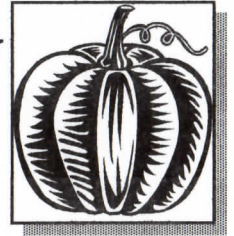




BHS Quarterly



Brant Historical Society 1999 ISSN 1201-4028

Celebrating Ninety - One Years of Preserving Local History

New Publication for Brant Historical Society

LORIMER BROTHERS

Brant County's Other Telephone Inventors

By Michael Hand



Helen Grieve Mountain working at The Canadian Machine Telephone Company on a Lorimer Automatic Telephone System. The office was located at 32 Queen St. Brantford, around 1922. Photo courtesy of her daughter, Mrs. Joyce Muth, member of Brant Historical Society.

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President's Reflections

Welcome back from your summer vacations. I hope you were able to take advantage of the exceptionally warm weather we had and are ready to enjoy the fall season of activities at the Museum and Archives.

Over the summer, we were able to accomplish a great deal of work with our summer students. We had an active school program, opened a special display of children's toys and clothing at the Mall, and accessioned some interesting new pieces for our collection. But the most visible differences are that some of the faces have changed at the Museum and Archives. Many of you knew that Sonia Mrva returned to school to pursue a program in Cultural Management and Debbie Van Veldhuizen has taken maternity leave to look after Angela, her first child. The Museum and Archives is fortunate to have been able to hire Stacey McKellar and Catherine Payne to fill these vacancies.

Stacey is a graduate at the Museum Management program at Sir Sanford Fleming College and was with us during the summer. She has taken over as Assistant Curator and replaces Sonia. Catherine has worked as an interpreter at the Backus Heritage Conservation Area and will be helping with our school program and some of our publicity work. Marilyn MacDonald will be helping out with administrative work at both the Museums in the Square and Charlotte St.

While we have finished recruiting staff, we still have to do some work in the volunteer area.

John Johnson has asked that we find someone else to fill his shoes as program coordinator next year. These will be difficult shoes to fill. John has organized an interesting and entertaining schedule of monthly programs for the past five years and we owe him a debt of gratitude for

his efforts. The Board has put a call out for people who would be interested in helping to plan the program lectures at our monthly general meetings in the year 2000. We are also interested in hearing from members who have suggestions for topics for lectures next year. Since this will be the first year of the new Millennium, I am hoping we can come up with programs that look backwards and are relevant for the future. If you have some ideas or want to volunteer some time, give me a call at 756-3705.

Finally, we are trying to increase our roster of volunteers who help with Bingo. Bingo receipts constitute about 25% of our annual budget and, frankly, the Museum and Archives would not survive without them. Elizabeth Hunter would be interested in speaking with you if you want more information about what is involved.

Robert Glass

Brant Historical Society Board of Directors

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The Returned Soldiers' Home

by Roger Sharpe

After the Great-war-to-end-all-wars, the returning hometown boys did not always adjust well to life back in their small towns. In its extreme form Shell Shock could debilitate a veteran to such an extent that immediate reentry into society was impossible. But for those with the less severe forms of what we now call Post-

Traumatic-Stress-Syndrome, and other illnesses, a stable nurturing home was something that went a long way in helping the veteran deal with his return to civilian life.

Even before the bulk of returning troops arrived, people at home recognized the importance of a stable home. They also recognized that not

all young men had a home to return to and, because of this need, many groups of local citizens decided to create, "The Returned Soldiers Home" in Brantford. The veterans chose the name themselves.

In the Spring of 1917 the Women's Patriotic League, a federation of all patriotic women's societies, first suggested the idea. The idea took root and in the summer they proceeded with the plan. Through campaigns and concerts money was raised for the project and by October the Home was a reality. On October 24th His Excellency the Duke of Devonshire, Governor General of Canada, officially opened it. Prior to the Home opening, the building had been a hotel called the Butler House at 20 Dalhousie Street.

As you approached the front

(Continued on page 6)



RETURNED SOLDIERS' HOME

BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
57 Charlotte Street, Brantford, Ontario
(519) 752-2483

Admission:

Adults - \$2.00 Seniors/Students - \$1.50
Children - \$1.25 Under 6 - Free

BHS members - Free

**Hours: Wednesday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm,
Saturday 1 to 4 Open Holiday Mondays**

THE MUSEUM IN THE SQUARE
(A Satellite of the B.C.M.A.)

