

# BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 1908 - 1994

Brant County Museum & Archives  
57 Charlotte Street Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

SPRING 1994

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CURATOR: Ms. Susan Twist, BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ont. N3T 2W6

## PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION

We are all looking forward to the spring and summer seasons - renewal and rebirth. Thus far, 1994 has been filled with activities. Dr. H. Hedges showed slides and spoke about moths and butterflies found in our area. In February, Mr. Derek Pite informed us about the newly formed Canadian Military Heritage Museum in Brantford. During the March Break, the museum was turned into a primeval forest where local children learned about the

world of dinosaurs. The group also went to the Royal Ontario Museum for a day.

A display of Canadian woven coverlets and horseblankets from the Harrison M. Scheak collection was opened on February 20th. This exciting display is presently set up in the "Great Hall" and will be on display until May 15th. Please try to come in and see this colourful display of early Canadiana.

Irish Heritage Night was a resounding success! There was

delicious stew and great entertainment. The luck of the Irish was with us.

As you can see, the Brant Historical Society offers an exciting variety of programs, information, and entertainment. Do join us and become a part of our history.

The Brant Historical Society wishes to thank the Corporate, Patron and Individual members for their support in assisting to preserve local history.

Ruth Lefler

# **BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY and MUSEUM ACTIVITIES 1994 (May, June, July, August)**

## **MAY 1994**

May 1st - May 15th  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
"Winter Warmth"  
Textiles from the Harrison M. Scheak collection.  
Small admission charge.

Wednesday May 18th, 8:00 pm  
BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Launching of the Brant Historical Society's newest book  
The Grand River Navigation Company,  
written by Mr. Bruce E. Hill  
The book gives a detailed account of the development of the Grand River canal system from Dunnville to Brantford during the 1850's.  
Free admission.

Wednesday May 18th, 8:00 pm  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Mr. Bruce E. Hill will lecture on his book The Grand River Navigation Company.  
Free admission.

Saturday May 28th, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm  
BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
GIANT YARD SALE

## **JUNE 1994**

Wednesday June 15th, 8:00 pm  
BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MONTHLY LECTURE  
Mr. David Neill will speak on the history of the W. Ross Macdonald School. Free admission.

Sat. June 25th - Sat. Sept. 17th  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Exhibition "Canadian Comic Strips" featuring cartoonists Jimmy Frise, Walter Ball, Doug Wright, James Simpkins, and Lynn Johnston.  
Small admission charge.

## **JULY 1994**

July 1st - September 17th  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Exhibition "Canadian Comic Strips" featuring cartoonists Jimmy Frise, Walter Ball, Doug Wright, James Simpkins, and Lynn Johnston.  
Small admission charge.

Monday July 11th - Friday July 15th  
Monday July 18th - Friday July 22nd  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Children's Museum Club  
full and half day programmes  
"Time Travellers"  
Pre-registration required.  
Fees vary.

## **AUGUST 1994**

August 1st - September 17th  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Exhibition "Canadian Comic Strips" featuring cartoonists Jimmy Frise, Walter Ball, Doug Wright, James Simpkins, and Lynn Johnston.  
Small admission charge.

Mon. August 8th - Fri. August 12th  
Mon. August 15th - Fri. August 19th  
BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 Charlotte St., Brantford  
Children's Museum Club  
full and half day programmes  
"Canadian Comic Strips"  
Pre-registration is required.  
Fees vary.

MUSEUM SUMMER HOURS:  
Tuesday - Friday 9 am to 5 pm  
Saturday & Sunday - 1 to 4 pm

ADMISSION FEES:  
Adults: \$2.00  
Seniors/Students: \$1.50  
Children: \$1.25  
Children Under Six Years: Free

BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
57 CHARLOTTE ST., BRANTFORD, ONT.  
N3T 2W6 (519) 752-2483

# **FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS - The founding of the Brant Historical Society & Museum by Ruth Lefler**

The Brant County Museum was formed in 1890. It began as a small collection housed on the second floor in the old library in the Heyd Block on Colborne Street. Mr. George Broomfield, a local resident and amateur archaeologist, became interested in the local museum and donated several hundred pieces of native artifacts that he had collected along the Banks of the Grand River.

