST) in Ottawa.

When members of the Alliston Historical Society (AHS) were made aware of the OAM closure, they requested that the Curator of the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum (SSPM, now

Museum on the Boyne) attempt to locate the fixture and arrange to have it returned to Alliston. After submitting evidence proving SSPM's original ownership, NMST released the chandelier to SSPM. The chandelier arrived in three boxes, was cleaned, re-assembled and officially hung in the museum in February 1999.

The Globe Hotel in Rosemont was built on a Crown Land grant in the 1830s. The current building, dating from 1859 was one of four hotels in Rosemont at the time. It served as a tavern and a stopping point for the stage coach. Prohibition curbed its legal activities, but it still accepted overnight visitors until 1955. A popular tale involving the Globe takes place the night a fire broke out in the hostelry built where the Anglican church stands now. The main water source for the village was a well located on the Globe's property. The owner went outside in her nightgown and stood guard over the well with a shotgun until her rival's business was beyond saving.

The Globe Hotel Bar and Mirror



Sir Frederick Banting's Kayak



Most people are familiar with Sir Frederick Banting as the co-discover of Insulin, but many do not know that he was also a gifted painter. During an art show at the University of Toronto, Banting's work was viewed by A.Y. Jackson, who took Banting on as a protégé and became a lifelong friend. They frequently travelled across Canada on painting trips; Banting was quite fond of painting landscapes.

In the summer of 1927 Banting and Jackson took a trip to the Arctic region of Canada on the SS *Beothic* as part of the Eastern Arctic Patrol. While there Banting became concerned by the health and living conditions of the Inuit people, particularly regarding their diet. He worried that the food shipped in by the

Sir Frederick Banting's Kayak cont'd

government and the Hudson's Bay Company would lead to drastic changes in diet, and that the high carbohydrates and sugars would lead to chronic diseases like diabetes. Banting wrote a scathing report to the Department of the Interior on the treatment of the Inuit people. In the report he noted, "infant mortality was high because of the undernourishment of the mother before birth"; that "White man's food leads to decay of native teeth" and that "white flour, sea-biscuits, tea and tobacco do not provide sufficient fuel to warm and nourish" them. As Banting was a prominent figure, his criticisms attracted attention, particularly from the media. As a thank you from the community he was attempting to support, he was gifted the kayak or "qajaq".



Painting by Frederick Banting, Sommerville collection
Courtesy of Sir Frederick Banting Legacy Foundation

The 27-foot Greenland style kayak hung in the Banting barn for several years before it was donated to the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum by Lady Banting. It was originally covered in seal skin, but many years in the barn had taken its toll and the kayak had severely deteriorated when it arrived at the museum. The driftwood skeleton of the kayak remained intact. It was sent to the Canadian Conservation Institute for restoration before being displayed in the museum.

Outside the Museum

Alliston Jail Cell



When the Alliston Town Hall was erected in 1893, four jail cells were installed on the dirt floor in the basement. The jail accommodations were later condemned in part because the basement offered no lighting, ventilation or sanitation facilities and was accessed through a trap door. A small wooden lock-up was erected directly north of the Town Hall. After the building was consumed by flames in

October 1914, a new brick and cement block jail with two holding cells and a wood-burning stove was erected on site. The pre-fab metal mesh jail cells complete with a floor and a door were considered escape-proof and fire-proof. By the 1960s the jail was rarely occupied and in 1962 Council ordered the demolition of the building. One of the cells was donated to the Museum on the Boyne.

The Log House



The 100 acres of the east half of Lot 11, Concession 5 in Essa Township were first leased from The Canada Company in 1859 by Neil McDonald. Between 1859 and 1914 the property was associated with Neil and his sons Alexander and Angus. The log house was built on the property circa 1865. It is a rare example of a 2-storey log house of this date. The property and log house were subsequently owned by the Feltis and then the MacKenzie families.

Salada-Shirriff-Horsey Ltd. purchased the property from the MacKenzies and donated the log house to the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum in June 1960. The building was dismantled and moved to the museum site. Rebuilding costs were covered by Alliston Town Council, the Alliston Lions Club and Baxter Laboratories.

Extensive restoration work was completed in 2000 and again in 2018-2019. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2002.

The Barn



The barn was built in 1858 in Bond Head. It is completely constructed of white pine, which is Ontario's provincial tree and a chief export at the time. The inside is held together by wooden pegs with hand forged nails securing the outside boards. The large beam down the center is called the swing beam and is common in English-style barns. The barn originally belonged to the Jeffery family and was donated to the museum in 1991 by the Keffer family. A barn raising ceremony took place on July 1st, 1991 to commemorate Alliston's Centennial Anniversary. The barn raising took

approximately 5 hours to complete. The barn is listed as a significant building on the Town's municipal heritage register.

The Fountain



In July 1919, the Alliston Town Council decided "to be in line with all progressive places and to be merely humane to the equine and accommodating to its driver this town must have a drinking fountain or two." The fountain was installed in October 1919 on the north-west corner of Mill and Victoria Streets. In 1942 the fountain was moved to Riverdale Park. When it was later replaced by a more modern fountain, the former town fountain was relocated to the front of the museum.



X 64-105 Cab, Toronto Public Library

Visit the Museum

Children's programs

We have many fun programs for preschoolers and youth. We enjoy combining learning with creative play to give your child the best hands-on experience possible. Some of our activities include summer day camps and programs for PA days, holidays and March Break.

Museum Hours:

Summer (June to August)
Monday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Winter (September to May)
Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Admission

There is no fee for admission but you may make a donation if you wish to support us.

For more information please contact us at:
705-435-4030 ext.1802

Visit our website: www.newtecumseth.ca