



NELLES MANOR MUSEUM

1798 Heritage House and War of 1812 Battle Site

December 2024

Newsletter

Volume 2024, Number 10

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.

Brown Homestead Tour



On Thursday November 28, volunteers from Nelles Manor Museum went on a tour of the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines. The tour was led by Brown Homestead Programming Coordinator Mikayla Barney and Director of Community Engagement Jessica Linzel.

Lakeside Pumphouse Artists Association Donation



Flora Hutterer (right) of the Grimsby Lakeside Pumphouse Artists Association presented Kate Pyatt Nelles Manor Museum Manager and Curator with a donation cheque for \$200.

The museum is grateful for the partnership with the LPAA during the Grimsby Arts Walk.

Board of Directors

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K. Pyatt

Museum

Manager/Curator

Message from the Chair

Just note to notice a few changes around the outside with a new walkway along the west side and work by the entry to the basement. Work was needed to improve drainage away from the building and to improve the appearance.



Of course, the replacement cedar roof is most noticeable, as Kate mentioned in the last newsletter. Thank you to the Town of Grimsby for the Community Development Grant.

Christmas experience will come to life as the Manor dons its seasonal décor, again thanks to volunteers.

Hope to see you around for some of the activities.

Linda Coutts

Tour Days and Hours

Off-season Tours

You can still book a tour during our off-season, September to May. The last tour begins at 3:00 p.m. Contact us at info@nellesmanor.ca

There are still many events throughout the year for you, your family and friends to enjoy.

Contact

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

**Nelles Manor
Museum is
a member of:**

**Canadian Museum
Association (CMA)**

**Ontario Museum
Association (OMA)**

**Museums of Niagara
Association (MONA)**

Upcoming Events

Saturday December 7 – Christmas at the Manor Tour with Father Christmas and Open-Hearth Cooking

Enjoy a 1798 manor house dressed in Christmas finery. Father Christmas will be taking time from his busy holiday schedule to meet with you! There will be open hearth cooking demonstration in our kitchen and the smells will be delightful!

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tours are hourly with the last tour at 3:00 p.m.

Tickets \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (3 – 13)

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/nelles-manor-museum-and-heritage-house-25218215405>

Sunday December 8 – Christmas at the Manor Tour

Enjoy a 1798 manor house dressed in Christmas finery.

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tours are hourly with the last tour at 3:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 adult and \$5 children (3 – 13)

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/nelles-manor-museum-and-heritage-house-25218215405>

December 14 - Candlelight Christmas

A cozy crackling fire burning in the hearth kitchen fireplace. The sounds of laughter and Christmas carols fill the house. Delicious food and refreshments. If this is an evening, you would like to experience then please join us!

You are invited to a festive evening of holiday cheer at Nelles Manor Museum at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$45 per person. The evening includes drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and music!

Tickets are limited.

On sale <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/1024842540627?aff=oddttdcreator>

Admiral Percy Walker Nelles, CB

The Nelles Family has a rich tradition of Military service. Robert Nelles' great-great grandson Percy Walker Nelles was destined to continue that tradition. Born January 7, 1892, to Brigadier General Charles Mecklan Nelles and Ida Maude Nelles in Brantford, Ontario. As a child he spent his free time playing with boats on the Grand River. With his passion for water and a high-ranking father, it was at a young age Percy knew the Navy was going to be his life.

Attending private school at Lakefield Preparatory School on the banks of the Otonabee River and then Trinity College in Port Hope where the Ganaraska River and Lake Ontario meet. In 1909 at age 17 Percy enlisted as a cadet in the Fisheries Protection Service. Second of a group of seven cadets who joined awaiting the formation of the Canadian Navy. Percy and his fellow cadets served on CGS Canada (renamed HMCS Canada during World War I). At that time CGS Canada was a training vessel. In 1910 he transferred to the RCN and the cruiser HMCS *Niobe* as a midshipman. The RCN was still in its infancy, so many sailors trained on larger ships of the royal navy. In 1911 Percy was assigned to HMS *Dreadnought*, then to HMS *Suffolk* in 1914. HMS *Suffolk* was stationed in Bermuda. In the time Percys was aboard HMS *Suffolk* was involved in protecting British interests in Mexico, then with the outbreak of World War I HMS *Suffolk* patrolled the Transatlantic trade routes, when Percy left the ship in April of 1917 it was patrolling the water between Halifax and Bermuda. He then served as Flag Lieutenant under Admiral Sir Charles Kingmill. Percy traveled to England in 1920 to join the Royal Naval College. Being promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 1922, he remained with the Royal Navy till his return to Canada in August 1925.



Promoted once again to Commander and appointed senior naval officer, at Esquimaillt in December. Returning to the United Kingdom in 1929. On 18 March 1930 he was appointed Executive Officer aboard the HMS *Dragon*. While sailing around Cape Horn her Captain L.H.B. Bevan died unexpectedly. Percy assumed temporary command of the HMS *Dragon*. Then appointed acting Captain, becoming the first Canadian to command a major British ship.

