



# NEWS FROM KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*Snowball Corners in October - site of Snowball School SS#10*

## KTHS Holiday Concert - Save the Date!

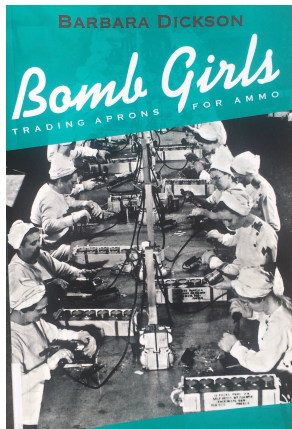
Our annual Holiday Concert this year will be presented as a 50-minute livestream on **Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 pm**, featuring King jazz singer, songwriter, recording artist **Michele Mele**.

Save the date as you won't want to miss it. More details to follow by email shortly!

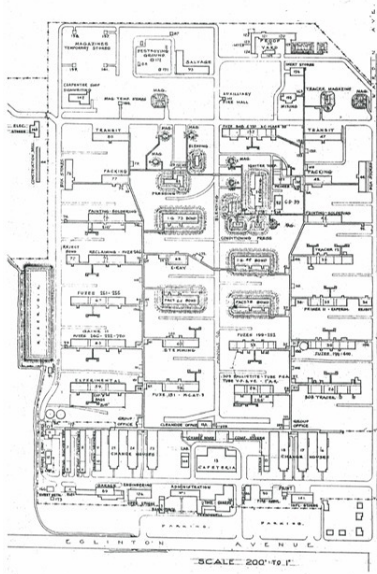


## Author Shares Bomb Girls' Contributions to the War Effort at September's KTHS Speaker Series

Last month, KTHS hosted Barbara Dickson, local historian and author of *Bomb Girls: Trading Aprons for Ammo*, for a captivating speaker series event on Zoom.



It's been 20 years since Barbara interviewed her first "Bomb Girl" who worked in Canada's largest fuse-filling munitions factory during WWII located in Scarborough, Ont. near where she grew up. She has been interviewing and compiling their histories ever since, having released *Bomb Girls* in 2015, followed by a documentary film with the same title in 2017. In the very near future, Barbara is releasing another book titled *Bomb Girls: United for Peace* with more than 100 personal accounts.



Barbara’s dream is to help establish a museum on the site of the former General Engineering Company (GECO) munitions plant in Scarborough with an archival repository recording of the names of the people (21,000 over four years – most of whom were women) who worked with dangerous explosives as part of the Canadian war effort. Eighty years later, 20 of the original 170 buildings are still standing and an estimated four kilometres of abandoned tunnels still exist underground.

“Some of the women I’ve interviewed have never even been asked about what they sacrificed for their country,” Barbara shared during her talk. “You were risking your life if you worked on the high explosive side of Scarborough at that time, and no one ever asked them to share their story.”

During her talk, she shared details of “A Day in the Life of a Bomb Girl”, from the strict rules women had to adhere to both in how they wore their uniform to how they accessed the dirty vs clean side of the

factory, two minute breaks, and the calling of “All Clear” upon leaving the change house. A typical shift to and from work, including the bus ride, took 11 hours.

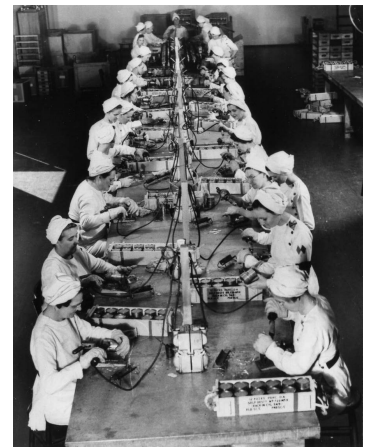
The 25-minute “Bomb Girls: A Documentary” includes Barbara’s interviews with five of the Bomb Girls and actual war-time footage of the Scarborough plant’s construction, its secretive tunnel system, and dangerous fuse-filling operations.

**Linda Similas, a KTHS Board member**, was personally impacted by Barbara’s talk in that she realized for the first time that her mother, **Evelyn Jarick**, had been a GECOite starting when she was just 16 in 1942. Both Evelyn and her older sister, Edna, worked there until the end of the war.

“She may have told me what she did, but I don’t recall. I was going through her things recently and I saw these photos, and I remember thinking that’s funny it looks like it could be, but no, it was probably a catering company or something like that.”