In the early 1900's, the museum moved with the library to the lower floor of the Carnegie Building and remained there until 1952 when both the library and the museum needed more space. Throughout these years, Mr. Broomfield continued to be involved with the museum.

The Brant Historical Society was organized on May 11, 1908. A public meeting was held at the Conservatory of Music on Nelson Street which is presently the site of the Hill & Robinson Funeral Home. The meeting was called by Miss Augusta Grant Gilkison. The first president was Judge Hardy with vice presidents Miss A. Gilkison and Mr. Alfred J. Wilkes, K.C.

The purpose of the society was to encourage research into Brant County history and to promote a spirit for preservation of local history and artifacts. This is still true today.

The annual meeting was always held on March 13th as it was on this day in 1830 that the town of

Brantford was laid out in town lots by surveyor Lewis Burwell.

The anniversary day is November 24th as Joseph Brant died on this day in 1807.

In 1951, the Brant Historical Society purchased its present site at 57 Charlotte Street from Mrs. Iona Hutton. The Society and Museum merged under one roof.

In 1964, two rooms were added on the northeast side of the building and, again in 1967, the large meeting room was added.

Even though the Brant Historical Society is based in Brantford, it serves both the city of Brantford and the County of Brant. The collection at the Museum encompasses the whole area.

**BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**APRIL MEETING**  
**Wednesday April 20, 8:00 pm**

**Arthur Binkley**  
**"The Bixel Family Inside Looking Out"**

**AND**

**Special General Meeting**  
**Wednesday April 20, 8:00 pm**  
**to consider a new Mission Statement for the  
Brant County Museum and Archives**

Meetings at BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES, 57 Charlotte St., Brantford,

# The Rise of the Armenian Community in Brant County

(Interview with Historical Society Members, Mr. and Mrs. Sid Hagopian)

To the north-east of Asia Minor is an area of land between the Black and Caspian Seas and Mesopotamia (Iraq), known as historic Armenia, a country of plateaus and mountains. The snow-capped Mt. Arrarat centered in the heart of Armenia near Lake Van is said to be the final resting place of Noah's Ark after the Great Flood. Legend states that the famed Garden of Eden is located on the picturesque Armenian plateau around Mt. Ararat. Did the civilization of mankind begin here?

During the fourth century, the Armenians were among the first people to adopt Christianity as a state religion. The Armenian Gregorian form of Eastern Christianity with the religious rituals of the burning of incense, the lighting of numerous candles, the chanting chorales in the mother tongue and the honouring of the sacraments of baptism, holy communion, marriage vows, and death rites were brought to America and carried out by these scattered people in other churches until they could purchase their own edifices.

One of the blackest pages in modern history was the

series of massacres and cruel atrocities carried out by invaders, the Turks, the Kurds, (Persians), and the Russians on the Armenian people from the year 1903 until after the First World War.

In 1896, it is estimated by historians that about 200,000 Armenians were massacred by the Turks and, in 1916, another 800,000 were massacred by Turks; 200,000 fled to Russia for protection. Armenia was partitioned between Turkey and Persia, and later Russia. With each massacre and partition it was necessary for Armenians to flee from their beloved homeland.

On May 1918, an Independent Armenia Republic was declared and recognized by Great Britain, United States, Canada and many other powers but, due to combined Turko-Soviet intervention, it survived only a little over two years. From 1915 to 1922 more than 1.5 million Armenians perished as a result of the Turkish government's policy of genocide.

Many Canadian historians state that the first Armenians probably arrived in Canada during the 1880's and their numbers increased during the next decade. They entered

via the American ports of Philadelphia and New York and Canadian ports of Halifax, Quebec and Montreal. They preferred trade rather than farming hence, they settled in the towns and cities of Central Canada, especially Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines, and Brantford rather than the Prairies. About ninety per cent of the Armenian population of Brantford, Hamilton and St. Catharines emigrated from the district of Keghi, county of Erzerum, situated in historic western Armenia.