**Second Level, Market Square Mall,
1 Market St. Brantford, Ontario
(519) 752-8578**

Admission by Voluntary Donation
**Hours: Monday to Friday 10 am to 6:00 pm,
Saturday 10 am to 5:30 pm**

NEW PUBLICATION! THE LORIMER BROTHERS, BRANT COUNTY'S OTHER TELEPHONE INVENTORS.

By Angela Files

Title of the Book: The Lorimer Brothers, Brant County's Other Telephone Inventors.

Author of Book: Michael Hand, retired engineer, member of the Brant Historical Society.

Description of Book: The Lorimer Brothers is an attractive soft-covered, black and white printed book. It is 8 1/2" x 5" in size with 48 pages of text and two maps. Sources of the contained information are well-documented.

Price of Book: \$ 6.95.

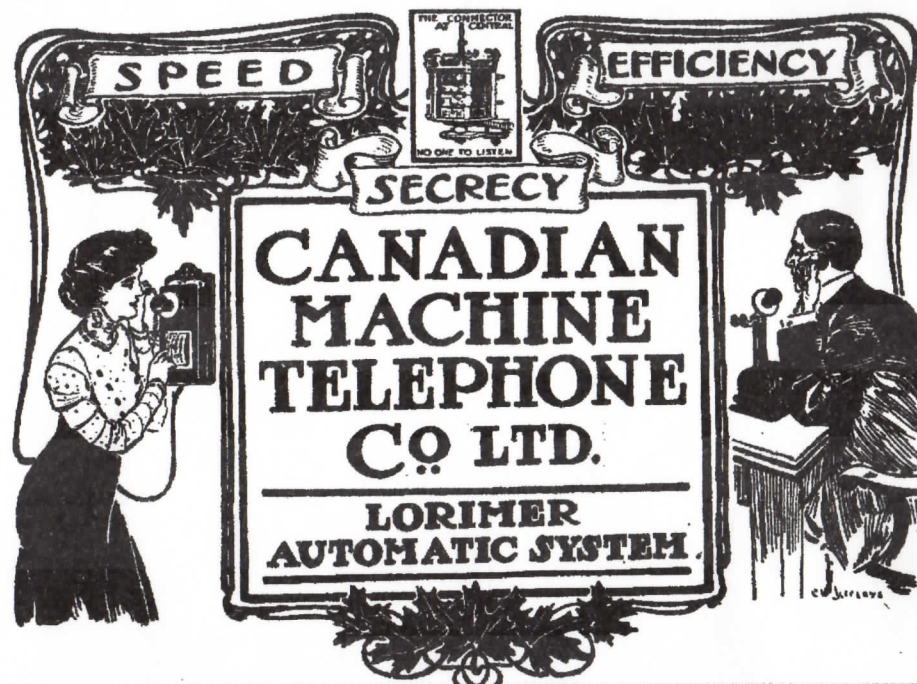
Launching of the Book: Saturday, October 23, 1999 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., at the Museum In The Square, 1 Market Street, Brantford, Ont. All are welcome!

In researching early newspapers of Brant, I have found listings of local people who have applied for patents in various fields; for example agricultural machinery inventions. Locally the three Lorimer Brothers, with their inventive minds, perfected the first practical automatic telephone exchange. They saw the need for automatic switching as the use of the telephone expanded at the end of the nineteenth century because it

became impossible for telephone operators to remember all of the names and numbers of callers. invention of the switching mechanism with the personal story of the Lorimer Brothers captioning one more exciting phase of our technological heritage.

Michael Hand has successfully entwined the

This advertisement in The Expositor's Greater Brantford number of 1909 proclaimed the merits of the Canadian Machine Telephone Company. The Lorimer automatic system, which it operated, was also of Brantford origin. The artist for this display was C.W. Jeffreys, who later became famous as a painter of historical pictures and as an illustrator of Canadian history books.



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Phone: 519-752-2483 E-Mail: bcma@bfree.on.ca

GOOD "OLD" BRANT'S FORD (A letter from Oregon in 1883)

by Ruth Lefler

Mr. F. Gardner, whose first letter was printed in the spring newsletter, wrote a second interesting, informative letter to Dr. Henry Hedges. He included a letter written in 1883 by S.O. Phelps from "Portland on the Willamette" in Oregon to the Honourable Joseph D. Clement in Brantford.

The letter is as follows -
"Age's-Home"!

Pacific Coast, "Portland on the Willamette", Oregon,
Nov. 15, 1883.

