



South Humber Monument - Press Kit

In the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration, in early 2021, three groups came together to develop new language and redesign the South Humber Monument (formerly known as the Brûlé Monument). United by the desire to recognize the historic Humber River's heritage in a more appropriate, inclusive, and accurate way, directors from the Etobicoke Historical Society (EHS), along with representatives from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and La Société d'histoire de Toronto are proud to announce the installation of a new plaque and rededication ceremony to take place in late summer.

Dignitaries including Chief R. Stacey Laforme, representatives of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, La Société d'histoire de Toronto, the Etobicoke Historical Society, and Ward 3, Etobicoke-Lakeshore Councillor Amber Morley, and other dignitaries, are expected to attend the rededication ceremony to be held on Saturday, September 9th, 2023, at 2pm.

Background

This story began in the late 1950's, spurred by the impending opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, the EHS made plans to erect a monument that would commemorate Étienne Brûlé's travels along the Humber River and the historic Toronto Carrying Place portage (as an example of a much older trade route). The project was not realized and shelved. The plans for the monument were revived in the mid-1960s in time for Canada's Centennial celebrations in 1967. The EHS had the new monument installed near the mouth of the Humber River as part of the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto's Centennial Celebration.

Though the monument also meant to honour the ancient Humber River and Indigenous portage route, the final inscription commemorated Étienne Brûlé, an interpreter and guide who came to New France with Samuel de Champlain in the early 1600s. At a ceremony held on August 9, 1967, Mary Appleby, President of the EHS, Etobicoke's Mayor Edward A. Horton, and other dignitaries unveiled the monument consisting of a seven-foot-tall pink granite boulder and a smaller inscribed black basalt boulder on the west bank of the Humber River, north of the Queensway in an area to be called Discovery Park.

At the time the monument was dedicated, Brûlé was believed to be the first European to see Lake Ontario. In the years since, his explorations around the Great Lakes have come under increasing scrutiny. Archival research and Indigenous oral histories tell a more complex and rich history of the area, revealing that much of what was written and believed about the extent of Brûlé's travels in the Toronto area was based on a combination of myth and misinterpretations.

Designated in 1999, the Humber River is the only heritage river in the Greater Toronto area and just one of 40 in the entire country. Indigenous peoples used the Humber River portage route or Carrying Place Trail for millennia, establishing villages on its banks amongst a diverse array of plants, fish, and animals. French explorers used the trail and fur traders later built several posts in the valley. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, the Humber route to the Upper Great Lakes played a key role in the strategic defense of the province, and it provided a source of power for the operation of Etobicoke's first mills and settlements.

A New Plaque

In early 2021, members of the EHS Board of Directors led by Chief Historian Richard Jordan, convened a committee with Councillor Erma Ferrell of The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and Lisette Mallet, who was then President of La Société d'histoire de Toronto, to collaborate on the creation of a new plaque that better reflected this history. Over the next year, representatives from the three organizations met several times through virtual online meetings, to finalize and translate the wording to ensure the plaque commemorated the Humber and its importance to Indigenous peoples, the French and English, and everyone else who enjoys this historical, recreational, and environmentally significant river valley.

In late 2022, the final inscription was sent to Mike Moffatt at The Trophy Centre, the company responsible for its manufacture, and by spring of 2023, the EHS received the new plaque; a metal oval nearly four feet in diameter with the following text in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway), English, and French:

*Waashme mdaaswak mnik, iw Humber ge iw baasaagmigak -giw yak
Wengdat (Huron), ge giw Onondodwagh (Seneca) minwaa ge giw
Mississaugas of the Credit minwaa naanind wgii aabjittonaawaa ji yaamwaad
nbi, miijim ge wiigwaaman minwaa ge wgii aabjittonaawaa ji zhaang ji
meshtoonaaagewaad odi Toronto baashkiiigaa. Wemtaagoozhwag ge giw e
meshtoonwaadwaad ge wiinwaa wgii aabjitoonaawaa iw baashkiigaagak.
Nogoom dash Humber baashkiigaa wdaadawendaanaawaa aki gi
aabjittowaad goji ji yaamgak daazhiikewgamgong odi odena. Wnendgegon
gaazhi bemaadziyang. Gnawendidaa ge ezhiwebak.
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation*

*Pendant des milliers d'années, la rivière Humber et sa vallée ont offert eau,
nourriture et abris aux peuples autochtones comme les Wendats (Hurons),
Onondowagah (Senecas) et Michi-Saagi (La Première nation des
Mississaugas de la rivière Credit). Elles leur ont permis de voyager et de
commercer grâce au passage de Toronto. Les explorateurs et les
commerçants français ont mis cette route à profit et la rivière Humber a fourni
une source d'énergie aux colonisateurs qui sont venus par la suite.
Aujourd'hui, la vallée de la Humber offre à notre ville un espace de loisirs dont
elle a grand besoin. Souvenez-vous de son histoire. Protégez son avenir.
La Société d'histoire de Toronto*

