



## ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

### OUR MANDATE

Founded in 2015, the Canadian Business History Association (CBHA) is a group of historians, archivists, and businesspeople who believe that the study of Canadian business history in all its forms is an integral part of Canadian history, and that this study benefits from a strong partnership between academia and business.

We work to preserve and present Canadian business history and its role both domestically and in world business history. The CBHA is a registered Canadian charity, and thanks to our donors, we offer funding for Canadian business history research, travel, teaching, preservation and promotion.



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Dr. Andrew Ross**, Chair (from January 2025)

**Ryan Manucha**, President (from September 2025)

**Dr. Dimitry Anastakis**, Chair (to January 2025)

**Joe Martin**, President (to September 2025)

**Dr. Donica Belisle**

**Tabitha Fritz**

**Jeremy Mosher**

**Dr. Don Nerbas**

**Stephen Salmon**

**Sanjeev Sharma**

**Mona Zhang**

**CHAIR'S REPORT**



This past year, 2024–2025, was one of ongoing transitions for CBHA. In reflecting on the scope and pace of that change, I am very pleased to say the organization is stronger than ever.

This year, our endowment funded a variety of business history research, thereby demonstrating our broad and deep definition of business history. The Aqueduct Foundation administers CBHA's endowment, and we would like to thank them for their steady guidance throughout the past year.

At the Board level our directors worked collaboratively to further improve CBHA's efficiency in the service of our overall mandate. This included making further enhancements to the organization's governance, such as streamlining our by-laws, roles and responsibilities. We also made a big push to establish a more secure foundation for our website this year. We enlisted KB Media as our new host and continued to work with them to improve the functionality of our membership platform. A new "Make a Donation" page now allows donations to the CBHA. We are now in a position to provide tax receipts due to the recent approval of our charitable status by the Canada Revenue Agency (many thanks to Denton's Canada for their help). We look forward to further improving the site in the year to come (and welcome any suggestions).

In terms of events, CBHA was prescient in holding a conference on the theme of Canada-US relations one day before the US elections in November 2024. Held in Winnipeg, our event featured a panel of distinguished political and industry leaders sharing their insights on the creation and impacts of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement, established in 1989. Our keynote speaker was Gary Doer, former Premier of Manitoba, Ambassador to the US, and Advisor to the Government of Manitoba on Canada-US Trade Relations. This event highlighted what became some of the challenges and opportunities facing Canada under President Donald Trump.

Then, in September 2025 we held a miniconference at the Albany Club. The audience heard insights from Rick Waugh and Chuck Winograd (moderated by Frances Horodelski), as well as a stimulating talk by Professor Charles Calomiris. We also awarded the inaugural Waugh Foundation Prize of \$10,000 to Dimitry Anastakis for his excellent book, [\*Dream Car: Malcolm Bricklin's Fantastic SV1 and the End of Industrial Modernity\*](#) (University of Toronto Press, 2024). I want to thank Rick Waugh and the Waugh Family Foundation for their generosity in funding this prize, which will continue to raise the prominence of Canadian business history in the years to come. Next year, the prize will recognize accomplishments in the public engagement of business history, including documentaries, exhibits, websites, databases, museum and archival projects, and contributions to business history



journalism. At the miniconference we also honoured our outgoing Founding President, Joe Martin, who stepped down from the board this fall after 10 years of leadership, and the Association will be looking for ways to honour his legacy. Video content from the event is available on CBHA's YouTube channel which you can see [here](#).

I would also like to highlight the role of Steven Bright, our inaugural Executive Director, who enthusiastically engaged with the Association's activities and implemented solutions to move us forward to the next stage. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all CBHA members, directors, and executive committee members. The CBHA would not be the vibrant organization it is without the voluntarism of its members.

- Andrew Ross

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

It was a tremendous honour to be elected President of the CBHA at the October 30, 2025 board meeting. I have massive shoes to fill as Joe Martin steps down as President of the CBHA, a position he has occupied since he helped birth the association in early 2015.

