**Serbian Heritage Museum**

**Serbs of Windsor**

Serbs have made Windsor, Ontario their home since the early 1900s. In numerous waves of immigration, Serbian people chose to move to Canada for personal freedoms such as cultural and religious tolerance. Men often arrived first to find work before sending for their families. Early immigrants often worked in the mining and forestry industries.

There was a considerable influx of Serbs to Toronto, Hamilton and Niagara Falls just before the First World War. These Serbs came from regions that were part of Austria-Hungary at the time. During the Great War, Serbs from Austria-Hungary, but not those from Serbia, were interned in camps under the War Measures Act.

Immigration increased in the 1920s, and many settled in an area of Windsor known as Ford City. Windsor’s first Serbian school was organized in 1933 to ensure that children would not forget their heritage. Božidar Marković, a Toronto businessman, founded the newspaper *Voice of Canada*, now *Voice of Canadian Serbs,* in 1934, which continues to be published today.

Serbs flourished in Windsor and Essex County, owning numerous businesses. The first Serbian Orthodox church, Grachanica, The Dormition of the Holy Theotokos, was completed in 1952 and a second church, St. Demetrius, was consecrated in 1966. Today the Serbian Centre is also the home to the Serbian Heritage Museum, whose purpose it is to collect, preserve, research, exhibit artifacts and archival material related to Serbian history and culture, in order to share it with fellow Canadians. Canadian Serbs endeavour to enrich their country with the cultural wealth and heritage from their previous homeland.

[Captions]

Group of Windsor Serbs working in Kapuskasing, Ontario.

Group of Serbs at the Windsor train station.

**Nikola Budimir**

Born in Zrmanja, former Austria-Hungary on March 14, 1914, Nikola Budimir immigrated to Canada in September 1949. He became very successful in Windsor as one of the owners of N&D Supermarkets, which employed hundreds of people in Windsor. Prior to his death in December 1963, he purchased a site for a Windsor Public Library, which was opened in 1966 as the Nikola Budimir Memorial Public Library. Together with his N&D partners, a large parcel of land was donated to Grachanica Serbian Orthodox Church – today the Serbian Centre and Serbian Heritage Museum reside on this land.

**Moma Markovich**

Born in Belgrade, Serbia in 1902, Moma Markovich graduated from École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Escaping from a Nazi labour camp in Austria during the Second World War, he made his way to Canada in 1951. He was hired by the Department of Highways, now the Ministry of Transportation. Working in the Art Section, he painted close to 200 works of art capturing the transportation infrastructure across Ontario. He also created 55 paintings for the Ministry of Natural Resources after he retired in 1970. He died in 1977, and in 2016, the Archives of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation prepared an exhibit showcasing his artwork to celebrate the Ministry’s 100th anniversary called *Footpaths to Freeways, The Artistry of Moma Markovich.*

**Boris Spremo**

Born in Susak, former Yugoslavia, on October 20, 1935, Boris Spremo was a graduate of Belgrade’s Cinematographic Institute. He came to Canada in 1957, settling in Toronto and becoming one of Canada’s most acclaimed photojournalists. Boris worked for *The Globe and Mail*, and then *The Toronto Star*. His photos were published in magazines such as *Maclean’s, Life*, and *Time*. Boris won almost 300 national and international awards, was an Order of Canada recipient, and was inducted into the Canadian News Hall of Fame. Several books have been published with his work. Boris died on August 21, 2017.

Boris Spremo, Vietnam, 1973.

Award winning photo, 1968 - construction of the TD Centre.

Photo of the Trudeau boys, 1977.

**Nikola Tesla**

Born in Smiljan, former Austria-Hungary, on July 10, 1856, Nikola Tesla, the son of a Serbian Orthodox priest, was an inventor and engineer who immigrated to the United States in 1884. He is most widely known for his design of the alternating current – AC - electrical system. In 1895 he designed the hydroelectric power plant at Niagara Falls, New York, which powered the city of Buffalo. On January 2, 1905, generators began operating in Niagara Falls, Ontario, distributing Niagara’s energy to various parts of the province. Tesla laid the foundation for wireless technology with the Tesla coil, which is still used in radio technology today. He died on January 7, 1943 in New York City. He was awarded the patents for radio posthumously.

Nikola Tesla - “I don’t care that they stole my ideas....I care that they don’t have any of their own.”

Toronto Power Generating Station, Niagara Falls, Ontario.

**Yerich Family – Skylon Tower**

The Skylon Tower, a Niagara Falls landmark, sits 775 feet above the Niagara gorge and has a panoramic view of the Canadian, Horseshoe, and American falls. In 1986, two prominent Serbian businessmen from Niagara Falls, George Yerich and John Gruyich, purchased it from the Canadian Pacific Hotels. In 1988, the Yerich family became the sole owners, and remain so today. Skylon Tower has a family fun centre, shops, and the Ride-to-the-Top to see wonderful views of the Falls and surrounding areas.

**Peter Zezel**

Born in Scarborough, Ontario, on April 22, 1965, Peter Zezel was a successful NHL player. He played for numerous teams including the Toronto Maple Leafs from 1990 to 1994. Peter was also a talented soccer player and the first to receive the Brian Budd Award from the Canada Soccer Hall of Fame. After his hockey career, he ran the Peter Zezel Hockey and Sports Camps in Etobicoke which helped children learn and improve their hockey and soccer skills. He died on May 25, 2009. The street, Zezel Way, was named to honour him in 2014.

Peter Zezel playing for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Street sign in Scarborough, Ontario.

**Book**

*Serbs in Ontario*, Sofija Škorić and George Vid Tomashevich

Serbian national costume and folk shoes.

**Newspaper***Voice of Canadian Serbs*, founded in 1934. This newspaper continues to be published today.