

BHS Quarterly

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Winter 1997 Brant Historical Society 1908-1997

Vol. IV No.4



SEASONS GREETINGS





WISHING YOU ALL THE BEST FOR A HAPPPY HOLIDAY SEASON



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Second Annual Antique Show and Sale will be history. Hopefully it will be the success that it was in 1996 and we will find ourselves well on the way to the Christmas Season. I would like to take this opportunity to express heartfelt thanks to Elizabeth Hunter, Sonia Mrva, Ruth and Morley Lefler, Bob Glass and John and Joan Bonfield for their help and assistance anonymous. Thank you one and all. in the various aspects of preparing for the Antique Show and Sale and to all of our many, volunteers, without whose help it would have been impossible to do the Show.

I would be remiss if I did not mention those who supported our efforts financially, including Telephone City Broadcast Ltd.; Board of Management, Brantford Downtown Business Association; S. C. Johnson and Son, Ltd.; Yorkshire Press; Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in contribution during their time on the Canada, Unit 341; The Williamson Board. We welcome two new members

By the time the membership receives Group; The Colour Shoppe; McCleister to the Board, Margaret Glass and Wayne this edition of the B.H.S. Quarterly, the Funeral Homes; Anthony J. Olszowy; Townson who were elected by the Gen-Scotia Bank; Mary Welsh; Canadian Tire Associate Store; Sandra J. Harris; Harold & Goetz Building Products Ltd.; As indicated in the Fall Edition of the Pauwel's Travel Bureau; McDonald's Restaurants of Brantford; Reginald R. Schram; Dennis Toll Funeral Home; Wayne P. Vipond and to several members of the Society who wish to remain

> passed away in September was sorely missed during the Show as he was of significant help in 1996.

> In addition to the loss of Ralph as our Second Vice President, Ken Strachan and Brian Wood are not standing for reelection to the Board of Directors for 1998. On behalf of the Board I would like to express our appreciation for their

eral Membership on November 19.

B.H.S. Quarterly, we are in dire need of volunteers to assist with the operation of the Museum and our satellite at the Market Square. If you can spare a few hours a week, please give Elizabeth a call at 752-2483.

On a sad note, Ralph Cook who In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Robert Deborr

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Back to the Wigwam, Part 3

by Ethel T. Raymond (1914)

The following is the final part of a romanticized historical sketch of Brantford composed by Ethel T. Raymond and published in the "Official Brantford Old Home Week Souvenir Book" distributed August 9-14, 1914. It will be presented in 4 parts through 1997 Sesquicentennial a contribution.

n 1874 Mr. Ignatius Cockshutt laid the corner stone of the first YMCA. A new building, the pride of the citizens, has just been erected at the cost of \$125,000. Its sister organization, the YWCA which began in 1876 with Mrs. S. Jones as President, now carries on its excellent work under the presidency of Mrs. John Ott.

Brantford's benevolent institutions are each doing a splendid work in their own particular branch - The House of Refuge, the Children's Shelter, and the Widows' Home.

From the early time when Brantford became a post village, the post office found its headquarters in various buildings until 1880, when the present structure was erected on the northeast corner of George and Dalhousie Streets, at a cost of \$35,000. An imposing structure of ornamental design is now rearing itself above the buildings of the city to accommodate the ever-increasing postal requirements of busy Brantford.

The Volunteer Fire Brigade, whose primitive apparatus once sheltered beneath rough sheds near the little frame school house on the Market Square, is now superseded by well-disciplined brigades housed in well-equipped stations under their efficient Chief D. Lewis. Law and order in the city is well kept by Chief C. Slemin and his capable corps of officers.

The successor of Brantford's pioneer paper, the Daily Courier, still thrives under the experienced editorship of F.D. Reville.

The Expositor, now the Liberal paper, possessed and edited by Mr. T. H. Preston, is one of the finest literary sheets in the country.

Early money in circulation was mostly American and Spanish. Army scrip and duebills were largely used in trade. The first banks were the British North America in 1846, with J. Christie. manager; Commerce, in 1872, with J. H. Plummer, manager, and Bank of Montreal, whose pioneer agent was Wm. Muirhead. In addition to these banks, which still survive, are: Standard, Toronto, Hamilton, Nova Scotia, Imperial, Royal and Merchants Banks.

Although a peaceful city, many of Brantford's citizens are actively interested in military organizations. On Sept. 28th, 1866, the 38th Brant Battalion of Infantry was formed. By special permission of the Earl of Dufferin, then Governor-General, the regiment in 1874 assumed the name of Dufferin Rifles. Near the old ford on a street named after the Indian warrior their handsome armories crown the river's terraced banks. The more recently organized 25th Dragoons and 32nd Battery of Field Artillery contemplate the

erection of new headquarters on the opposite corner.