I wish to thank Joe for his indefatigable efforts incubating a durable organization that promotes the study and preservation of Canadian business history. CBHA Chair Andrew Ross delivered remarks of praise & thanks to Joe at the September 18, 2025, in-person event at the Albany Club. As I listened to Andrew speak, I looked around the room (filled to capacity) with individuals from across a whole host of industries, at various stages of their careers, working in a wide range of occupations. They craved knowledge of Canada's business past, wisdom from leading thinkers, and fellowship amongst those with similar interests. Over the years, Joe has helped fill many such rooms. He has created spaces for knowledge to flourish, connections to form or deepen, and insights to improve action and practice.

The significance of the CBHA's mission became all the more evident this past year. Trump's return to the White House brought with it seismic shifts for Canada and its place in the world. Canadians grew gravely concerned about the nation's prosperity, competitiveness and prospects. In such moments of uncertainty, when the rules of the road are upended and the in-place playbooks no longer work, the lessons of history are what one must turn to. Canadians, their leaders and their businesses looked to past struggles, historical tariff wars, and previous diversification strategies to discern paths forward. On the whole, Canadians enjoy a stable



democracy and high quality of life. This state of affairs did not happen by accident and will not persist without conscious effort. And the study of our business history is fundamental to this exercise.

2025 was a clear demonstration of why the CBHA's mission is so important. History can guide the present on how to survive contemporary tumult. The value of efforts to preserve and present the past receive an even brighter spotlight in such moments of disorder as 2025. This past year has highlighted the nation-building significance of Joe's leadership and the organization that he was instrumental in founding.

Joe continues to advance the preservation and presentation of business history - the mission runs through his blood, and he is not one who requires a title to do what needs doing. And Canada is all the better for it.

In my capacity as President, I am guided by the CBHA's several purposes:

- Organizing lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences on Canadian business history and business archival practices.
- Funding research, archival work and special projects to further business history in Canada.
- Providing awards and prizes to scholars for their contributions to Canadian business history.
- Increasing the general public's understanding and awareness of Canadian business history and facilitating partnerships within civil society to further promote its study.

Our programming this past year was robust, and I look forward to continuing to build on the momentum. Much credit for this is owed to our outgoing Executive Director, Steven Bright. He brought energy, vision and stability to the CBHA. I wish him all the best as he focuses on his PhD at the intersection of finance and faith in 19th century Canada.

Our Annual General Meeting, held on February 27, 2025, at the Rotman School of Management, was a great opportunity to update all our members on the organization's transition to CBHA 2.0. With the business of the meeting concluded, we were honoured to have Professor David Wilson as our keynote speaker. David is a Professor in the Celtic Studies Program and History Department at the University of Toronto, and the General Editor of the Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Quite fittingly, the title of his fascinating talk was "The Dictionary of Canadian Biography and Business History from the Bottom Up." Some members joined us in person, with more joining remotely.



Throughout the course of the year, we continued to support Dimitry Anastakis in his preparations for the World Congress of Business History set to take place July 2026 in Toronto.

The CBHA is uniquely positioned in the Canadian intellectual landscape to conceive of and host such events, where practitioners and academics meet and allow for deeper understanding of episodes and periods in our nation's business history. As Andrew mentioned, our event on 18 September was a huge success and I look forward to another year of engaging programming.

Following the conclusion of the fiscal year (which, members should note, will shift from September 30 to December 31 on a go-forward basis), the CBHA struck a search committee for the role of Executive Director, to replace outgoing executive director Steven Bright. The committee, and the Board as a whole, is thrilled to announce the successful conclusion of this search. After careful consideration, Dr. Joanne Archibald was selected to serve as the CBHA's next executive director. Dr. Archibald holds an honours BA from Queen's University, an MSc from the London School of Economics, and a PhD in Canadian political and military history from Queen's University. In her professional career, amongst other roles, Dr. Archibald has worked for Historica Canada researching, producing and marketing the famous Heritage Minutes series. The CBHA will be fortunate to benefit from Dr. Archibald's experience in academia, business, marketing & event planning, and the communication of history and heritage.

