



NELLES MANOR MUSEUM

1798 Heritage House and War of 1812 Battle Site

August 2024

Newsletter

Volume 2024, Number 6

Nelles Manor Museum is operated by **Nelles Manor Heritage House**, a non-profit charitable organization.

We present Nelles Manor, a 1798 Georgian style house built by United Empire Loyalist Robert Nelles from local materials. The Manor opened as a museum in 2016 and represents the history of the Nelles Family who through their involvement in early government and military service plus their extensive early trade and commerce helped to build Canada as an early Nation. The Manor grounds are also the site of the Engagement at the Forty that took place during the War of 1812 - that may have been an important part in the destiny of Ontario and Canada.

Music at Nelles Manor – Michelle Hedley



Michelle Hedley performed on Sunday July 7 – the second concert in the Music at Nelles Manor concert series. The weather was very summer-like! Thank you to all those who attend!

An Afternoon with Jane Austen



On Saturday July 27 Nelles Manor Museums wonderful and amazing volunteers performed. The performance was based on an original idea by Paul Pipher. Written and directed by Meg Grimsmo. Music, poetry, Jane Austen excerpts and a letter from the Manor archives were presented. It was well received by our extensive audience.

Board of Directors

L. Coutts – Chair

B. Coutts

A. Hurst

C. Gudas-Murphy

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J. Roberts

Museum Manager/Curator

K. Pyatt

Canada Day Finest!



Volunteer Ilze Valdmanis in her Regency attire celebrating Canada Day!

Ilze is a new volunteer at the museum and has jumped in with both feet. Not only is she a tour guide, but she was also a performer in the An Afternoon with Jane Austen.

She also brings a wealth of knowledge on Regency fashion and lifestyle. She has created an information guide for our volunteers on clothing and hairstyles. With her assistance we are developing a talk and hope when we are ready that you will be able to attend.

Tour Days and Hours

The museum is open for tours:

Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The last tour begins at 3:00 p.m.

The museum will also be open on Labour Day 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

Monday August 5 – Music at Nelles Manor: Shari Vandermolen Trio

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

This is the third concert in our series of four.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. Children under 12 are free.

Sunday August 18 – Music at Nelles Manor: Natalie Walker

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

This is the last concert in our series of four.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. Children under 12 are free.

Saturday August 24 – Annual Vintage Car Show with special musical guest Mark Donoghue

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mark will perform at 1:00 p.m.

By donation in support of Nelles Manor Museum preservation.

Contact

126 Main St. W.
Grimsby, Ontario
L3M 1R8
289-235-7755
www.nellesmanor.ca
info@nellesmanor.ca

Early Card Games - Faro

History

Pharaoh emerged circa 1713 as a derivative of basset because King Louis XIV outlawed basset in 1691. Pharaoh was also outlawed several years later. Basset was a gambling "bank" game invented in Italy in 1593 by a Venetian noble and popularized in England in the early 18th century.

Although both faro and basset were forbidden in France, these games remained popular in England during the 18th century because they were easy to learn and, when played honestly, the odds for a player were the best of all gambling games.

Scottish expatriate John Law (1671 to 1729) introduced an early version of the game in the Americas around 1717 in what was to become the city of New Orleans. Its name often spelled 'pharo' or 'pharaoh,' derived from period French playing cards, whose backs sometimes bore the likeness of an Egyptian ruler. Some early faro cards and layouts also displayed a portrait of a Bengal tiger, inspiring such terms as "bucking the tiger" or "twisting the tiger's tail" to describe playing the game. By the mid-19th century, the tiger was so commonly associated with the game that gambling districts where faro was popular became known as "tiger town," or in the case of smaller venues, "tiger alley." In later years, a framed tiger portrait hanging outside a gaming house announced the presence of a faro game within.

With its name shortened to Faro, it spread to the United States in the 19th century to become the most widespread and popularly favoured gambling game. It was played in almost every gambling hall in the Old West from 1825 to 1915. Faro could be played in over 150 places in Washington D.C. alone during the Civil War. An 1882 study considered faro to be the most popular form of gambling, surpassing all others forms combined in terms of money wagered each year.