Hon. Joseph D. Clement
My Old and Esteemed
Brantford Friend

As four of us old Canadians met on Front Street here recently, among many other things your name was mentioned in connection with Brantford. One young man, James Campbell, asked me if I knew you and called you "Uncle Joe", which was a trifling incident but called up to my remembrance a thousand pleasing reminiscences of the "Long Ago" in good old "Brant's Ford", when you ran the Hotel there and I ran the Wheat Market: when Babcock ran the stages; Tupper repaired them; Wilkes, Cook, Cockshutt ran the stores: Dr. Digby was the

medicine chest: John Lafferty, Bill Stewart, John Kerr assisting Judge O'Reilly in the courts.

When old King Capron of Paris, Tom Perrin of the Chequered Sheds, Captain Perley of Burford Plains, Peter Cain of Cainsville, Alex Bunnell of the Landing, and a host of other personages used to come to town and congregate at your Inn. When David Christie and other politicians went to consult you there. When Huntington ran the shoe trade, Van Brocklyn the tin and stove business: Yes and James Muirhead the bank, and the other Muirhead the Justice Court. Aye and we were well fed at your table and flourished in your Bergh.

But now, oh how altered! oh how changed! Now the "Iron Horses" trot in and out of Brantford perennially. Yea and westward "across the Continent" from "ocean to ocean" on three different roads and when the Canadian Pacific is completed - on "four Highways". Now the telegraph speaks out and the Telephone talks for us. Now "ocean steamers" consume only a single week in crossing the Atlantic Pond. Now, you in Ontario and I in Oregon, are only six days apart by the

"Northern Pacific"! Old Mother Shipton's prophesy has literally come to pass in our day except the end of the World, and, judging from your blizzards and storms which we read about, it is not a long way off.

Well, old friend, how are you and yours? How is old Brantford and its citizens? One Yankee here asked me one day how the "Widow Brown" was meaning Her Majesty "Queen Victoria"! I resented this indignantly.

We Oregonians are booming now! Respects to you and to all Ontario especially Brantford Friends! And to the Queen and our Irish President.

O.S. Phelps -
"Wheat-Buyer"

To me, this newsy letter captures the importance of valuable friends and memories and the only thing constant in our World is change.

Mr. S.O. Phelps was related to the Phelps family who were among the early-settlers of Brant County. Before leaving Brantford he operated the Wheat Market.

Joseph Duffett Clement who

(Continued on page 7)

Returned Soldiers' Home continued from page 3

door on Dalhousie Street in 1917 a frosted globe above the front door was inscribed with, "The Returned Soldiers' Home". Upon entering you came to a reception hall. Gold inscribed names of Brant men, who had made the ultimate sacrifice, were placed on four handsome oak panels. The honour rolls were presented by the Kitchener Club of Young Girls. The hall was finished with the donations of a velvet rug, big tan and brown leather upholstered chairs, davenports, and a combination writing/library table. The whole hall was screened by large palms.

To the left was the canteen and to the right a large assembly room. The assembly room could accommodate 150 people and was furnished and equipped as a lounge. The canteen was run by Mr. Ernest W. Standbridge and hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, chocolates, cigars and cigarettes were supplied.

The home contained three bedrooms on the second floor and eight more on the third floor. A unique feature of each of the rooms was their furnishings. Much care and

kindness had been taken by the ladies, who matched colour schemes and furnishings making each room a work of art. An author of the time commented, "There is not a bedroom that has not had much loving thought and care. Each seems prepared as for an honoured guest."

The second floor contained a unique den furnished like a military trench. For relaxation the floor had a billiard and pool table. The secretary's office and a writing room were also on this floor. All furnishings and games were generously donated.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Home was the creation of a "Dug out", as a reminder of those never-to-be-forgotten days. You could go down a flight of steps to find a small area with all four walls sandbagged. A meeting place? Perhaps, but when reading about this dug out, I can't help but imagine those returned young men coming here as if it were a reminder that many still had one foot caught in the world they had just left. Sitting in the dug out surrounded by friends,

the men probably remembered those horrible scenes of carnage. Perhaps it was the Battle of Ypres where Canadians were first gassed or possibly Passchendaele where, after wading waist-deep in mud, they were mercilessly bombed during a violent thunderstorm. Each veteran recalled his own personal hell. As those repressed memories came to the surface among the comrades there might have been a catharsis. Over time this helped them to reenter civilian life. Undoubtedly not all made the readjustment but that was what the Home was about.

