

Oshawa Horticultural Society



Issue #4 – The Third Decade – The Fabulous Fifties

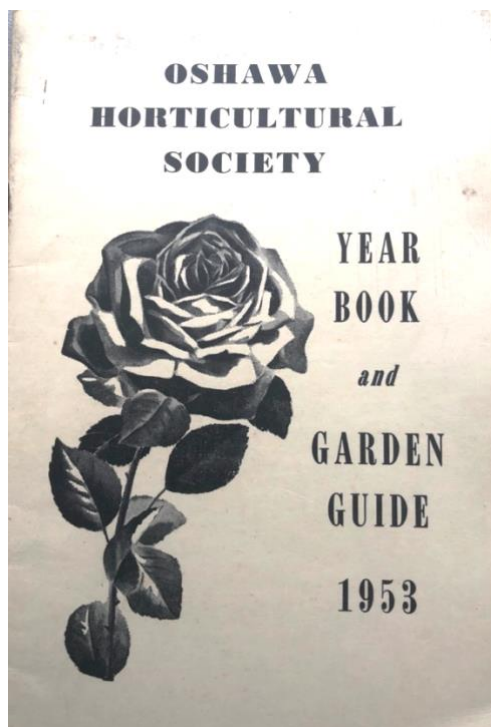
We continue our journey that began with the rebirth of the **Oshawa Horticultural Society** on 23rd of **February 1931**. This journey is part of our 90th Anniversary celebrations.

After two decades of sacrifice and limitations, the 50s brought a new era of opportunity and optimism as well as beginning a slow journey of change. It also marked the beginning of a changing focus for the Oshawa Horticultural Society. The decade began with a continuing focus on community pride and beautification along with their traditional emphasis on individual floral competitions for their members. There was a strong interest striving to be the best at some aspect of gardening and displaying prize specimens. But it also was a time to have fun, explore and try new things, and to prosper after a long war.

Prosperity Returns

To build on the success of the Society and to bolster membership, it was decided to begin the tradition of an Annual Year Book and Garden Competition Guide. The earliest edition on file is for 1953, shown below, and focused on the annual flower shows and competitions, the rules and regulations, as well as a recap of the success of shows in recent years.

There was much excitement around the introduction of the Peace Rose introduced by Wm. J. McNeill. The rose would now become a major emblem for the OHS and feature in developments to come. It was also the feature flower on the Year Book for the Society.



GM's "Pride Packages"

...finest we've ever built - and we're sure you'll like them too!

1. Chevrolet's beautiful new Bel Air 4-Door Sedan
2. The new International 4-Door Sedan by Pontiac
3. The handsome 1953 Oldsmobile Super "88" 4-Door Sedan
4. Buick's brilliant 1953 CUSTOM 4-Door Sedan
5. The new "62" Convertible by Cadillac
6. Powerful GMC "470" Heavy-Duty Truck
7. Advance-Design Chevrolet Medium-Duty 1700 Series Truck for "35"
8. M-135, a 6-wheel-drive Cargo Carrier, now being built for the Armed Forces

It's easy to fall for a good-looker! That's why each of the famous five General Motors cars for 1953 will make an instant appeal to your sense of grace and beauty. And there's no unmistakable air of clean, functional design in the appearance of General Motors trucks.

Yes, for downright good looks, there's no match for the General Motors family: Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet and GMC Trucks.

GENERAL MOTORS PRODUCTS OF CANADA LIMITED
OSHAWA - ONTARIO

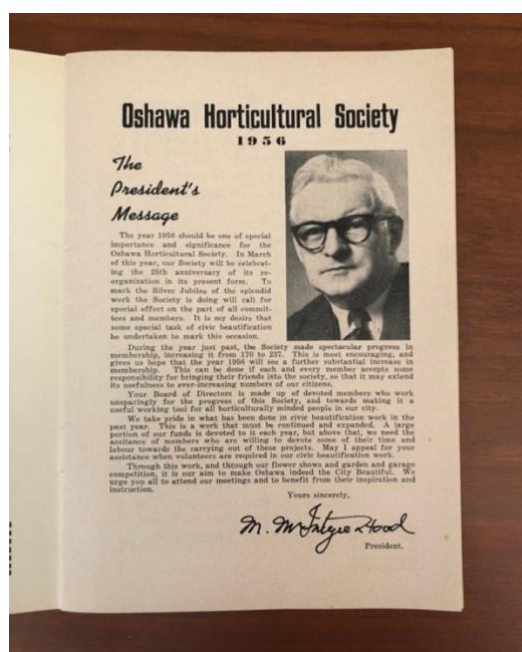
CHEVROLET - PONTIAC - OLDSMOBILE - BUICK - CADILLAC - CHEVROLET AND GMC TRUCKS

The 1950s are also a time for social change.

