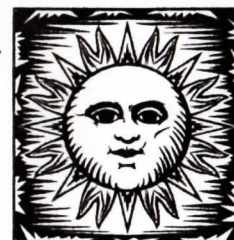




BHS Quarterly

©Brant Historical Society 1999 ISSN 1201-4028

Celebrating Ninety - One Years of Preserving Local History



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT A HUGE SUCCESS



Glenn Kilmer in front of the D'Aubigny Inn at Westfield Pioneer Village.

On Wednesday June 16th the society honoured its volunteers to a picnic supper at Westfield Pioneer Village. After the supper all the members of the society were invited to a private tour of Westfield Pioneer Village lead by Glenn Kilmer, one of the founders of the village. More than 50 people came on the tour. Highlights of the tour included three buildings from Brant County; The D'Aubigny Inn, Cathcart School and Gillin House. The Society would like to thank Mr. Kilmer for arranging the private tour of the village.

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President's Reflections

Although the weather has felt more like mid-July, it's really just the end of the spring season. We held our last board meeting before the summer break on June 8th and we are looking forward to our last general meeting on the 16th. The June General Meeting is a special time of year for the Society as it's the time when we recognize the contributions of our volunteers.

The Society itself has 186 members, and, of those members about 40 are volunteers who regularly donate their time and talent to help the Brant County Museum and Archives operate and expand. In my

thirty years with the Provincial Government, I had the opportunity to work with a large number of volunteer and non-profit organizations. By comparison, the one thing that has struck me about the Brant Historical Society is the enormous range of volunteer activity that takes place. Some volunteers write books and publications like this newsletter. Some volunteers do gardening. Others raise funds by managing bingo or the gift shop. Still others help researchers or catalogue acquisitions. Others plan and participate in our monthly lecture series. We spent a lot of time moving furniture last month. And then there are the ubiqui-

tous committee meetings. This represents a wide variety of activities from brute physical labour to intellectual endeavours, but all are needed to keep our BCM and A flourishing.

On June 16th, I will have the opportunity to thank the volunteers personally for their help. Unfortunately some volunteers have other commitments and cannot make the trip to Westfield Village. So I would like to take the opportunity in this article to thank you now and to wish you an enjoyable summer season.

Editors note: This publication was produced after the volunteer appreciation night.

Brant Historical Society Board of Directors

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The 1836 Paris Toll Bridge

by Roger Sharpe

In the early communities of the 1830s and 40s the roads and bridges that linked out of the way places like Paris to larger towns like Hamilton and London were vital to settlers. New immigrants to the area needed ways to bring in the necessities of life and established farmers needed roads and bridges to take their produce to the larger local markets.

On a highway like the Governor's Road, that wound slowly through the heart of Upper Canada, there were broader reasons to maintain adequate communication with developing areas. In the event of war, good roads were an essential part of military strategy. The loss of a bridge on a principal road like Dundas Street would compromise troop movements.

The early bridges were made of wood and, during the spring thaws, were subject to the danger of being swept away by the swollen rivers and large chunks of ice. This was the case when, in the spring of 1833, the Dundas Street bridge was swept away by the spring freshets. It had been built from donations collected from the local inhabitants and they were unable to again raise the money needed to rebuild.

The first notice of an intention to replace the bridge

was found in the Upper Canada Gazette, October 3, 1833 which read as follows: "Notice is hereby given that application will be made at the next Session of the Legislature for money to build a bridge over the Grand River on Dundas Street, in the Gore District, Paris, 27th April, 1833."

This notice was followed up with a formal request by Manuel Overfield and others to the Commons House of Assembly for a loan. It was envisioned that the next bridge would be a more permanent structure of the type with stone columns and abutments. To build on such a grand scale would require a loan which would be repaid by means of a small toll to be collected from those using it.

The chairman of the committee reviewing the petition was the Hon. Charles Duncombe, Member for the County of Oxford, who in a few years would cause such a commotion during the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837. His committee in January 1834 recommended 1,500 pounds be lent by the government for the purpose of erecting a more permanent bridge and 2,000 pounds was eventually lent. The bridge was to be built by Mr. John Hammill who had built the Brantford covered bridge in 1833. Hiram Capron's account

books showed him paying Hammill \$169.11 from an account called the Bridge Account on November 9th, 1835. It was to be 230 feet long and of a new improved plan called the diamond bridge. It was 24 feet wide and contained two arches.

From a letter written by John Smith, Paris' 1st postmaster and village councillor, to Civil Secretary John Joseph we know that by January 1836 the structure was not quite completed. Both tracks and approaches were finished and the bridge was expected to be complete in early spring. A contract with Charles Gurney, one of Paris' early merchants and school teachers, had been made to operate the toll bridge for the first six months for the sum of 57 pounds. Any money earned over that amount would be Gurney's profit. The Provincial Legislature authorized the collection of Tolls at the Paris bridge through the Act 4 Will. IV, Ch. 44.

But many of the people of the area were unwilling to pay the toll and when the river was low would cut across the flats by various routes and ford the river at about where the present William Street bridge is.