- Ryan Manucha

## **FUNDING RESEARCH + AWARDS**

### Chris Kobrak Research Fellowship

The Chris Kobrak Research Fellowship provides \$5,000 per year over two years for a deserving graduate student or early career scholar to support their continued research in business history (widely defined). In 2024, CBHA awarded the Fellowship to Dr. Clarence Hatton-Proulx, for their project "The Spatial and Environmental Consequences of Deindustrialization in Montréal's Oil Refining Sector." Clarence completed their PhD, "A Social and Material History of Urban Energy Transitions: The Case of Montréal, 1945-1980," in the History and Urban Studies at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (Montréal) and Sorbonne Université (Paris).

As Dr. Hatton-Proulx describes:



“I am interested in the urban development of former industrial brownfields, and in the disposal and treatment of industrial waste.... From a business history perspective, I focus on the role of two actors: oil majors — present in an oil refining cluster near Montréal-East — and how they dealt with soil contamination on their properties; and the environmental industry, which emerged in order to find ways to depollute contaminated brownfields.”

CBHA, through the Chris Kobrak Research Fellowship, funds this project in numerous ways. First, it supports archival research of the oil companies involved, notably British Petroleum and Petrofina, in the United Kingdom and France. Second, it supports a book project on the history of oil refining in Montreal, using Clarence’s previous doctoral research alongside this new material. (That book, published by McGill-Queen’s University Press, will be released in 2026.) Third, the Fellowship facilitates collaboration with Montréal-based photographer Jules Gauthier.

#### The Waugh Family Foundation Book Prize in Canadian Business History

This prize, which comes with \$10,000, recognizes excellence in business history scholarship. On 18 September in Toronto, we announced Professor Dimitry Anastakis as the inaugural winner for his book *Dream Car: Malcolm Bricklin’s Fantastic SV1 and the End of Industrial Modernity*.

Dimitry’s book is the tale of entrepreneur Malcolm Bricklin’s sporty, sexy Safety Vehicle-1, a legendary failure in automotive history yet one that reveals much about postwar North America’s economic, political, and cultural evolution.

Our call to publishers for submissions for the Book Prize attracted more than 24 books to consider. A three-member jury spent several months reading and discussing the books, and in selecting *Dream Car* they wrote the following: “What makes the book so powerful is how Dimitry uses failure to illuminate success. Rather than dismissing Bricklin as a colourful hustler, he asks why the venture appealed, why it failed, and what this reveals about entrepreneurial risk, industrial policy, and consumer culture.”

Dimitry, a scholar of the automotive industry, is the L.R. Wilson and R.J. Currie Chair in Canadian Business History at the University of Toronto in the Department of History and the Rotman School of Management.

In his own words, Dimitry said: “I am delighted to receive this recognition from the CBHA and the Waugh Family Foundation for my book. The book aims not only to capture the story of a notable entrepreneur, but to highlight the tremendous



importance of cars and the automotive sector to millions of Canadians, and how automobility has shaped and reshaped our world over the last century and a half.”

Two other books were short-listed for the Prize: Alexandra Posadzki’s *Rogers v. Rogers: The Battle for Control of Canada’s Telecom Empire* (McClelland & Stewart), and Eric Cline’s, *Squandered: Canada’s Potash Legacy* (University of Regina Press).

The Waugh Book Prize jury comprised Professor Don Nerbas, Associate Professor and the St. Andrew’s Society/McEuen Scholarship Foundation Chair in Canadian-Scottish Studies at McGill University, Professor Erik Thomson, Associate Professor of History at the University of Manitoba, and Alex Walker Turner, Associate Partner at McKinsey & Company. Don is a Board member of CBHA. Dimitry is the former Chair of CBHA and sits on the Board but was not involved in any way in the judging process.