It is apparent from the minutes of the OHS that the executive is beginning to look at the Society more like a business than just a special interest and social organization. There was an expressed need to increase membership yet again and to put the organization on firmer financial ground.

The minutes show that this is probably the first time that they looked to an annual Plant Sale to raise funds for their projects. Civic beautification remained a primary focus going into the 50s but funding from the City of Oshawa was limited and the population was growing, post war. The Society planted trees, shrubs, grasses, and bulbs in many civic locations including barren areas that were considered civic eyesores.

1953 saw the introduction of a published Year Book, as many other societies were already doing. This also became a source of extra revenue from advertising and in 1953 the books showed a profit of \$235 from the year book. This, coupled with plant sales, added to the ability of the Society to take on even more civic beautification projects. Indications are that grants from the City of Oshawa began to decline in this era as the City dealt with increasing costs for infrastructure development, so fundraising became more and more important for the Society to fulfill its mandate.



McIntyre Hood was Managing Editor at the Oshawa Times at the time and brought a very business-like approach to the OHS during his time on the Board. He was also the author of several books on local history, most notably Oshawa – A History of “Canada’s Motor City” that he published for Canada’s Centennial in 1969. The Oshawa Horticultural Society gets a good mention in that book.

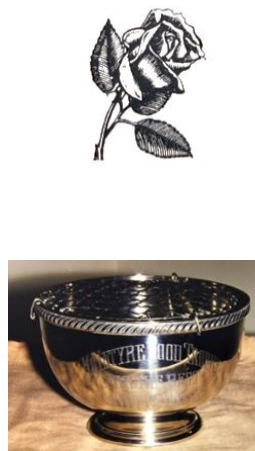
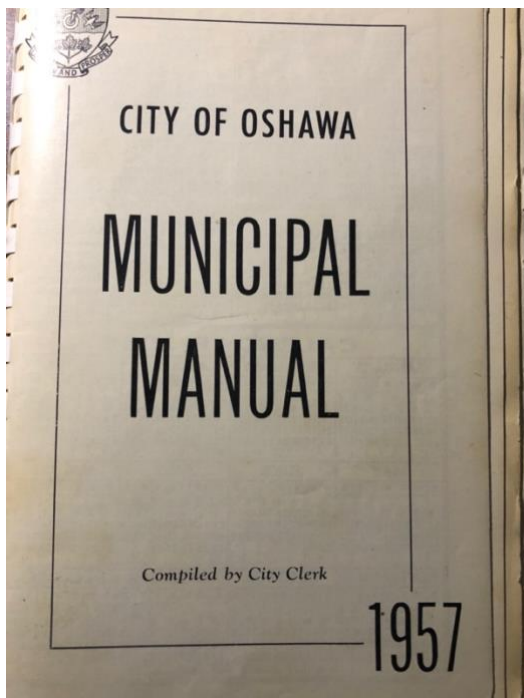
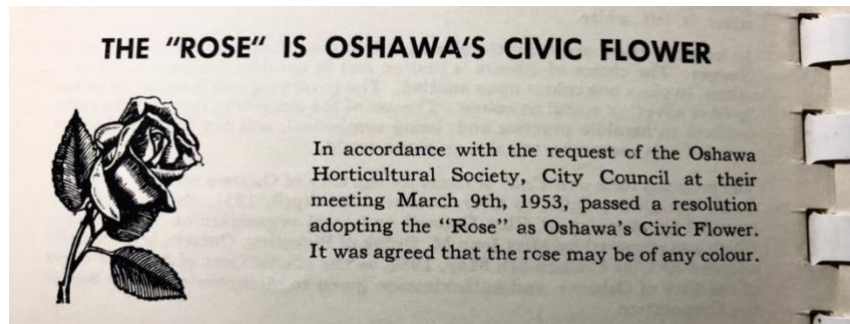
Oshawa Horticultural Society



Oshawa's Civic Flower

In December of 1952, McIntyre Hood, then a Society Director, brought forward a motion from the Executive Committee to ask OHS members to choose a flower which would then be proposed as Oshawa's Civic Flower. The rose was the popular choice and the following year a proposal was made to Oshawa City Council to accept making "A Rose, of any colour, the Official Flower of Oshawa".

At that time, no other Canadian municipality was on record of having the rose as their official flower.



It is also interesting to see the emphasis on roses and rose cultivation that is celebrated on the cover of the OHS Year Books as well as in floral competitions. McIntyre Hood later donated a trophy to be awarded to the **BEST WHITE ROSE**.

Oshawa Horticultural Society on the Move!