But when Barbara showed photos of the young girls in their uniforms during her presentation, Linda couldn’t help but recognize the uncanny resemblance ... it just had to be. During the Q&A session following the presentation, Linda voiced what she was thinking and Barbara suggested she reach out by email with her mother’s name and any other details. Later that week, Barbara sent Linda a photo of a newspaper clipping that mentioned her mother’s name and shared the following insights based on her research on what Evelyn’s role was:

“She worked in Building No. 78 called “Box Stores” where munitions boxes were built and inventories managed. You can imagine the sheer number of wooden munitions boxes that would have had to have been built to ship out over 256 million rounds of ammunition over the course of the war; sturdy and practically indestructible!”



“She was mentioned in the *GECO Fusilier* because she and several of her shop mates earned their first-year badge as of March 1943. She would have started working at GECO in February 1942, or about 4 months after production got underway.”



Although Linda’s mother passed away in 1998 and she will never have an opportunity to sit down to ask more questions, if Barbara’s talk hadn’t lit a spark, Linda may never have realized her mother’s invaluable role in the war effort. Maybe a lesson for us all to record our loved one’s stories and history before it’s too late!

Should you know of, or suspect you know of someone who may have worked in the Scarborough plant between 1941-45, **please reach out to Barbara Dickson** at [barbara@barbaradickson.ca](mailto:barbara@barbaradickson.ca) as she would like to help confirm and/or add them to her ongoing archival repository list. You may also order an autographed copy of *Bomb Girls: Trading Aprons for Ammo* directly from her for **\$20 + HST!**

These courageous young women were not only part of what Barbara refers to as Canada’s “best kept secret”, but true unsung heroes of the war effort.

## History of King Book Update

We are excited to report that after being closed for nearly 20 months, the **Ontario Archives will reopen on November 1<sup>st</sup>, by appointment only**. This will allow author Kelly Mathews the opportunity to complete her research.



We still have lots of work to do to try and complete our History of King book in time for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year! Stay tuned for future updates!

## Travels of the King Railway Station

*By Ann Love Reprinted with the permission of MOSAiC magazine*

My husband vividly remembers leaping in the back of his grandfather’s station wagon in the 1950s for a drive to the King railway station.

He and his brothers looked forward to this regular Saturday outing to witness the spectacles of the steam engine’s arrival. Which grandson would first hear its horn wail at a distant level crossing? Who would get to cry out, “I see it!” when the bright headlamp of the locomotive rounded into view? The brothers loved the powerful huffs and sharp hisses, squeals, and clanks as the locomotive slowed and braked, stopping in front of the station at precisely the same spot every time. When the whistle blew and the train





departed, the boys got to choose a soda at nearby Armstrong's store before driving home. David liked Wilson's orange best, but his brothers preferred Vernor's ginger ale.

The King railway station was built in 1852-3 by the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Railway with service from York to Machell's Corners (Toronto to Aurora). The first train to chug north from York through King was, in fact, the first train to run in Upper Canada. The Grand Trunk Railway took over the line in the early

1900s. Canadian National acquired the station in 1923 after Grand Trunk went bankrupt and offered service from Toronto to North Bay.

In the late 1950s, diesel locomotives replaced steam on the Toronto-Barrie line. Then, for lack of riders, passenger service discontinued to King. By 1967, the railway station sat empty. But that was just the first chapter of our station's story. Today, at about 169 years old, the King station has had two road trips, two threatened demolitions, a major restoration, and is about to get a facelift – again.

Member Doris Willoughby is certain the King Women's Institute saved the railway station from a first demolition. She recollects attending, with a delegation, a meeting at the station in 1968. The women argued it was the oldest surviving station on the Toronto-Barrie line, probably in Ontario, and maybe even all of Canada. Its last two lookalike sister stations had recently been destroyed – Maple had burned and Concord was torn down. The CN men at the meeting were surprised at the women's interest but shrugged – if they wanted it, they could have it!

Fortunately, Russ Cooper of the Toronto Conservation Authority took an interest in mounting a train exhibit at Black Creek Pioneer Village. So, as Doris remembers, the station was moved to a field at Kortright until Pioneer Village was ready. The King bank manager dispersed the station's contents and the Matthews Brothers, a local haulage company, carted the structure away. Photographer and local resident Bill Poulis filmed its solemn departure from King for the CBC.

My mother-in-law Betty Love spotted the station, slumping in a field at Kortright in the late 1980s when she was picking up my children at a summer day camp. As she had fond memories of meeting her parents at the station years before, she talked about its future with friends in the Township and found many shared her interest.