The Book Prize, which is open to books in English and French, is one of three prizes sponsored by the Waugh Family Foundation, each presented on a tri-annual basis. The Waugh Family Foundation Career Recognition Award was given in 2024 to Professor Brian Young, James McGill Emeritus Professor of History at McGill University. The Waugh Family Foundation Prize in Public History will be awarded in 2026 as one of five awards we will give out in the current calendar year.

#### Award for Best Scholarly Article in Canadian Business History

The annual CBHA/ACHA Best Scholarly Article in Canadian Business History award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field and welcomes submissions employing any methodological approach. Eligible articles should either focus on Canadian topics or include a Canadian perspective within an international context. Submissions must be written in English or French and published within the year prior to the award.

In the summer of 2025 CBHA announced Sarah Elvins and Katherine Parkin as winners of this award for their article “The Business of Abortion: Referral Services, Cross-Border Consumption, and Canadian Women’s Access to Abortion in New York State, 1970–1972” *Enterprise & Society* (2024),1-21 (doi:10.1017/eso.2023.61).

A three-person jury found their article to be very well written, organized, and argued. Its themes also resonate with contemporary trends: US abortion access in post-Dobbs period (in which women in abortion-ban US states currently travelling to states with abortion access, possibly not unlike what Canadian women were doing in early 1970s), as well as the longstanding context of Canada/US cross-border shopping/commerce.



The jury comprised Professor Dan Robinson (Western University), Professor Donica Belisle (University of Regina) and CBHA Chair Andrew Ross. Danica is also a member of the CBHA Board.

## **CBHA READING GROUP**

The Canadian Business History Association's Reading Group was formed in 2020 at the University of Toronto. Its objective was to bring scholars together to discuss their published and works-in-progress research. Each session discusses pre-circulated chapters and papers, one by a graduate student participant and one by an established scholar. This approach supports emerging historians and provides established historians with additional mentorship opportunities. It also broadens the field of business history in Canada.

The Reading Group went on hiatus during the pandemic but was restarted with a session on 25 February 2025 at the University of Toronto. Moderated by Dr. Jean-Philip Mathieu of McGill University, the group discussed chapters by Professor Andrea Benoit and PhD student Louise Swaffer. Andrea won the 2021 CBHA Award for Best Book in Canadian Business History for her publication *VIVA M·A·C: AIDS, Fashion, and the Philanthropic Practices of M·A·C Cosmetics*.

The next session will be on 24 April at the University of Toronto where participants will discuss chapters by Christina Lubinski and the doctoral student Kathleen Durocher from UQAM. They are aiming to host the fall 2026 meeting at McGill.

## **OUR FINANCIAL POSITION**

The CBHA ended the 2024/2025 fiscal year with a revenue of \$26k, an increase of 247%. At the same time, operating expenses increased by nearly the same rate (268%) to \$200k. The large portion of this increase comes from the hiring of our first Executive Director, while the rest came from our continued charity status application as well as the expenses related to our successful September event.

The CBHA ends the 2024/2025 fiscal year with a little over \$3M in assets on our balance sheet, providing both a runway measured in years as well as a strong foundation to expand our operations in 2026 and beyond.

## **ENHANCING OUR ENGAGEMENT**

### Expanding Stakeholder Outreach



During the year we enhanced our stakeholder outreach to a variety of different groups.

We had very constructive conversations with organizations such as the Canadian Historical Association, Historica Canada, the Canadian War Museum, the Association of Canadian Archivists, the Champlain Society, and many individual members and people interested in our mission. We also presented at CHA's annual conference, held in Toronto.