In Brantford, the Armenians worked at Pratt and Letchworth, Malleable Iron Works, manufacturers of malleable castings for train wheels and implement parts; the numerous Railway Lines; the Buck Foundries, manufacturers of Happy Thought stoves; the Cockshutt and Verity Plow Company and the Massey-Harris Company; and the Waterous Engine Works. In commerce, they saved money to purchase coffee houses, barber shops, boarding houses and grocery stores.

Like many of the Armenian settlements in America, there were two political groups among them: the Hnchags and the Tashnags. The Hnchags or The Armenian Social

(INTERVIEW continues)

Democrats, did not favour an independent Armenia, and did not honour the red, blue, and orange flag of free Armenia. They had a community hall where they held programs to teach Russian arts, crafts, language and religion to their people. A library was organized so the older generation could read books in their own language.

The Tashnags or the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (A.R.F.) also had a community hall where programs in Armenian arts, crafts, culture and languages were taught.

The majority of the Armenians belong to the Armenian National Apostolic Church; a few adhered to the Armenian Catholic or Protestant churches. In the early 1900's Grace Anglican congregation invited the Armenians to worship in their building. An Armenian priest of Toronto, Ontario, periodically conducted services in the mother tongue on Sunday afternoon. After examining the church books, Miss Eleanor Chapin located Armenian baptisms recorded as early as 1910 at Grace Anglican Church, Brantford.

Among the Armenian immigrants who came to Canada were 100 orphan boys in the 1920's, who were

sponsored by the Armenian Relief Association of Canada. The orphans lived on a farm near Georgetown, Ontario. A year after the United Church of Canada took over the orphanage in 1928, the farm was closed down and "the Georgetown Boys" were placed among the Ontario farmers, either as foster children or as contracted farm labourers.

When attempts were made to Anglicize the names of the Georgetown boys in 1923, one boy said to another, "...do you see that boy sitting on the end of this row? He lost his father and mother, his home and country - everything that is dear to a boy's heart. All he has left of his past is his name. Please, sir you wouldn't take that away from him, will you?"

We wish to thank Sid and Lucy Hagopian for their devoted loyalty to the Brant County Museum & Archives and the Brant Historical Society. Their stories have been captured on tape for the preservation of local Armenian history.

In conclusion, Sid stressed the fact that Armenian parents encouraged their children to seek a good education. Some successful Armenian

professionals of this small ethnic group are: Bill Balian, teacher; Dr. John Basmajian, medical scientist, author of I.O.U.; Madelaine Bazoian, teacher; Dr. Matthew Bazoian, Hamilton Psychologist; John Bazoian, accountant; Berberians Steak House, Toronto; Barbara Hiosipain, teacher; Dr. Archie Manolian, Dentist of St. Catharines; Ronald Mashoian, principal; Audrey Mooradian, nurse; Harry Serabian, accountant; Luci Serabian, nurse; Dr. Serganian of Montreal; Arnse Valien, teacher.

Angela Files

## DID YOU KNOW?

(Queries And Gems  
Of Local History)

According to oral tradition, some of the scows used by the Grand River Navigation Company were sunk in Mohawk Lake. Do their skeletons still exist?

**PUBLICATIONS LIST & GIFT SHOP ITEMS**  
**of The Brant Historical Society,**  
**Brant County Museum & Archives**  
**57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6**

**NEW HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS OF 1994**

1. Brant County: Place Names And List of Professionals and Trades From Lovell's Directory and Gazetteer (20 pages) \$ 5.95  
 Collator Angela Files, Computer Recorder Clifford Jones
2. Assessment Rolls of Grand River Tract (Haldimand Township) \$ 5.95  
 Gore District, (now Brantford Township) 1816, 1818-24 (27 pages)  
 Collator Angela Files, Computer Recorder Clifford Jones
3. Census (Nominal) Grand River Tract (Haldimand Township) \$ 5.95  
 Gore District, (now Brantford Township) 1824, 1827, 1829  
 Collator Angela Files