In 1989, Bill Poulis' wife Helen, then President of the King Township Historical Society (KTHS), heard that since Black Creek now did not want the station, the Ontario Railway Association and the Town of Lindsay were both considering acquiring it. The Society approached King Council to request the station be brought home. As talk favouring its return grew around the Township, Mayor Britnell and Council agreed to

allow the Society to move it back to the Museum site in Kinghorn (today called the King Heritage & Cultural Centre) if the Society bore the cost and sorted out the logistics.

The Society struck a fundraising committee led by Gage Love, Betty's husband, and John Manson, while Bill Poulis ran the team investigating the complex details of the move and restoration.

A fundraising goal was set at about \$75,000. Laskay's Bert Ezard designed a replica station coin bank and crafted over a hundred banks for Society members to sell for the restoration fund.

Meanwhile Gage Love and John Manson sought individual donations, big and small, from the community. Successful at reaching their target in the end, there were bumps along the fundraising road. When they approached a neighbour – a successful businessman or “gentleman” farmer – he granted the fundraising team an interview. After their pitch, the man reached into his pocket but, instead of pulling out his checkbook, he rattled a box of matches and said, “This is all that station is good for.” Gage and John were shocked. They had raised money for multiple community projects and had never had a “no” like that!

Bill Poulis discovered that the Matthews Brothers still continued to haul and that their mother, now elderly, still worked for the business. The Historical Society contracted the company to bring the station home again in early December 1989. They persuaded Vaughan Hydro to drive ahead of the flatbed, lifting wires for free; but Ontario Hydro, at the King Vaughan Line, insisted on being paid for the final leg. Road authorities permitted the move so long as the station was off the asphalt by 3:30 p.m.



Moving day was snowy and the station, having sunk into the field at Kortright over the past 21 years was hard to raise.

Doris Willoughby remembers standing on the corner of King Road, looking down Jane Street, at 3:30 p.m., when the hydro truck and the station on its flatbed reached the intersection. Wet snow continued to fall, and the Matthews Brothers blared, “I’ll be Home for Christmas” from their truck cab as they rumbled round the turn.

The hydro truck pulled onto the shoulder to lift the last wires on King Road. The driver did not secure the truck’s safety outriggers and the budget operator did not tightly clip his safety harness. Suddenly the truck slipped and rolled down an embankment. The bucket operator jumped clear while onlookers, including Doris, held their breath. The truck driver looked up to see the station looming over him – but, thankfully, the station stayed put and the hydro driver was OK. The bucket operator suffered a broken ankle.



The Matthews Brothers offloaded the station at its destination before rain started to pound. And, of course, instead of celebrating the successful delivery of the

station, the evening news focused on the near disaster.

Doris Willoughby’s husband Bill, a CN employee himself, and many others volunteered for the restoration. Campbell Snider, a restoration professional, directed the talented team, Bill Poulis supervised the whole project, getting supplies on site and hiring workers when needed to see the job finished. David Chambers, a professional carpenter from Bond Head, was hired to restore the baggage room.

Helen Poulis says her husband was a dreamer, but he was clearly also a doer. He filmed the station’s departure from King and then, 21 years later, its journey back. Those return trip tapes have been gifted to the King Archives by Helen, and will be available for viewing at [www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com](http://www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com).

Today, Erika Baird, Supervisor of the King Heritage and Culture Centre, is preparing a 10-year plan for the site that includes the re-restoration of the railway station and an upgrade of services to the building. Already the baggage cart has been restored, using funds provided by the Historical Society’s Fawcett Bequest. Erika’s hope is to repurpose the venue to attract many visitors who will enjoy the station’s stories.



And the railway station does, indeed, have great stories – of good people, big dreams, and road trips; of steam and diesel, of chugging and squealing; of whistles, horns and bells; as well as many happy times.

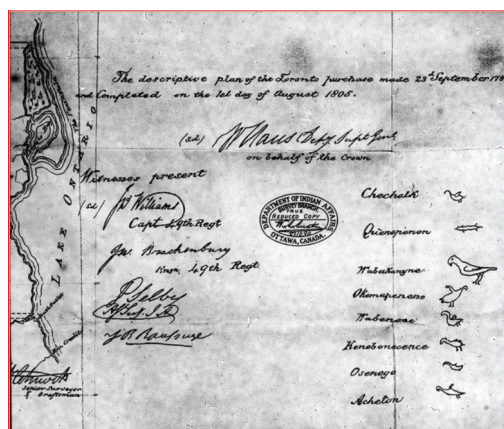
Doris Willoughby remembers riding the steam-powered train with her sister from Toronto to King in the 1930s. When night fell, beautiful gas lamps twinkled in the passenger car. She would watch out the window for the friendly lights of the King station. The same station now greets residents returning from their highway commutes and welcomes them to King township.