Returning to Canada in 1931 he took command of HMCS *Saguenay*, the first destroyer especially built for the Canadian Navy. As well as Senior Officer of the Canadian Destroyer Flotilla. Staying in that position till 1933. Spending a short period of time at the Imperial Defence College. He was made a commodore in 1934 and appointed as Chief of the Naval Staff.

Percy spent the next 5 years helping the Navy bear the financial challenges of the Great Depression. As well as being promoted to Rear Admiral in 1938. In 1939 Nelles had to take a 180 degree turn and was focused on the rapid growth of the Fleet. The following year Rear Admiral Nelles led a group of Royal Naval College of Canada alumni who met with the Naval Minister to discuss opening a Naval College for the RCN and Merchant Marines. In 1942 Royal Roads Military College on its doors. During this time, he was promoted to Vice Admiral. In 1943 New Year

honours, King George VI appointed Nelles as a Companion of the Order of the Bath. At that time, he was the highest ranking naval officer in the Royal Canadian Navy.

Following disagreements with the Minister of National Defence for the Naval Service, Angus Lewis Macdonald, over training and management of Canadian Naval officers, he was transferred to Great Britain and given the post of Senior Canadian Flag Officer Overseas. His duties included Naval Attaché, in charge of coordinating the RCN for operation overlord, the landing on Juno Beach. Following the successful mission Percy Nelles retired from the Navy in January 1945, as an Admiral. After retirement Percy lived in Victoria, British Columbia until his death on June 13, 1951. He was buried at sea by HMCS *Sault Ste Marie*.

Mark Les

Nelles Manor Neighbourhood - Gibson Street

Many people have walked the Gibson Street trail either to connect with the Bruce Trail or just to seek solace that is found while standing on the walk bridge that crosses the 40 Mile Creek. A lot of the good folks take the time to soak in the area start to get a sense of the history quietly on display. One cannot help noticing the beautiful stone house at the foot of the trail to the Hawk Watch. Built by Robert L. Gibson around 1860 with local red sandstone he brought down the side of the escarpment on a gravity rail system from behind his house. He was sent Grimsby to do an audit on the quality and quantity of limestone and sandstone to supply the needs of the new railway and other construction projects.



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Just down the hill, toward the Gibson Street Bridge there is a millstone that once gave rise to the wealth and drove early commerce.

The elevation and the volume of water in the 40 valley afforded those with the "Skill and the Will" to harness its hydraulic power. Most folks will not think much of this millstone or where it came from, never mind the effort that it took to get it there. Remember, these were the days when most things were done by the hand of man and those who lacked ingenuity were left to labour and for others barely living hand to mouth.

Ingenuity was one thing that Robert Nelles had in abundance but even he could not manufacture a millstone when there were no near sources of chert in which to fashion these technical marvels of the day. So, like a lot of the necessary finished products in Upper Canada it had to be ordered from the old Countries. In this case the millstone was quarried on the Left Bank of Paris and probably shipped to Montreal. Then forwarded down the St Lawrence to where navigable water to Lake Ontario allowed it to resume its journey, to be off loaded at Fort Niagara. From there it would be brought by a small schooner or large bateaux to the mouth of the Forty Creek where a team of oxen and a wagon would deliver it to the building site of Nelles Grist Mill. The size of this French Bhur Stone would relate to the horsepower assumed to be generated at the new mill (a bhur stone was made in pieces for long distant shipment). Considerations for the volume and the head or height of the fall of water determined the size of millstone to be used. Also, maintenance and ease of use by the miller were critical in determining the final dimensions.

So next time you stroll by, and the millstone catches your eye think of its journey and the labour of Robert Nelles and the people that were served by this millstone. This mill and others like it were the centres of the communities both providing succor and employment who took up the Miller's Trade.

John Holbourne

Supporting Nelles Manor Museum

Renewing Your Friends of Nelles Manor

2025 Friends of Nelles Manor renewals begin January 1.

Due to the Canada Post strike, you can make your new or renewal payment by e-transfer at info@nellesmanor.ca.

Please fill out, and email or send (once the strike is over), the Friends of Nelles Manor form on the last page of the newsletter.

If you would like a form emailed to you please contact info@nellesmanor.ca.

Thank you for your support. As an independent museum we value your contributions towards our preservation and programming efforts!

Become a Friend of Nelles Manor

Some of the benefits of becoming a Friend of Nelles Manor include 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

Catherine Bingle-Gonnsen

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.

Join our great group of dedicated volunteers!

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.

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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.

Donor Levels

Friend	\$25 - \$99.99
Partner	\$100 – \$999.99
Champion	\$1,000 – \$4,999.99
Patron	\$5,000 - \$9,999.99
Visionary	\$10,000 - \$49,999.99
Founder	At the discretion of the Board

Become a Sponsor in 2025!

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

Thank you to our 2024 sponsors!

Your contributions brought the community together!

Signature

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Harmony Jewellers; Life Coach Financial Strategies
and Spaceless Marketing

Supporter

The Lynn Fee Team (Keller Williams Realty); St Andrews Anglican Church
and Dave and Chris VanSickle (Royal LePage Macro Realty)

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

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