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS**

Jean Waldie Vol. 1	\$14.95
Jean Waldie Vol. 2	\$15.95
Both Volumes	\$22.50
St. George Continuation School	\$ 7.00
Rural Schools of South Dumfries Township	\$ 8.00
Glimpse of the Past	\$ 3.50
View of an Indian Reserve	\$15.00
How Brantford Cooked	\$ 3.50
Brantford Pottery (Robert Deboer)	\$ 9.95
Arts and Entertainment (Robert Deboer)	\$ 9.95
From Automobiles to Washing Machines (Robert Deboer)	\$ 9.95

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

Great Little Inns of Southern Ontario	\$ 9.95
Brant County Atlas	\$20.00
Real Old Woodstove Cookbook	\$ 2.95
Rules of Etiquette of 1800's	\$ 2.95
Health Hints 1887-1924	\$ 2.95
Great Grandma's Health Suggestions from the late 1800's	\$ 2.95
Canadian Album Series - Nature Stories for Children	
Wildflowers	\$ 3.95
Insects	\$ 3.95
Large Mammals	\$ 3.95
Birds	\$ 3.95

**POSTERS**

Pelee Island Wine & Vineyards Inc.	
J.S. Hamilton	\$20.00

**HASTI-NOTES**

Market Square (5's) (Stedman postcard)	\$ 2.95
Mohawk Chapel (5's) (Stedman postcard)	\$ 1.95

**FRANK ADAMS' PRINTS** \$ 5.00

Mohawk Chapel  
 W. Ross MacDonald School  
 Brantford Market Square,  
 Bell Homestead  
 Brant County Court House,  
 Grace Anglican Church  
 (6 in pkg.)

**POSTCARDS**

Mohawk Chapel (Stedman Postcard-1910)	\$ .25
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**MAPS**

County of Brant - Tremaine	\$ 2.50
City of Brantford 1875	\$ 5.00
Historical Map of Brant County	\$ 5.00
Discovers of Canada Map	\$ 5.00

The Brant Historical Society is pleased to announce the launching of **The Grand River Navigation Company** by author **Mr. Bruce Emerson Hill**, on Wednesday, MAY 18, 1994, 8:00 P.M. at the Brant County Museum & Archives, 57 Charlotte St., Brantford

The Grand River Navigation Company developed a waterway from Dunnville to Brantford passing through Cayuga, Caledonia and a number of smaller places. A line of steamers made regular runs from Brantford to Buffalo. During the 1850's there were 111 arrivals and departures of steamers from Brantford and 824 of scows. Much grain was exported and also large quantities of pine and oak timber and of saw logs. Plaster of Paris was also shipped along the water from the mines along the Grand River.

The interesting history of The Grand River Navigation days is captured in our new book entitled "**The Grand River Navigation Company**", by teacher and educator Mr. Bruce Emerson Hill, of Brantford, Ontario, and published by The Brant Historical Society. This attractive blue-covered book is a detailed account of the canal fever along the Middle and Lower Grand River during the early 1800's. Irish

immigrants helped to dig and build the series of dams and locks. The text of the book encompasses an extensive documented account of the inception of the Grand River Navigation Company in 1832; the utilization of Six Nations' Funds for the construction of the locks and dams and the purchasing of Indian land for the building of towpaths; the commencement of navigation along the Grand River; the building of the Brantford Canal; and the impact of the navigation along the Grand River.

To enhance the history of the heritage Grand River, the ten chapters of the one hundred and fifty paged book provide the readers with numerous charts, documents, maps, pictures and tables. Image Quest of Brantford, Ontario, designed the book.

Please, plan to attend the book launching on MAY 18th and hear Mr. Bruce Emerson Hill speak about the rich history of The Grand River Navigation Company.

**PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM**

TITLE	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE

\* Add \$3.00 to cover the cost of postage, ALL orders are to be prepaid.

Mail To: NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/PROVINCE/POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque payable to **Brant Historical Society.**

Send to: Brant County Museum & Archives, 57 Charlotte St., BRANTFORD, Ont. N3T 2W6

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