Today 20 Dalhousie Street rocks to the country music of Randy Travis and Dolly Parton, as a 1990s bar called, "The Rodeo Grill." There is no reminder of the mission of mercy it once was.

Bibliography:

Brantford Expositor, Christmas Number, 1917, pg. 23, "Men Who Have Done Their Bit."

Brantford Expositor, October 24, 1917, pg. 16, "The Veterans' Home."

Brantford Directories, 1917 to 1922, Brantford Public Library

NEW - FOR CHRISTMAS

The Brant Historical Society is pleased to announce a new fund raising initiative for 1999. We are introducing a series of pewter collectible replicas of Brant Heritage Buildings.

The 1999 edition will be available in October in the Museum gift shops at 57 Charlotte Street and the Market Square Mall, as well as at Fairview Photo Lab, Bruce Knight Jewellers, Elegance in Glass and Angus Jewellers.

The first two of the series are the Mohawk Chapel and Brantford's original City Hall. Each will be attractively boxed, with a short description of the history of the building enclosed, suitable for gift giving or for collectors.

They will be priced at \$10.95 each or \$20.00 for the set. This price includes all taxes.

These items are being produced locally and will be available in limited numbers, so act now to get yours and to support your Historical Society.

PLEASE NOTE

A nominating committee has been struck to recruit new members for the Brant Historical Society Board of Directors for next year. If anyone is interested in participating in any of the Society's committees, or can offer suggestions of likely candidates, please contact the museum or Robert Glass.

THE GROWTH OF PARIS JUNCTION by Ruth Lefler

Mr. Bob Hasler from Paris, Ontario shared the vibrant history of Paris Station, later named Paris Junction, at the September meeting of the Brant Historical Society. The Junction, as it is locally known, was originally a separate community from the Town of Paris. On December 15, 1853 the Great Western Railway sent the first train into Paris and on January 16, 1854 the Buffalo, Brantford, Goderich Railway came to Paris forming a junction. Located at the Junction were the train station, sheds, a partial round house, boarding houses for the workers and taverns. Between 1853 and 1960 many businesses relating to serving the citizens and

shipping local products developed here.

One of the oldest businesses in the Junction was started by the merchant George Taylor in 1869 and remained in the family until 1957. Throughout its years of operation this business dealt in a variety of commodities such as grain, coal and lumber, cement and groceries. Horses were rented out only in the summer as they were used to deliver coal during the winter.

Mr. Hasler and his wife live in a heritage home in the Junction in Paris that was his wife's great grandparents' home. Hasler is presently writing a book that will capture this valuable local history.

GOOD OLD BRANT'S FORD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

was Mr. Gardner's wife's Great Grandfather, came to Brantford about 1824. According to F.D. Reville's book "The History of the County of Brant", J.D. Clement owned the British American Hotel located at the corner of Market and Colborne Streets. This fine hotel was built prior to 1838. Reville's book also states that between 1841 and 1844 Clement kept the Brant Hotel which was located on the south side of Colborne Street. In 1850 he was appointed Postmaster, a position that he held until 1862.

In 1851 an Act was passed to take effect in February, 1852 to temporarily unite Wentworth, Halton and Brant Counties for municipal, judicial and other purposes. Each County was given the power to elect its own provisional government. On April 15, 1852, Brant representatives held their first meeting and J.D. Clement, Reeve of the Town of Brantford, was elected Warden of the Provisional County of Brant. The final meeting of this Council was held on January 13, 1853 where Mr. Clement received a hearty vote of thanks and a grant of 25 pounds for serving as the first Warden of the Provisional County of Brant.



SAMPLE OF PEWTER ORNAMENT

B.H.S. HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

NEW RELEASES		Tuscaorora Township	5.95
Lorimer Brothers: Brant County's Other Inventors	6.95	B.H.S. REPRINTS	
The Way we Were	16.95	Oakland Township	8.00
B.H.S. ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS		Lewis Burwell's Diary of the Indian Surrender	8.00
A History of Brant County and Its People	15.95	Brantford City Directory 1910	16.00
Vol 1	14.95	Brant County place names & List of Professionals and trades, 1855	5.95
Vol 2	22.50		
Set of Vol. 1 & 2			
The Grand River Navigation Co.	21.95	Grand River Tract Assessment Rolls 1816, 1818-1822	5.95
St. George Continuation School	7.00	Grand River Tract Census 1824, 1827, 1829, 1832	5.95
Rural Schools of South Dumfries Township	8.00	Directory of the Townships of Brant, 1880	10.00
How Brantford Cooked	5.95	City of Brantford Municipal Directory, 1880	10.00
A History of The Brantford Pottery	9.95	Irwin's Directory, 1883	10.00
Brantford Arts & Entertainment	9.95	City of Brantford Municipal Directory, 1883-86	8.00
From Automobiles to Washing Machines	9.95	City of Brantford Directory, 1899-1900	15.00
A History of Mohawk Park	2.00		
Wild Mammals of Southwestern Ontario	8.95		