Faro's detractors regarded it as a dangerous scam that destroyed families and reduced men to poverty because of rampant rigging of the dealing box. Crooked faro equipment was so popular that many sporting-house companies began to supply gaffed dealing boxes specially designed so that the bankers could cheat their players; methods of cheating in faro are detailed in the description section. Cheating was so prevalent that editions of Hoyle's Rules of Games began their faro section by warning readers that not a single honest faro bank could be found in the United States.

Although the game became scarce after World War II, it continued to be played at a few Las Vegas and Reno casinos, the last being the Ramada in Reno in 1985.

Faro was not popular in Canada. It was introduced by American gamblers to Dawson City, Yukon but when the gold rush died, so did the popularity of the game. There is a town in Yukon called Faro, named after the game.

Rules Description



The layout of a faro board

A game of faro was often called a "faro bank." It was played with an entire deck of playing cards. One person was designated the "banker" and an indeterminate number of players, known as "punters," could be admitted. Chips (called "checks") were purchased by the punter from the banker (or house) from which the game originated. Bet values and limits were set by the house. Check values in the US could range from 50 cents to \$10 each.

The faro table was typically oval, covered with green baize, and had a cutout for the banker. A board was placed on top of the table (see diagram above) with one suit of cards (traditionally spades) pasted to it in numerical order, representing a standardized betting "layout." Each player laid his stake on one of the 13 cards on the layout. Players could place multiple bets and could bet on multiple cards simultaneously by placing their bet between cards or on specific card edges (much like in roulette). A player could reverse the intent of his bet by placing a hexagonal token called a "copper" on it. Some histories said a penny was sometimes used in place of a copper. This was known as "coppering" the bet, and reversed the meaning of the win/loss piles for that particular bet. Players also had the choice of betting on the "high card" bar located at the top of the layout.

In 1822, Virginia gambler Robert Bailey invented a brass dealing box (also known as a "shoe") with a hole in the top, which allowed cards to be slid out one by one. Bailey claimed this device prevented any shenanigans by dealers, but because it concealed the deck, many houses were skeptical and barred it from their premises. In 1825, an Ohio watchmaker named Graves perfected an open-top, spring-fed dealing box that held the deck face up to eliminate any suspicion of cheating. This box, usually made of German silver, was an instant success and would remain the standard throughout faro's long reign. Since the top card was exposed in these boxes, it was a "dead" card and could not be bet upon. The top card became known as the "soda card," and the last card, also dead, was called "hock."

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Dealing Box Procedure

- A deck of cards was shuffled and placed inside the shoe.
- The first card in the dealing box was called the "soda" and was "burned off" leaving 51 cards in play. The dealer then drew two cards: the first was called the "banker's card" and was placed on the right side of the dealing box. The second card also known as the *carte anglaise* or "player's card" was placed on the left side of the box and declared the winner. So, if the two cards were, say, a "2" and a "Jack," then all bets on the 2 were lost by the players and won by the bank. All bets on the Jack to win were paid.
- The banker's card was the bettor's losing card; regardless of its suit, all bets placed on the layout's card that had the same denomination as the banker's card were lost by the players and won by the bank. The player's card was the winning card. All bets placed on the card that had that denomination were returned to the players with a 1 to 1 (even money) payout by the bank (e.g., a dollar bet won a dollar). A "high card" bet won if the player's card had a higher value than the banker's card.
- The dealer settled all bets after each two cards drawn. This allowed players to bet before drawing the next two cards. Bets that neither won nor lost remained on the table and could be picked up or changed by the player prior to the next draw.
- The farther you got into the deck, the more interesting the game became. With fewer and fewer numbers to bet on, the bets tended to get larger. The final bet, when there were three cards remaining in the deck, was known as "calling the turn." The object now was to predict the exact order that the three remaining cards, banker's, player's, and the hock, would be drawn. The player's odds here were 5 to 1, while a successful bet paid off at 4 to 1 (or 1 to 1 if there were a pair among the three, known as a "cat-hop"). This provided one of the dealer's few advantages in faro. If it happened that the three remaining cards were

all the same, there would be no final bet, as the outcome was not in question.

- The only other time the casino had an advantage was on a "push"—when two identical cards were drawn on a turn. When that occurred, the house took back half the bet, for a two percent edge.