Brantford's social progress has kept pace with her industrial gains. Many organizations have been formed in various interests. IODE and its Military Chapter, the National Council of Women, Musical and Historical Clubs, while all claim large and active memberships. Numerous fraternal societies bind the interests of the citizens. Prominent among these is the Canadian Order of Foresters, the leading fraternal society of Canada, which claims Brantford for its head office.

Brantford and Brant County have taken a creditable part in the service of the Province and Dominion. The names of our representatives in the Federal Parliament and Provincial Legislature form a list well known in the history of the country and suggestive of its development and progress, a contribution to the public life of which we may be justly proud. Among them Wm. Ryerson, whose descendants are honored citizens, still active in the public interest; the Hon. E. B. Wood, renowned as an orator of dramatic power, Hon. E. B. Christie, speaker of the Senate; Hon. Wm. Paterson, Minister of Customs; Mr. C. B. Heyd, Mr. Lloyd Harris, and our present representative, Mr. W. F. Cockshutt.

Among them all is one who stands out conspicuously, the imprint of whose ability was stamped upon the legislations of the Province for a quarter of a century, Hon. A. S. Hardy, whose continued on P.5

Page 3

Henry Box Brown: An Entertainer of African Culture

by Angela Files

From the bulge of West Africa came the captured slaves who brought their African culture and traditions of art, dance, literature, magic and music to the Americas. In literature, they passed on legends, magic myths, proverbs, and animal stories from one generation to another by either trained narrators or amateur story tellers. The art of story telling was a profound aspect of African life. Is it any wonder that the American slave stories were reiterated to countless audiences in both United states and Henry Box Brown, a slave living in Canada?

accounts audiences Brantford were not only entertained by the play "Uncle Tom's Cabin", but also by the tales of runaway slaves: Rev. Josiah Henson, the major character of the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin; Harriet Tubman, the Black Moses, who led over 20 groups of slaves, to Canadian freedom: Andrew Lucas, and Aunt Mary Brown, local former slaves", told their stories in local churches.

Wycliffe Hall or the Stratford Opera House. One of the international story tellers who came to Brantford was American ex-slave Henry Box Brown, an escapee from Virginia to Philadelphia in a 3 foot long and 2 feet wide crate.

The Escape of Henry Box Brown. Benjamin Quarles in his book "The Negro Making of America" Page 95, describes the escape of slave Henry Box Brown.use.

Like many other runaway slaves, Richmond, Virginia, planned a bold and According to early local newspaper ingenious escape. "Brown ordered a

specially designed and equipped box to be built in which he would be shipped to freedom. The box was three feet high and two feet wide, containing food and water, and carefully marked so that Brown would be travelling with his head up; the box reached Philadelphia, via Adams Express, after twenty-six hours en route. When this human cargo was delivered, four men who were anxiously awaiting its arrival, pried off the lid. Then according to eye witness William Still, "the marvellous resurrection of Brown, followed. Rising up in his box, Brown reached out his hand saying,

'How do you do gentlemen?"

Henry "Box" Brown, Former Slave Entertains At Wycliffe Hall, Brantford. In the Brantford Evening Telegram Feb. 2, 1889, Page four, edition, the following interesting account is given of Henry (Box) Brown's visit to Brantford.

continued on p. 7



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Brant Historical Society gratefully acknowledges support from:

The County of Brant

The City of Brantford and Brantford Regional Arts Council

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Back to The Wigwam continued from p. 3

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memory is still green, and whose name recalls grateful and the scientific world; his brother Norman, prominent in the world affectionate memories - a Brantford boy who rose to be Prime of letters; Sarah Jeannette Duncan (Mrs. Everard Cotes), one of Minister of his native province.