The 1950s saw a huge uptake in urban development, more and more suburbs, new roads and highways leading to more local travel and exploration for recreational pursuits. It is evident in the minutes of the Society in the 50s that Society Members wanted to experience more and more of what other gardeners were doing across Ontario.

Bring on the Bus Tours!



In July of 1957, two busloads and two carloads of OHS Members traveled to Guelph to tour the OAC and tour the Rose Garden and Weed Garden (no, I don't think that it was that kind of weed at that time). A picnic supper was enjoyed at Riverside Park after a tour of the Greenhouses.

In July of 1958, three busloads of OHS Members, 115 in all, travelled to Niagara Falls to tour Oke's Gardens. A bus load of 29 attended a District Meeting in Stouffville as well.

Denure Bus Lines were the favourite provider of bus services for the Society, but I was unable to find an image of a Denure Bus of the era.

Oshawa Horticultural Society



NEWS OF THE DAY

Commemorating Queen Elizabeth's Coronation

The Oshawa Horticultural Society is planting an Oak Tree in the Pioneer Cemetery on Bond Street W. to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth the Second on the 2nd of June 1953.

Long Live our Queen.



OHS Presidents in the 50s

50-52	Archie Whitmee
53-54	Ethel Fairbrother
55-57	McIntyre Hood
58.	Percy Carter
59-61	Lloyd Johnston

Preserving Our Heritage

Pioneer Cemetery

The Oshawa Horticultural Society continued its dedication to the maintenance and beautification of the Pioneer Cemetery on Bond Street West through plantings and tree-planting. In the



M. MCINTYRE HOOD

In a journalistic career which began in 1918, one of Canada's most outstanding journalists, M. McIntyre Hood, occupied top editorial posts with the Kingston British Whig, Woodstock Sentinel-Review, Oshawa Daily Times, and Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph. He served for six and a half years as foreign correspondent for Thomson Newspapers of Canada and chief of the London Bureau of these newspapers. Interspersed in his busy newspaper life, was a period of six years as private secretary to the Hon. Gordon D. Conant, Attorney-General and Premier of Ontario; and five years as editor of publications and director of public relations for the Ontario Department of Agriculture. Mr. Hood also served with the Canadian Army on active service throughout the two world wars.

During Mr. Hood's 25 years in Oshawa, he wrote extensively on its history. His intimate knowledge of the city, with its many institutions and people; bolstered by his keen participation in the activities of many of its civic organizations, has enabled him to inject something of his own vital personality into the production of a history of the city in which he spent most of his life in Canada.

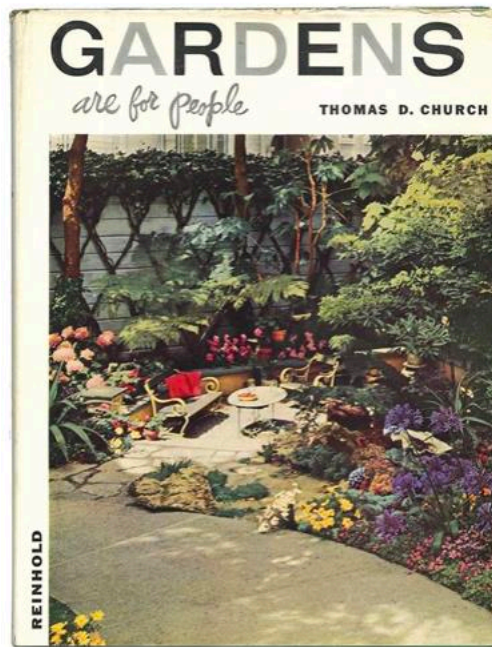


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1956 is the Silver Jubilee for the OHS and was celebrated with an Anniversary Dinner on March 12 at Northminster United Church. W. Gordon Bunker, the first President of the Society, was the keynote speaker.

A Changing Focus from Decorative Gardens to Backyard Living and Life in the Burbs

How people enjoyed their gardens began to change in the 1950s as more and more people owned homes with backyards, often in suburbs and semi-rural areas. With new technology and spare time came interests related to relaxing and enjoying family time in backyards and entertaining friends. This created a whole new type of gardener and set of interests and pride of ownership that led to a broader interest in gardening in the 60s.



A game of shuffleboard in the Bolte garden, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1957.
MOLLY ADAMS, PHOTOGRAPHER, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN GARDENS.
MAIDA BABSON ADAMS AMERICAN GARDEN COLLECTION.



Next Edition: The Oshawa Horticultural Society in the Sexy Sixties.

Join me as we continue to explore the very interesting history of our club over the past 9 decades. Please feel free to share your feedback and family history as it relates to our story through info@OshawaGardenClub.com

Number 4 in a series produced by Past President,
Merle Cole, from the OGC Archives.
A project for our 90th Anniversary leading to
our 100th Anniversary in 2031

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