

Wednesday, Mar 6 2024, 8:00 pm

Rousseau Room - Swansea Town Hall

SPEAKER: Lorna Poplak

Toronto's Infamous Don Jail

Visitors Welcome! Light Refreshments!

*The Swansea Historical Society thankfully acknowledges
funding grants from the following bodies:*

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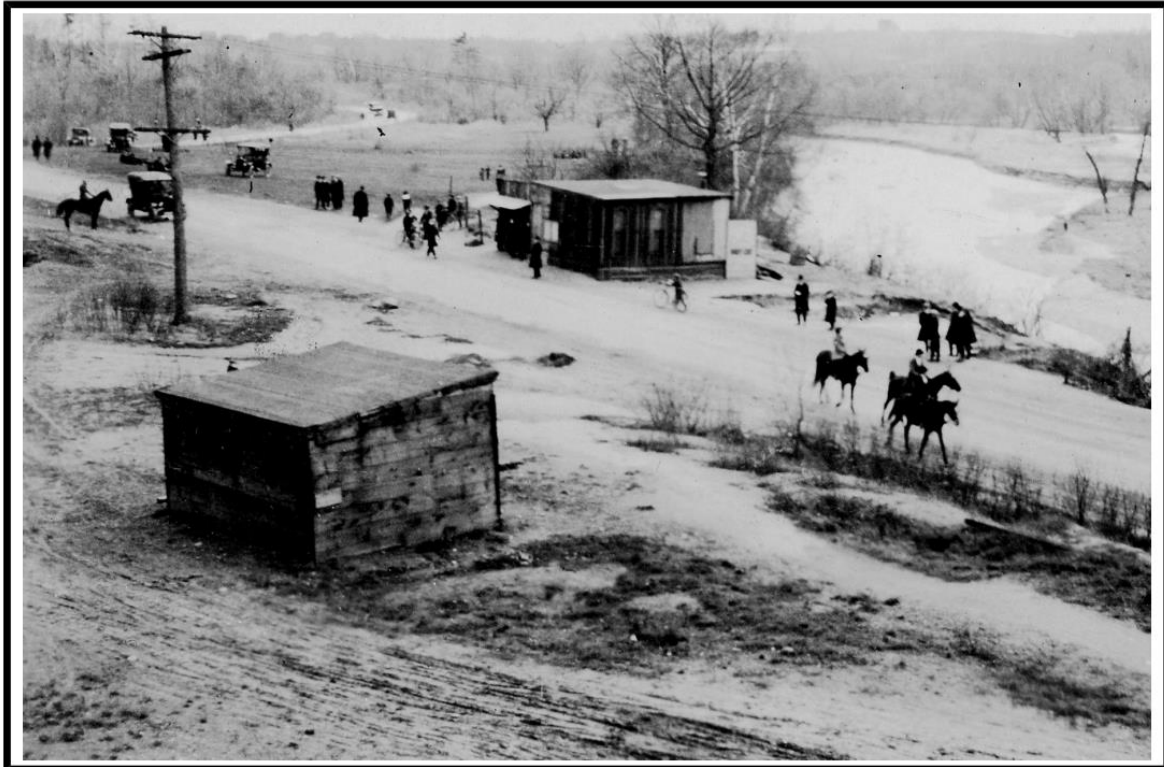


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Historical Photo of the Month

This is just one of many local historical photos in our 2019 calendar. See the 2024 calendar at swanseahistoricalsociety.ca/publications/calendars



Original Bloor Street alignment near the Old Mill, 1920
(Dawson Family Donation to the Swansea Historical Society Archives)



Swansea Historical Society Contact Information

During the pandemic, we have been doing our best to respond to all requests, although our answers may be delayed somewhat because of renovation work at the Town Hall is now complicating access to our Archives. In the meantime, we invite you to continue following our activities through the Society's website

www.swanseahistoricalsociety.ca and the website of the Swansea Town Hall www.swanseatownhall.ca . You can also follow us on X (formerly Twitter) at twitter.com/Swansea_History or Instagram at www.instagram.com/swansea_history .

If you wish to contact us, the Society's mobile telephone number is 647-859-3901, and you can send e-mails to: swanseahistoricalsociety@gmail.com or swancnews@gmail.com or through the SHS website. Our mailing address is 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto ON M6S 3H9. However, for urgent items, we suggest that you use email or telephone where possible, since we have only occasional access to our mailbox at the Town Hall. Your comments and suggestions are always most welcome, and please let us know of any developments that may be of interest to the Society and its members.



Future Events

In addition to the following list, please note that our new “Events” web page contains a more complete and more up-to-date list of Swansea Historical Society events and local community events. See swanseahistoricalsociety.ca/events .

Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. March 6, 2024, 8:00 pm, Swansea Town Hall: Speaker: Lorna Poplak -- *“Toronto's Infamous Don Jail”*. Lorna Poplak is a Toronto-based writer, editor, and researcher. She is the author of two award-nominated non-fiction books: -- *“The Don – The Story of Toronto's Infamous Jail”*, and *“Drop Dead – A Horrible History of Hanging in Canada”*. With these and other publications, Lorna is establishing herself as an authority on the history of crime and punishment in Canada. Her presentation will include many fascinating stories about people associated with the Don Jail – the inmates, the staff, the governors, people who escaped from the Don, and people whose lives ended there at the end of a rope.