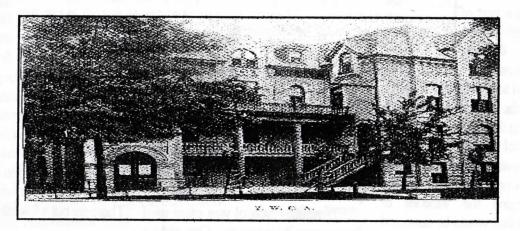
Princess Patricia recently visited the city, they were driven to the Brant. Bell Homestead, which has become a modern mecca for travellers. Here Alexander Graham Bell untiringly and he led his dusky tribesmen across the ancient ford. Over the persistently worked out his invention which revolutionized the bridge the tide of busy commerce rolls, the trail has become a world and won for Brantford the enviable and distinctive name of paved thoroughfare. Along the winding Grand a railway takes its the Telephone City. As though to emphasize her right to the title, sinuous course, homes crown its banks and cluster to its edge, the automatic telephone was also invented and largely brought to factories flank its sides - a white man's city is mirrored in its depth. perfection in the City of Brantford by the Lorimer brothers.

of Mr. Fred C. Salter, chief official in Europe for the GTP and barter and justice was settled in the glow of the campfire, now Mr. Reuben C. Leonard, late chairman of the Transcontinental stands surrounded by library, churches and banks, and over-Railway; Mr. Bruce J. Walker, who has played such an important shadowed by the Court of Justice. and useful part in the affairs of the Dominion, and now holds the keys of immigration to the Golden West.

Of Brantford's sons and daughters who have decked her brow with laurel, mention must be made of the late lamented Robert Kennedy Duncan, who had risen to such an elevated position in the foremost women novelists of Canada; and the late Pauline By special request, when the Duke of Connaught and Johnson, the literature, descended from the same tribe as Joseph

The stalwart warrior gazes down the vista of years to where The red man, who learned from nature's open book, worshipped Prominent in the public service of the country are the names beneath the sun and stars, when threaded wampum passed in

Thanks to Robert Deboer for submitting this article.



ARCHIVES

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Brant Historical Society

Searching for Tranquility, Part 2

by Ruth Lefler

Mrs. Sandy Martin, whose family has lived in the Tranquility area for many years shared some interesting antidotes and information about this community.

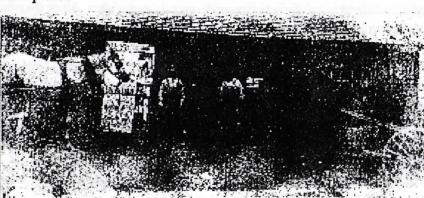
The church played a most important

role here and the earliest reference to a Tranquility congregation was found in the report of Missionary Society of the Methodist Weslevan Church of Canada in 1851. From this time until 1856 the community was part of the Brantford Circuit. In 1856, it became a part of along with St. George. Sheffield and Harrisburg.

Suppers used to be held upstairs in the church before the basement was built. The day following these suppers was a big day for the school children as they were allowed to go over to the church from school to clean up the remains of the supper. Imagine the varieties of homemade pies that would be devoured

by these students. What a treat!

At an evening revival meeting held in the winter, everybody came by horses and cutters which were parked in the driveshed beside the church. During the



the St. George Circuit successful Blacksmith's SHOP — Always a focal point of day to pay of in the crewas in 1904. The shop was operated by Bart, O'Conner,

service some young neighbourhood boys unhitched and switched the Batson family's and Mr. Kitchen's teams of white horses. After the meeting both parties drove home and didn't realize that they had the wrong horses until they tried to put them into the barns for the night!

Tranquility School was often used for community meetings. One night a

farmer's meeting was held here. Before the meeting started some neighbourhood boys climbed the bell tower, attached a long rope to the bell rope, let it down over the roof, took it across to the bush and hid

about where DiPietro Food Store is today. When the meeting was over. Mr. Pike put out the coal oil lamps, locked the door and started up Power Line Road. The boys began to ring the school bell. Back to the school went Mr. Pike. He lit the lamps, looked

around & found nothing. He then put out the lamps, locked up and headed for home again. The boys waited until he was up the road a bit and started to ring the bell once more. Back went Mr. Pike. Legend has it that Mr. Pike made three trips before. he finally found out what was going on. These are but a few tales from Tranquility.

Henry Box Brown An Entertainer of African Culture continued from p. 4

"Last evening, Professor Brown and Family gave one of their unique entertainment in Wycliffe Hall (YMCA location) to a fair audience.

First, Professor Brown told us about slavery and his escape from the slave scouts to Philadelphia in a box from which incident he was for many years called "Box Brown".