A device, called a "case keeper" was employed to assist the players and prevent dealer cheating by counting cards. The case keeper resembled an abacus, with one spindle for each card denomination, with four counters on each spindle. As a card was played, either winning or losing, one of four counters would be moved to indicate that a card of that denomination had been played. This allowed players to plan their bets by keeping track of what cards remained available in the dealing box. The operator was called the



"casekeeper" or, colloquially in the American West, the "coffin driver."

Case Keeper

In casinos there was often a "lookout," as well as the banker and the casekeeper, who watched the bets being made and ruled on disputes that arose.

Vivian Chow

Artefact Showcase

By Lo Doll, Bisque head and hands. Cloth body



This is a 35cm long By-low Doll, made of German bisque and cloth. By-low Dolls were invented in 1923 by the sculptor and college professor Grace Storey Putnam. Putnam, feeling that the baby dolls at the time were too mature looking, made a doll that had a realistically looking baby head. The By Low's realism was a result of Putnam basing the doll off an actual newborn that she saw at a maternity ward; she sat by the three-day old infant and sculpted a copy of their face in clay. At the time, By-low Dolls were the most realistic dolls ever made, which made them extremely popular with young girls. They were an instant hit in North America, being the highest selling doll during the

Christmas season of 1924. The doll line was so successful that it was often referred to as the "Million Dollar Baby". The By-Low dolls had a long lasting impact on the doll market which can still be seen today; other doll manufactures saw the success of the By-Lows and started making their own versions, which normalized realistic looking baby dolls in the toy market.

Clara Falconier

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Supporting Nelles Manor Museum

Become a Friend of Nelles Manor

Some of the benefits of becoming a Friend of Nelles Manor includes receiving first notification and early registration for ticket sales on all events and programs. As a Friend you also tour the Museum for free during our regular season. As a member of the **Museums of Niagara Association** we are part of the reciprocal agreement program so that with your support through Friends of Nelles Manor you also have free admission or other perks at the other Niagara museums that are part of the program.

To become a Friend of Nelles Manor the annual cost is only \$25 for individual and \$40 for family. Your contribution helps support the preservation of the Manor and programs. This contribution helps the museum financially as we do not receive annual operational funding from any government level. Your contribution shows us the community support and interest in our mandate of protecting heritage.

If you would like to become a Friend of Nelles Manor, please contact us at info@nellesmanor.ca.

Remember, Friends of the Manor receive advanced ticket sale notice.

New & Renewed Friends of the Manor

Hilary Jackson
Olga McNeil
Stacy McNeil
Richard Merritt
Jane and Bram Radix

Volunteering the Gift of Your Time and Knowledge

If you have the time and want to contribute to an important cause while meeting some great people along the way, please consider becoming a volunteer. The museum offers many diverse opportunities and has many areas that need your support. We appreciate the gift of your time and knowledge and can coordinate around your availability - whether for a few hours or a whole day; weekly, monthly or a few times a year.

If you are interested in being a tour guide, we train and support you. We have a detailed training manual for you to be able to lead our visitors through the history of the home and the Family.

Join our great group of dedicated volunteers!

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Financial Support

As a nonprofit charitable organization funding is always top of mind. Nelles Manor Museum is a gem in the landscape of early Upper Canadian history and is a centrepiece in the community. Maintaining a 1798 building is an ongoing responsibility and with your support it will continue for centuries more.

Nelles Manor Museum is an independent organization that does not receive any sustaining funding from any level of government.

Become a Donor by contacting us at info@nellesmanor.ca or calling 289-235-7755. All donations of \$20 or more receive a tax receipt.

Legacy Giving

A donation from your estate or life insurance policy to Nelles Manor Museum could be made to our annual operations or to an endowment fund that would support our major capital needs, or where the income supports our annual preservation, maintenance and operations costs. Please consider being a legacy donor and consult your lawyer or accountant as to how to provide this type of support.

Become a Sponsor

Sponsor an event or our annual season. We have several sponsorship levels.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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Harmony Jewellers; Life Coach Financial Strategies
and Spaceless Marketing

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Dave and Chris VanSickle (Royal LePage Macro Realty)

Value

88.5 the Lake; Agis Computing and Newsnow

If you would like to support Nelles Manor Museum as a sponsor, contact us at
info@nellesmanor.ca.

All donations to Nelles Manor Museum of \$20 or more are tax deductible and a donation receipt for tax purposes will be issued.

For more information on our events and activities visit our
website www.nellesmanor.ca