*Over thousands of years, the Humber and its valley provided Indigenous
peoples – the Wendat (Huron), the Onondowagah (Seneca) and the Michi-
Saagi (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation) among others – with water,
food and shelter, and with means for travel and trade via the Toronto
Passage. French explorers and traders made good use of this route and the
Humber River provided a source of power for the settlers who followed. Today
the Humber valley affords much-needed recreation space for our city.
Remember its history. Protect its future.
The Etobicoke Historical Society*

*Original Monument Erected 1967 by
The Etobicoke Historical Society
Rededicated 2023*

Next Steps: Rededication

In anticipation of the upcoming rededication, Ward 3 (Etobicoke-Lakeshore) Councillor Amber Morley and her staff liaised with Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation to install the plaque on the smaller basalt stone boulder in May 2023. The EHS is thankful for the assistance from Councillor Morley's office.

When the first monument was dedicated in 1967, the location was an open hillside overlooking the Humber but in the intervening years, the site became overgrown and forgotten. Currently, the two boulders, believed to be from the grounds of Montgomery's Inn, remain hidden away in an overgrown grove of trees, and have been the target of graffiti and neglect for many years. In the intervening years, the monument's presence was forgotten until the EHS was made aware of its existence in the fall of 2020 when members of the public brought their concerns about the state of the site to the board. The circumstances that led to the erection of the original monument were later revealed through a search of the EHS archives, leading the EHS to explore revitalization of the site. Since the City of Toronto owns the land on which the monument sits, the EHS is currently unable to relocate it or restore the grounds. As a next step, we are currently urging Toronto City Council to dedicate funds for moving the monument to a more visible and accessible location.

Timeline

Late-1950s – EHS Board plans to erect a monument to commemorate Étienne Brûlé's travels along the Humber and the historic Toronto Carrying Place portage. It is to be unveiled in conjunction with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. The plans are not realized and shelved.

Mid-1960s – EHS Board resurrect plans to erect a monument to be unveiled during Canada's Centennial in 1967.

August 9, 1967 – The Étienne Brûlé monument is unveiled in South Humber Park by the EHS with various dignitaries present.

September 2020 – Concerned citizens notify the EHS about graffiti and neglect of a monument in South Humber Park. At this time, the EHS was unaware of the monument's existence.

October 2020 – The EHS Board begins researching and planning to replace the monument text.

February 2021 – The EHS partners with The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and La Société d'histoire de Toronto to create a new plaque in three languages: Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe), French and English.

July 2022 – The new plaque text is finalized and sent to the manufacturer.

May 2023 – Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation installs the new plaque on the smaller basalt stone in South Humber Park.

September 9, 2023 – Rededication Ceremony planned with representatives from The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, La Société d'histoire de Toronto, Councillor Amber Morley (Ward 3, Etobicoke-Lakeshore) and Etobicoke Historical Society.

Partners



The Etobicoke Historical Society was formed in May 1958 by Etobicoke citizens concerned about the rapidly changing character of what was then the Township of Etobicoke, and the need to preserve our early history. With a rich history, the Etobicoke Historical Society has grown to become a leader in the preservation of Etobicoke's heritage assets and the promotion of our history through community education. With a growing and loyal membership, the Etobicoke Historical Society is committed to supporting many special projects, awards and events and is dedicated to the community we serve.



The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation has survived hundreds of years of change, fought through near extinction, battled in many wars, suffered loss of culture, and faced the trials and tribulations that have come with facing Government systems and the loss of our traditional territory. However, despite every inch of opposition the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation have to endure, they have continued to adapt and grow into the resilient First Nation community that stands today.



La Société d'histoire de Toronto (SHT) met en lumière l'histoire des Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariens. Elle veille à la conservation de toutes les catégories de documents historiques et encourage les recherches en histoire.

La Société d'histoire de Toronto offre des conférences, des visites guidées et des excursions dans des lieux historiques; elle tient des expositions, des ateliers; elle publie des brochures et des documents visuels. Elle réalise également des projets de recherche.

La Société d'histoire de Toronto highlights the history of Ontarians and Franco-Ontarians. It ensures the preservation of all categories of historical documents and encourages research in history. La Société d'histoire de Toronto offers lectures, guided tours and excursions to historic sites; it holds exhibitions, workshops; It publishes brochures and visual materials. It also carries out research projects.