He then proceeded to give a number of feats of legerdemain (tricks of a stage magician) of the usual order and after which

the Company rendered a number of plantation songs which were well appreciated by those present. The ladies were very good singers and there was more of plantation energy than

gentlemen in the city were anxious to have him give a lecture on slavery and to do so in about two weeks."

usual in such entertainment. The Professor stated at the close that a number of B.H.S. Quarterly

.Volunteer Help Needed

1997 has been a year of great transition at the museum, with the departure of Susan Twist as Director, Cliff Jones and subsequently, Shana Balaz, as Collection Manager and the extended sick leave of Anne Byard, our Education Co-ordinator. The new staff, Director/Curator Elizabeth Hunter and Collection Manager Sonia Mrva, assisted by Marilyn McDonald are struggling to maintain services at both sites, but need your help. Volunteers are needed to assist with a number of projects:

- gift shop or museum attendants
- clipping and filing newspaper clippings for the archives
- cataloguing the collection
- helping with education programs
- assisting with Bingo
- responding to research requests

Anyone interested in any of these jobs, who is able to make a regular commitment (be it a half day a week, or one day a month), please contact the museum at 752-2483.

Staff would like to schedule training sessions before the end of January, for those interested in helping catalogue and for those willing to man the gift shop. They will provide instruction on how to operate the cash register and take credit cards, (or for the true technophobes, how to bypass the cash register by pushing "No Sale"!)

\$\$\$ ENDOWMENT FUND \$\$\$

The Brant Historical Endowment Fund is one of the ways in which we can ensure a viable future for the Society and the Museum. The fund currently holds \$75,000, up from \$61,000 at the end of 1996. We thank the following donors for their generous recent contributions to the endowment fund:

Bill Cockshutt Mr. & Mrs. Kneale Hugh McCracken Merle Moor

Brant Historical Society

In memory of Tom Brennan The Brant Historical Society Ruth Lefler

In memory of Ralph Cook The Bradley Family

In memory of Della Ester Durham Marilyn McDonald

In memory of Allan Scott The Brant Historical Society Ruth Lefler

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> The Brant Historical Society, 57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ont. N3T 2W6 Phone: 519-752-2483 E-Mail: bcma@bfree.on.ca

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B.H.S. HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

A History of Brant County & Its People:		List of Professionals and Trades, 1855	5.95
Vol. 1	\$14.95	Oakland Township	\$8.00
Vol. 2 Set of Vol. 1 & 2	15.95 22.50	Lewis Burwell's Diary of the Indian Surrender	8.00
The Grand River Navigation Co.	21.95	Grand River Tract Assessment Rolls	* ^ *
St. George Continuation School	7.00	1816, 1818-1822	5.95
Rural Schools of South Dumfries Township	8.00	Grand River Tract Census 1824, 1827, 1829, 1832	5.95
How Brantford Cooked	4.50	Directory of the Townships of Brant, 1880	10.00
A History of the Brantford Pottery	9.95	City of Brantford Municipal Directory, 1880	10.00
Brantford Arts & Entertainment	9.95	Irwin's Directory, 1883	10.00
From Automobiles to Washing Machines	9.95	City of Brantford Municipal Directory, 1883-86	8.00
A History of Mohawk Park	1.00	City of Brantford Directory, 1899-1900	15.00
Tuscarora Township	5.95	Wild Mammals of Southwestern Ontario	8.95
Brant County Place Names & hat change	1	Who intuinings of Southwestern Olitatio	0.75

B.H.S. Publications Order Form

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Brant Historical Society

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Blind Seneca Chief John A. Gibson,

Informant Of Iroquoian Cosmology 1

Submitted by Angela Files

During the termination of the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, anthropologists, archaeologists and ethnologists and historians from the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, American and Canadian Universities visited the native reservations in New York State and Ontario. The object of their visits was to study the characteristics, culture, custom, life, and social relationship of native races. Their findings were published in the scholarly journals, periodicals, and magazines of the day.

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In 1903, Ethnologist2, J. N. B. Hewitt published the first part of the Iroquoian Cosmology, 1899-1900, 212 pages, and in 1928, he published the Second part of Iroquoian Cosmology, 1925-1926, 370 pages. With the valuable loyal assistance of blind Seneca Chief John A. Gibson, Hewitt was able to record the beliefs, habits, traditions of the Iroquoian linguistic family of North American natives

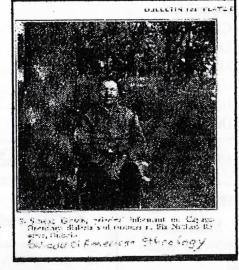
The brief obituary of Chief John A. Gibson emphasizes his commitment and dedication in preserving the chronicles of his people for future generations.

The Obituary of Chief John A. Gibson3

Chief John A. Gibson, Seneca, sixtyfour years old, one of the leading Chiefs in council died at his residence last night at his residence, opposite Middleport, Ontario.

The Chief have been blind for over thirty years. This afflection was the result of a case of overheating due to exertions while playing lacrosse. Chief Gibson was in his day one of the champion lacrosse players in the Dominion.