*This article drew on the memories of KTHS life members Helen Poulis and Doris Willoughby, as well as KTHS member Barry Wallace.*

*Historical photos are courtesy of the King Heritage & Cultural Centre.*

### King Township’s Connection to Indigenous Treaties

*By Vicki Hotte – Vicki is a longtime resident of King Township, and a member of KTHS, Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT) and supporter of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. She believes there is far more going on “in the landscape” than we understand, but all life depends on nature for survival and there is no “substitute”.*



RG 10, Vol. 1941, IT 040, Indian Affairs' Consecutive No. 13 National Archives of Canada

Within the Great Lakes’ drainage basin, “**The Dish With One Spoon**” Treaty Wampum bound Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas to share and care for all landscapes and animals, enjoining them to the shared spoon and single ‘Dish’. The wampum belt was a woven ‘legal document’ depicting this agreement. Historians estimate this Great Law dates back to 1142 and formed the basis for subsequent treaties.

Under indigenous beliefs, animals have souls connected to other living spirits within landscapes, and all are integral to ‘The Dish’.

Native spirituality draws genealogical (kinship) lineages from two flood events. Creation of landscapes from floodwaters was credited to animals, beginning

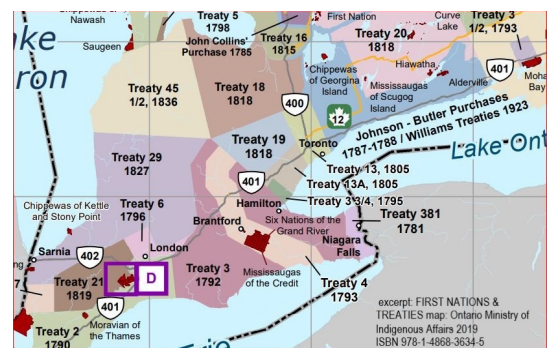
with a muskrat who scooped a pawful of mud from the flooded depths. Animals tended the mud, creating diverse habitats for all species.

Indigenous peoples trace their descent from these honoured animals, whose bodies gave shape to the doodems used to symbolize different clans.

Settlers were invited into 'The Dish' Treaty, following King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763; yet, the Crown retained sovereignty/control over all native lands and ignored the Treaty's wise harvesting obligations.

In 2014, Ryerson University invited Hayden King, an Anishinaabe writer/educator, to prepare a Land Acknowledgement, which invoked the laws of 'The Dish', but seemed to be interpreted metaphorically in a popular, not obligatory sense. By 2019, Hayden regretted writing the acknowledgement: "Who are we, really, to invite anybody into 'The Dish With One Spoon' Treaty?"

**For King Township, three treaties matter. Treaty No. 13 (Toronto Purchase of 1787) includes most of King, Vaughan, and Toronto. It was disputed by Mississauga Chiefs, who were not consulted, though their doodems were drawn on the deed of sale. In 1792, Lt-Gov. John Graves Simcoe found a blank deed attached to the disputed page. Simcoe's successor, Peter Hunter, turned Treaty No. 13 into the 1805 Indenture Agreement, with a map to which doodems of the original Chiefs were again affixed.**



By the 1980s, Mississaugas of the Credit Nation assembled historical documents for their successful appeal against Treaty No. 13, resulting in a settlement of \$145-million (\$578/acre) in 2010.

Background material for the Mississaugas' claim noted stocks of goods and weapons, provided by British agents to secure their ongoing alliance against American incursions, were later claimed to be 'proxy payments' for Treaty No. 13 lands, but historical documents disproved that. Officially, the Mississaugas received 10 shillings for 250,880 acres of land by 1805.



Toronto Public Library – 1911 Map, Baldwin Collection  
Call No. MsX.1918.1.6

Schomberg and Glenville lie north of Treaty No. 13 lands, and so exist within the **Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty No. 18 of 1818**, while Holland Landing and a sliver of eastern King lie within the **1923 Williams' Treaties**.

All these treaties were challenged because **promised** hunting, fishing and reserved lands were not written therein.

In November 2018, Federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett, apologized for all injustices of the Williams' Treaties, leading to a \$1.1-billion settlement.