B.H.S. Publications Order Form

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THE BRANTFORD POST OFFICE
A Focal Point in The Community

By Angela E. Files

One of the focal points of early Canadian settlements was the post office, the place where people met on a daily basis to discuss and gossip about the affairs of the community and pick up their mail. Brantford built two impressive post offices - (1880-1913) and (1913 - present) which were focal points in the community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

1. Early History Of The Canadian Postal Service

Early postal service in Canada was under the control of the British postal service which insisted that each mail route should be self-supporting. Much to the chagrin of the early colonists, profits from more populated routes had to be placed in the British Treasury and were not available to extend postal services to frontier settlements.

2. The First Post Offices Of Brantford

Brantford established its first frontier post office at the Ford in 1825, with William Richardson as the first post master. By 1841, the post office was in a building on the north side of Colborne Street. P.O. Walker (1848) and James Muirhead (1848-1850) were the post masters.

3. The Various Locations Of Early Brantford Post Offices

By the year 1851, imperial legislation gave Canadian provinces control of their own postal service and the Brantford Post Office was moved to a store on Colborne

to construct a permanent building for a post office because mail routes were well-established.

4. The First Permanent Post Office Building In Brantford, 1880

The first post office building was erected for some \$35,000 at the corner of George and Dalhousie Streets and it operated as such for only 35 years.

Charles H. Clement, F.J. Grennie, W.W. Buckewell and J.C. Montgomery were the post office staff.

Transactions of the post office were carried out on the main floor. Mail was received via private boxes or at General Delivery wickets. On the second floor of the building was the Customs and Inland Revenue Department.

The building became too small for the staff and volume of mail. In 1913 another post office was built on the corner of Dalhousie and Queen Streets to the tune of \$300,000. The old post office became the Holstein-Freisson Place which kept records about dairy cattle across Canada. Again, this same edifice

(Continued on page 10)



The first permanent post office building in Brantford (1880) - 1913) was built on the corner of George and Dalhousie streets. It is a commercial building today.

Street and later to the west corner of Dalhousie and Market Streets. By 1856 it moved to George Street in the Kirby Block. The downtown fire of 1869 forced the move of the post office again to the corner of George and Dalhousie Streets. Moving to these various locations brought about the determination of city council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

became too cramped for the Holstein Association and their headquarters moved to Colborne Street in 1989-1990.

5. The New Post Office Built In 1913

The cornerstone of the new post office was laid in 1913 by Sir Thomas White, the Minister of Finance. In the building were quarters for the Post Office, Customs and Inland Revenues, Indian Office and the Inspector of Weights and Measures.

Substations were located in Eagles Nest, Grand View, Tutela Heights and Farrington Hill.

6. Thoughts About The Post Office - Mr. Cuppy Cox

In speaking about the post office to Mr. Cuppy Cox, an employee of the Brantford Post Office (1945-1985), Cuppy recalled the beauty of the inside

of his workplace with its high ceilings, large windows, marble counters, grey five foot marble walls and nine brass wickets with iron bars. Wickets opened from 7:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. during the week days.

7. The Old Post Office Clock

The large clock above the post office building was made of wrought iron and the gears of brass. Twice a year Mr. Charles Waddington climbed up the ladder to change the time from Daylight Saving time to Eastern Standard time.

8. The First Day Issues Of The Alexander Graham Bell Stamp - 1947

During the time when the Alexander Graham Bell "first day issue" stamp was released, the introductory stamps were shipped out of the Brantford Post Office and each

letter was hand stamped by the postal workers with the date and month of the issue of the stamp.

9. The Santa Claus Letters

In early times the letters addressed to Santa Claus were placed in the dead letter office and postal clerks replied by sending out form letters. For a period of time Eaton's also answered requests by sending out attractive tree cards.

10. Nostalgic Thoughts Of The Post Office

Over thirty years ago, Jim and I made the Brantford Community, our home. We used to love to enter the stately Brantford Post Office to meet people, purchase stamps and mail parcels. It became a focal point in our lives, until like others, we were routed to the postal outlets in stores and malls.