During his afflection the deceased had been actively engaged in both the administration of his farm and also in the manufacture of lacrosse sticks. Besides these activities the chief was one of the



most eloquent speakers and one of the most influential of the 60 chiefs on the Reserve and was a leader of the Deists, worshippers of the Great Spirit.

Chief John A. Gibson died on November 10, 1912. He was buried in the Onondaga Longhouse Cemetery according to the rites of his native people.

The second Volume of Iroquois Cosmology, Chief Arthur Gibson Gave the Ethnologist Hewitt, the Seneca Tradition.

J. N. B. Hewitt, noted ethnologist, the branch of anth who has spent many months in Brantford on the Six Nations Reserve through a long period of years, devoted to the native races of the continent, has first sent copies of his latest published work, Part II of the Iroquoian Cosmology to Lt. Col. S. E. Morgan, Supt. of the Six Nations and to H. M. Hill, Secretary of 9, 1930, Page 6.

the Indian office.

The publication is a comprehensive and very interesting book, being one of the longest texts dealing with the myths of the genesis. It is in the English and Indian language and is the record given to Mr. Hewitt on the Six Nations Reserve in 1900 by John Arthur Gibson, Seneca federation chief and a priest of the religion of his ancestors.

At the time of the record Chief Gibson had been blind for 26 years. John Gibson was noted among his people for his marvellous memory and as one of the cleverest and most able chiefs of the band.

On completion of his long tale, which took many days in the telling, the old blind chief turned to the setting sun and spoke to his chronicler and friend Mr. Hewett with these words: "John, that is the end, I have told you all I know".4

Chief Gibson did not live to see his story in print, but he has contributed a lasting heritage to future generations in making possible a magnificent record of the thought beliefs of his Iroquoian ancestors!

End Notes

- Cosmology, is the theory or philosophy of the nature and principles of the universe.
- Ethnologist is a specialist who studies the branch of anthropology that deals with the comparative cultures of various peoples, including their distributions, characteristics, folkways; etc.
- 3. Brantford Weekly Expositor, November, 1912 P2 Column 1, See also Page 14, Column 5.
- 4. The Brantford Daily Expositor, January
 9, 1930, Page 6

RENEWING MEMBERS

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The Expositor

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Please accept our apologies for any omissions!

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Thank you for your support.

Membership Benefits

A Brant Historical Society membership offers:

- free admission to the Brant County Museum & Archives, Bell Homestead and Myrtleville House Museum (excluding special events)
- exemption from regular research fees in our Archives
- bulletins about upcoming Museum activities
- subscription to the "B.H.S. Quarterly"
- discounts on Heritage Bus Tours, Children's Museum Club, and other programs
- ♦ 10% discount on Gift Shop purchases over \$10

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Selected Merchandise on sale throughout the month of December

and Mohawk Lake

Happenings

December
Seasonal Celebrations
November 24-December 19
Education Program
at the Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte St., Brantford

Explore Brantford in the 1920s and 1930s through a unique photographic experience. The Walker Studio Photographs, complemented with artifacts from the museum's collection, provide us with a rare look into Brantford's bustling past.

Jean Farquharson will examine the exciting history of Gypsum Mining along the Grand River.

Explore the winter holiday traditions of the ethnic groups who have settled in Brant County.

Guided tour of displays, craft activity and treat.

"Christmas 1897"
BHS Lecture Series
and Open House
Wed. December 17,
1997 8pm
at the Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte St., Brantford

Ken Strachan's outstanding annual presentation of Christmas 100 years ago. Tour the Museum while it's decked our for the holidays. PLEASE JOIN US ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 1998 7:00 P.M.

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Febuary
"Recent Acquisitions"
BHS Lecture Series
Wed. Feb

Wed. February 18, 1998 8pm at the Brant County Museum 57 Charlotte St., Brantford

The Brant County Museum Collection will be the basis for a discussion given by Ruth Lefler. Prior to the Lecture, the BHS will hold its annual meeting.

March
"Pioneers of the St.
George Area"
BHS Lecture Series
Wed. March 18,
1998 8pm
57 Charlotte St.,
Brantford

January Exhibition

"Glimpses of Brantford: The Walker Studio Photographs 1925 - 1935" January 10, 1998 - March 28, 1998

The Museum in the Square

"Mining for White Gold in the Grand River Valley"

BHS Lecture Series

Wed. January 21, 1998 8pm
at the Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte St., Brantford

The accomplishments and legacy of the pioneers of the St. George will be examined by Isabel Brubacher.