The March meeting, and future SHS meetings, will be conducted in a hybrid format so that participants can attend in-person at the Swansea Town Hall or connect on-line using the Zoom tool. Zoom links will be provided closer to the meeting dates. The Zoom connection will be open before 7:45 pm on March 6. If possible, we suggest that on-line participants start tuning in as soon as the link is open, so that we can be ready to kick off the meeting at 8 pm sharp.

Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. April 3, 2024, 8:00 pm, Swansea Town Hall: Speaker: John Beram. Tentative subject – *The early history of horse-racing and the Queen's Plate in West Toronto*. Did you know that there was once a race track located between High Park Avenue and Keele Street? The first Queen's Plate horse races (now called the King's Plate once again) were held there, starting in 1860. John has previously spoken to the Swansea Historical Society on subjects related to the history of West Toronto and the Junction area. We are pleased to welcome him back as our April speaker.

Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. May 1, 2024, 8:00 pm, Swansea Town Hall: Speaker: Chris Higgins. Tentative subject – *The History of Swansea Public School*. Chris Higgins retired from teaching at Swansea Public School in 2020, after three decades there. He has subsequently published 2 books on local history: *BRICK by BRICK: Swansea Public School, 1890-2020*, and *Riverstoryz: Conversations on the Humber*. According to his website www.chrishigginswrites.com Chris is now working on a third book, *Hanging on Every Word: Toronto in the Age of Execution*, which we expect will dovetail nicely with Lorna Poplak's March presentation on the Don Jail.

Jane's Walks, Fri. May 3 – Sun. May 5, 2024: Once again, guided walking tours will be held across the City throughout the weekend in honour of the late community activist, Jane Jacobs. In cooperation with the Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area (BIA), we are making plans to hold a walking tour focused on the history of businesses in West Toronto and Swansea. For this and other Jane's Walks, details should be available on the web-site www.janeswalkfestivalto.com closer to the May 3 – 5 weekend.

Annual Swansea Historical Society Walking Tour, Sat. June 8, 2024: We are starting to make plans for our annual guided walking tour of the Swansea area, to be held on June 8. Details to follow.

Annual Governor Simcoe Walking Tour, Sat. Sept. 28, 2024: As in past years, we are planning to hold a guided walking tour, retracing the first day of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe's 1793 expedition following the centuries-old Toronto Carrying Place portage route. We anticipate that Part 1 of the tour will start at 9:30 am at the Rousseau site, just south of the Petro-Canada station on South Kingsway, and Part 2 will start at 1:00 pm at the Alex Ling Fountain, on the north-west corner of Bloor and Jane Streets.



Executive Vacancies: If your Society is to continue functioning, we still need more volunteers!! Three important positions, Vice-President, Events Coordinator, and Publications Coordinator, are currently vacant. In addition, some of us are now dealing with personal issues that limit our ability to participate. We can always benefit from new blood and new ideas! Please let us know if you would like to explore ways that you could become more involved in the operation of your Society, or if you can think of someone we might approach. We are also happy to introduce people to the Executive as “members-at-large” with no specific ongoing responsibilities – just a willingness to help out when needed. We need to hear from you!!



2024 Swansea Community Calendars

The 2024 Swansea Community Calendar has been selling well since early December. As in past years, the calendar includes dates of upcoming community events and a selection of historic photographs of the area. The price is being held at \$10.00 per copy. While supplies last, calendars can be purchased over-the-counter at the office of the Swansea Town Hall, or at any SHS events. We can also receive orders by telephone, email, or regular mail for calendars to be mailed to you -- or hand-delivered if you are in the area. (A hearty "thank-you" to Lance Gleich, Sarah Lowenberg, and Wallace Boustead for their roles in making the annual calendar a success once again).



Financial Notes: We are pleased to remind you that the Swansea Historical Society can now accept payments electronically. E-transfers directed to swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com will result in a direct deposit to the SHS bank account at Scotiabank. This e-transfer approach can be used to pay membership fees, purchase publications, make donations to the Society, etc. (As a registered charity, the Society can provide tax receipts for donations). We invite you to give it a try. To assist our Treasurer with her accounting, if you are sending money by e-transfer, please use the “message” area to identify the purpose of your payment.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!!

As of September 1, 2023, we are in a new membership year which extends to August 31, 2024. Some of you have already paid your membership for 2023-2024, and we thank you. If you have not yet paid your membership fees for 2023-2024, we invite you to do so at your earliest convenience. Fees can be paid at any SHS events, or payments can be sent to: 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto, M6S 3H9, or fees can be paid by e-transfer to: swanseahistoricalsociety@gmail.com. To assist our Treasurer, please use the "message" area to indicate whether your e-transfer payment is for a single membership, family membership, and/or donation, etc.

For many years, the annual membership fees have been held at \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Your fees help to offset many of the costs incurred by the Society in its ongoing operations. If you are reading this and you are not already a member of the Swansea Historical Society, please join us so that you can be added to our mailing list and help support this worthy cause.



SWANSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



2023/2024 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (The membership year runs from Sep – Aug)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual..... \$15.00 _____
Family \$20.00 _____
Corporate \$25.00 _____

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Individual..... \$250.00 _____
Family \$500.00 _____

Family Name: _____ Given Name(s): _____ Membership Number: _____

Street Address: _____ Apartment Number: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____

Home Telephone: (_____) _____ Business Telephone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____ Please use e-mail for my newsletters: Yes No, thanks

Please send to: Swansea Historical Society Membership Secretary, 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3H9