Feedback from our outreach clearly demonstrated that Canada's long business history can help Canadians navigate the present and move into a more resilient future. It also showed that overall interest in business history is growing across Canada, reflecting the broader geo-economic dialogue on Canada's relations with the United States during a time of cross-border tensions.

### Other Engagement Activities

#### CBH Talks

We continued to engage authors and business leaders in our ongoing series of videos, named "[CBH Talks](#)." We are adding to the scope and number of our videos, with more on the horizon in 2026.

In 2024–2025, we interviewed Professor Patrice Dutil, author of *Sir John A. Macdonald: & the Apocalyptic Year 1885*, published by Sutherland House. Patrice made the bold case for why Canada's first prime minister should not be erased from history. With schools renaming buildings and monuments being torn down, Patrice argued that we need to consider the full context of Macdonald's actions during the apocalyptic year of 1885.

We also spoke with Robert Stephens, author of *To Make A Killing: Arthur Cutten, The Man Who Ruled the Markets*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press. Arthur Cutten, a Canadian entrepreneur born in Guelph, Ontario, is often remembered for his ruthless rise to wealth through grain futures and stock market speculation. From his humble beginnings in rural Ontario to becoming a dominant figure in the US markets during the Roaring Twenties, Robert's story offers a captivating look at the intersection of power, wealth, and scandal. Sadly, Robert passed away a few months after we shot this interview.

#### Our Newsletter

Through our monthly newsletter, Prospectus, we shared a number of business history-related updates and short articles with more than 1,750 people on our



distribution list. Our open rates continued to be quite high, and we received some positive feedback along the way. This suggests that people pay close attention to our newsletter, which is gratifying.

We also reviewed and shared several book reviews, which we posted on our website and included in our newsletter. These reviews would not be possible without the active support of many of Canada's leading publishers. We sincerely thank them for providing our reviewers with copies of the books, and, more broadly, for their support in nurturing business history in Canada.

### Books reviewed in the last year include:

*The Next Age of Uncertainty: How the World Can Adapt to a Riskier Future*, by Stephen Poloz. Published by Penguin Random House Canada

*Selling Britishness: Commodity Culture, the Dominions, and Empire*, by Felicity Barnes. Published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

*Needle Work: A History of Commercial Tattooing in Canada*, by Jamie Jelinsky. Published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

*The Honourable John Norquay: Indigenous Premier, Canadian Statesman*, by Gerald Friesen. Published by University of Manitoba Press.

*Boosters and Barkers: Financing Canada's Involvement in the First World War*, by David Roberts. Published by UBC Press.

*Hayek's Bastards: Race, Gold, IQ, and the Capitalism of the Far Right*, by Quinn Slobodian. Published by UBC Press.

*Pharmacopoeias, Drug Regulation, and Empires: Making Medicines Official in Britain's Imperial World, 1618-1968*, by Stuart Anderson. Published by UBC Press.

*The Scramble for the Teenager Dollar: Creating the Youth Market in Mid-Century Canada*, by Katharine Rollwagen. Published by UBC Press.

*Standing Up to Big Nickel: The Story of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Strike, 1958*, by Elizabeth Quinlan. Published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

### LINKEDIN AND WEBSITE

We continued to engage people with our LinkedIn content through updates on CBHA initiatives and connections to news of the day related to business history. We



faced a few technical challenges in updating our website over the last year. But we made significant progress, leading to enhancements that will be released in 2026.

## **LOOKING FORWARD: WORLD CONGRESS OF BUSINESS HISTORY**

CBHA is partnering with the World Congress of Business History, to be held from July 27-31, 2026, at the Rotman School of Management in Toronto. This will be the third such Congress, and the first time it will be held in North America. This will be the largest-ever gathering of business historians in Canada.

CBHA is looking forward to an exciting year ahead with robust programming and continued outreach to the Canadian business history community.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at [cbha.acha@gmail.com](mailto:cbha.acha@gmail.com) if you have any questions, feedback, or suggestions! We'd love to hear from you.