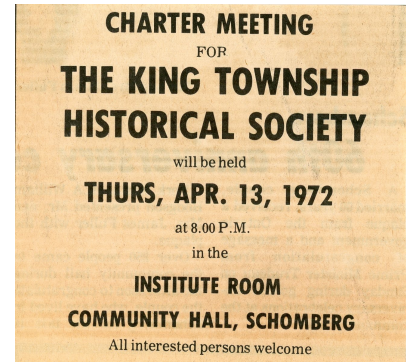
Her apology was delivered in Rama where a "native-themed" casino was built in the mid 1990s as a partnership with 132 native communities. Since 2013, OLG has been locked in disputes with the Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership due to inadequate payments

and lack of native representation on the Corporate Board. In 2019, one judge called the ongoing disputes “*breath-taking in this age of reconciliation.*”

## Next year the KTHS will celebrate its 50th anniversary!

Stay tuned for our celebration plans, including the rescheduling of Ted Barris, author of *Dam Busters: Canadian Airmen and the Secret Raid Against Nazi Germany* as one of our special guest speakers and assorted other 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events!

Over the course of the coming months, be sure to check our website for updates: [www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com](http://www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com)



## What’s Happening at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre 2920 King Road, King City

King Heritage & Cultural Centre reopened for self-guided tours of the Kinghorn Schoolhouse August 17th, including the exhibits *A Place to Call Home* and *Together Again*.

Admission includes access to the Kinghorn Schoolhouse, exhibition galleries and grounds. Laskay Hall, King Christian Church and the King Train Station can be viewed from outside. Kids 12 and under also get free participation in Museum-to-Go, a self guided program that will educate and entertain on-site and after you’ve gone home. Children 2 and under are free and do not require registration.

For groups over ten people please contact us at (905) 833-2331 or [kingmuseum@king.ca](mailto:kingmuseum@king.ca) to arrange your visit.



### Haunting on King Road October 29<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00pm at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre

Haunting on King Road is back at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre! Follow our spooky railway to stop at five different stations of Halloween filled fun. Stations include a ghost hunt, scary stories, crafts and a haunted train station! Get your ticket stamped at each station for a sweet treat and place your ticket at the end in a draw for a prize. Cost is \$5 per person +HST

### The Trees of Giving display is back this year!

This annual tradition will start on **November 20<sup>th</sup>** and run **through December 18<sup>th</sup>**. Vote for your favourite tree at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre and help raise funds for the Southlake Foundation in honour of frontline workers! Admission is free.





### Timeless Tales – The Anthology

LAST CHANCE TO ORDER YOUR COPY!

First run has sold out! Less than 10 copies available from the second run!

The Timeless Tales Writing Contest was created with the intention of discovering the writing talent in our community of York Region while melding literary art with local history.

As well as the judges' top picks, we have included all 23 entries in this testament to the success of our aims and as a legacy for future contestants. Every story told has its shining moments. Authorship is part talent and a greater part dedication to honing the craft. This publication is a tribute to these brave new authors, to encourage them onward in pursuit of that unforgettable story.

There were Winners and Honourable Mentions in four different age categories. Grade 1 - 4; Grade 5 - 8; Grade 9 - 12; 18 yrs. to 101 ! To order your copy, visit [ArtsSocietyKing.ca](http://ArtsSocietyKing.ca).



### Heading to Collingwood Sometime Soon?

Be sure to stop by the **Butter Gallery at 126 Hurontario Street** to view Colleen Glynn's collection of landscape paintings, including **many barns and scenes from around King**.

As an artist, Colleen is "inspired by what can often be overlooked and by subjects that remind people of home." View her collection here: <https://buttergallery.ca>



### Help KTHS Grow Our Membership!

Are you interested in joining the King Township Historical Society? Would you like to help support and preserve the history of King? Join today for only \$25/individual, \$30/family membership. Submit your membership online through the KTHS website at [www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com](http://www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com) or by mail. Questions? Please email us at [kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com).



King Township Historical Society, 2920 King Road, King City ON L7B 1L6

#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2021

(PLEASE PRINT INFORMATION AND MAIL CHEQUE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS)

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

INDIVIDUAL \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**History of KTHS in Brief:**

*The KTHS dates back to 1972 when a group of dedicated residents, with interests in preserving the history of their Township, gathered to form the King Township Historical Society. In 1981 ~1982, the KTHS was incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society under a Provincial Letters Patent. Our goals and objectives are to encourage research into the history, to secure and preserve an accurate account of the progress and development, and to promote public interest in the history of King Township. More information may be found on our website at [www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com](http://www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com).*