Yearbooks Make a Welcome Addition to the Archives

The Society is grateful to Glenn Kilmer for donating his collection of high school yearbooks to the archives. Glenn and his wife Doreen worked for many years as a teacher and principal for the Brant County Board of Education. This spring Mr. Kilmer presented the Society with copies of Herman E. Fawcett Secondary School's Spectrum (1969-71), Pauline Johnson Collegiate's Owanah (1956-1966) and North Park Collegiate's Highlights (1964-75, 1977). This donation not only provides documentation of Mr. Kilmer's impressive contributions to the local education system, but will also prove a valuable resource in the future for general researchers.

We have also been able to fill in a few gaps in our holdings of The Hello, published by the students of Brantford Collegiate Institute. Norman Showers, a former resident of Brantford, contacted the Museum while visiting the city and presented us with the first issue of The Hello, published in May 1921. At the time we had copies of issue 2 (May 1922) and 7 (April 1927) and the historian Jean Waldie's copies from 1930 - 1932. I was pleased to discover that my maternal grandmother's high school years corresponded to the earliest gap in the holdings and I was able to add issues 3 - 6 (Christmas 1922 - 25) to the collection.

If any members have yearbooks from Brant County schools which they would be willing to donate, the archives is seeking to expand its holdings. They provide valuable documentation of people, local businesses, student activities and the changing fashions in clothing and graphic styles. And remember... something doesn't have to date from the reign of Queen Victoria to belong in the museum and archives. As we move into the new year our recent past will be a part of the last century.

Elizabeth Hunter

HAPPENINGS

EXHIBITION

"Age of Chivalry"

October 2 - December 31, 1999

Museum in the Square

Have you always wanted to learn more about knights in armour and the code they lived by? Explore the age of chivalry with a tour of our new exhibit. View suits of armour and chain mail. Admire the stained glass inspired by this period. Discover the impact of the Crusades on European society and pick up some medieval recipes.

BOOK LAUNCH

You are invited to attend the launching of "the Lorimer Brothers; Brant County's Other Telephone Inventors" at the Museum in the Square, Market Square Mall. The launch is on October 23, 1999 from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. The author, Mike Hand, will attend to autograph books.

B.H.S. GRAND RIVER BUS TOUR

SATURDAY OCTOBER 16, 1999

Relive the history of the Grand River at: Edinburgh Square in Caledonia, Ruthven in Cayuga and Haldimand Norfolk Museum in Cayuga.

Bruce Hill, author of "The Grand River Navigation Company" will be our guide.

Cost members \$25

Non members \$30

(transport, lunch and admissions included)

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:

57 Charlotte St. (752-2483) and Museum in the Square (752-8578) Limited Seats - Get Your Ticket Early!

Bus leaves museum at 9:30 a.m.

Returns at approx. 5:00 p.m.

B.H.S. LECTURE SERIES

Wednesday, October 20, 8 p.m.

Ruth Lefler & John Johnson will present some highlights of the Harrison M. Scheak Collection.

Wednesday, November 18, 8 p.m.

Dr. Walter Rolland will share his experiences after 50 years of Medical Practice in Brant County

Wednesday, December 15, at 8 p.m.

Ken Strachan will return for his popular Christmas address of newsworthy items culled from the December 1899 issues of the Expositor and Courier.

PAPER CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

Mary Gladwin of the Norwich Archives will be leading a paper conservation workshop at the Brant County Museum (57 Charlotte St.) on October 30th from 10: a.m. - 3:00 p.m. She will provide instruction on surface cleaning, removing stains, repairing tears and encapsulation.

Bring your own lunch. Enrolment limited to 10 people. Reserve in advance by calling 752-2483.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Brant Historical Society gratefully acknowledges support from:

The County of Brant
The City of Brantford and Brantford Regional Arts Council
The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

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ENDOWMENT FUND

The Brant Historical Endowment Fund is one of the ways which we can ensure a viable future for the Society and the Museum. We thank the following donors for their generous recent contributions to the Endowment Fund:

John R. Johnson
 Margaret E. Stedman

In memory of Helen Catherine Clemons
 Brant Historical Society
 Mrs. Frank Westaway

In memory of M. Opal L. Howey, U.E.

Brant Historical Society
 Eleanor Chapin
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 Ruth Lefler
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Brantford Street Railway Track
50th Wedding Anniversary - Presented
to Tony & Betty Johnson
 By Trevor and Joy Haight

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