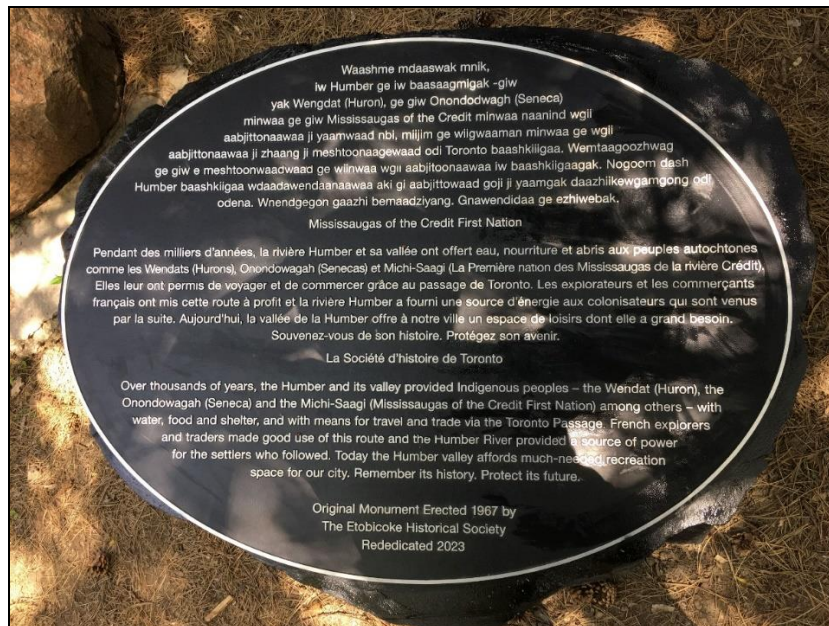


We also honour and celebrate the dedication and hard work of Lisette Mallet, president of La Société d'histoire de Toronto (2016-2022) who helped the EHS with the French translation. Lisette passed away in January 2023 before the plaque could be completed.

Photos



Dedication Ceremony, August 9, 1967. Left to Right: Mary Appleby (President, EHS), Rene Brunelle (Ontario Minister of Lands and Forests), H.O. Waffle (Brule Committee, EHS), E.A. Horton (Mayor, Etobicoke), Lucien Darveau (Quebec Provincial Under-Secretary), R.C. Phillips (Kingsway Kiwanis Club), Leo Beaudry (Port Neuf Kiwanis Club), J.K. Mackay (former Lt.-Gov. Ontario, EHS Patron), H.D. Anger (President, Women's Historical Society of Canada)



The new plaque installed by the EHS on the smaller basalt stone. Photo by Neil Park, EHS.

Location Map

Due to space and logistical limitations, the rededication ceremony will be by invitation only. We encourage the public to visit the monument on their own or with the assistance of a self-guided tour package which will be available through the Etobicoke Historical Society in September. Information will be emailed to our members and partners, and posted on our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.




Direction to Monument Site

- Enter the South Humber Park on Stephen Drive
- Follow the path of the Humber River Recreation Trail to the Oculus Pavilion
- The Monument is located across from the Oculus up a fairly steep hill

Street parking is available on:

1. Cloverhill Road
2. Cannon Road
3. Waniska Avenue

-  Park Entrance (picture below)
-  Paved Walking Trail
-  Oculus Pavilion (picture below)
-  South Humber Monument

Public Transit

From Old Mill Station: The 66A Prince Edward to Humber Loop bus to Stephen Drive at Cloverhill Road.

From Humber Loop: The 66 Prince Edward to Old Mill Station bus to Stephen Drive at Cloverhill Road North Side.





Contacts



“The Etobicoke Historical Society (EHS) is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and La Société d’histoire de Toronto on the South Humber Monument. The new plaque honours and recognizes the past and continuing importance of the Humber River.”

Mireille Macia, President, Etobicoke Historical Society
president@etobicokehistorical.com



“The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) appreciate the opportunity to work in collaboration with the Etobicoke Historical Society to create a new plaque to recognize the Humber River’s heritage. The new plaque supports MCFN’s commitment to their responsibility to the water and the land.”

Erma Ferrell, Councillor, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
ErmaF@mncfn.ca



“La Société d’histoire de Toronto is pleased to be associated with strengthening the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and protecting our shared historical and natural heritage. May everyone know how to enjoy it and protect it for future generations.”

“La Société d’histoire de Toronto est heureuse d’être associée au renforcement de la reconnaissance des Peuples Indigènes et à la protection de notre patrimoine historique et naturel commun. Que tous sachent en profiter et le protègent pour les générations futures.”

Rolande Smith, La Société d’histoire de Toronto
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