In 1838, around the end of February, Isaac Arnold had been contracted to run the toll

continued on page 8

Reminiscences Of Brantford

by Mr. F. Gardner

The following letter was written to Dr. Henry Hedges from Mr. F. Gardner. He received a copy of our latest publication "The Way We Were" and writes as follows -

I found much of interest in the book - It mentions a number of personalities with whom I came in contact. I came to Brantford in late February, 1927. I was recruited in England by Massey-Harris, served a five year indentured apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer and gained professional standing in the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. My mother-in-law's maiden name was Clement. They were United Empire Loyalists who came to Brantford in the early days. Her grandfather once owned the Kerby House and was the former Post Master of the old Post Office. He owned various properties including the corner lots on Colborne and Market Streets. Mr. Clement built the large house at the corner of Church and William Streets. It is now the headquarters of the Red Cross.

I joined Grace Church and became a lay reader under Archdeacon Fotheringham. I got to know many of the worshippers including Judge Hardy. In 1928 he used to drive

me to Burford as their Rector was ill. I took the service and Judge Hardy preached. I also knew the Misses Leonard of West Street. They often invited me to tea on Sundays and allowed me to read a rare book loaned to them by their brother, Colonel Leonard, who provided St. Catharines with its hospital. He also provided the funds to build the Tower at Grace Church and the peal of bells which used to be rung on Sundays by the Benning Brothers who lived on Terrace Hill. The book of the Misses Leonard's was "Lawrence of Arabia", one of only 100 books hand printed and hand coloured by Private Lawrence's Order.

During the Depression of 1929, Massey-Harris closed down. I was out of work and had to take work welfare provided by the City. It was manual labour and I helped fill in part of the Canal. I also lost a pair of rubber boots in the heavy gumbo. My fellow workers on that project, at 32 cents an hour, were a dentist and the former City Engineer. I later got work at Robbins and Myers assembling electrical fractional horse powered motors for 25 cents an hour.

I remember well the Wong murder trial (page 152) as I

was an observer throughout the trial. The defending lawyer was John Reycraft, son of Rev. Reycraft minister of Wellington Street Church from 1923 to 1930. I shared an apartment with John over stores next to the Bodega Hotel on Market Street between Darling and Wellington Streets. He invited me to sit at the Counsel's Table so I was close to the scene. The article is as I remember it.

There are some things that I would like to have seen in the book. One was the locomotive washer. The Company was operated by the Lyons family who also owned the Arcade. Some of the washers can be found in antique shops and (The Brant County Museum and Archives has one in its collection). Another item to mention is the knoter - a small device developed by Mr. Harris of Mount Pleasant. It made Massey and Mr. Harris. This device tied the knot of the sheaves of grain after cutting. It saved hand work.

My best wishes to you and the Society for I did enjoy the book.

SUMMER FUN AT THE BRANT COUNTY MUSEUM

Members, don't forget the Brant County Museum when planning activities for the younger members in your family. Also, members receive a 10% discount on all of the Museums children's programs.

All the World's A Stage

July 12-16

Explore the art of the theatre.
Design costumes, masks, puppets
and stage a performance for
a grand finale! Ages 6-12

Cost: \$20/day
\$10/half day

Toy Making Workshops

Toy making workshops will take place
on Thursdays at the Museum in the Square.

July 29: Optical toys

August 5: Dolls and Soldiers

August 12: Puppets

August 19: Noah's Ark

August 26: Mechanical Toys

\$6/child

A Child's World

Monday to Saturday, July 24-August 28

10am to 5pm; and the following

Saturdays in September: the 4th and 11th
Drop by and explore "A Child's World" at the
Museum in the Square, an exhibit and activity
centre focusing on the experience of childhood
past and present. Try on the clothes your
parents or grandparents would have worn
or test some toys from an earlier era.
Admission \$2; accompanying adults free.
At the Market Square Mall.



Chicago's Second World Fair, A Century of Progress, 1933, 1934

By Angela Files

1. The Crash Of The Stock Markets, October 1929.

The crash of the stock markets was followed by the Great Depression of the 1930's which brought about business failures, massive unemployment, the unionization of Chicago's steel, farm and meat packing industries. The second Chicago World's Fair, or The Century of Progress Fair was a much needed diversion from the economical conditions in the world and the "futuristic exhibits were a shining symbol of what the future could be".¹

2. Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages by Federal American Law (1920-1933)

The opening of the Second Chicago Fair in 1933, was also the year that prohibition was terminated in the United States. The gang wars were still rampant after prohibition days. Chicago was notorious for its bombings, bootleggers, and murders.

Many of the stories of Chicago criminals appeared in newspapers:

"One Public Enemy of Chicago Dead, Rocco Bescastio, King of Bombers."²

3. The Opening Of The Second Chicago World Fair May 27, 1933.

Chicago's second World's Fair opened on May 27, 1933. It



opened with a parade of marching bands, smartly dressed policemen, and a beauty queen with violet eyes from Racine, Wisconsin. In the evening rays from the star Arcturus the Bear, the brightest star in the constellation sparked floodlights which illuminated the cloudy, drizzly night sky.

The star Arcturus was chosen because its light takes about forty years to reach the Earth and forty years had passed since Chicago's First Fair in 1893. Taking the energy of Arcturus to switch on the fair's lights symbolized the exhibition's theme of scientific progress during the last century.

Displays from Hollywood Studios and Treasure Island Park fascinated one and all!

4. The Roof That Breathed.

Folks of Brant County who were fortunate enough to visit the Chicago Fair in 1933, or 1934, remember the roof of the Travel and Transport building. It was held up by a dozen cables attached to towers. The roof could rise or sink by a foot and a half, depending on air pressure or the weight of snow. The roof was featured as "The Roof That Breathed".

5. The Exhibition Of The Art Deco Buildings.

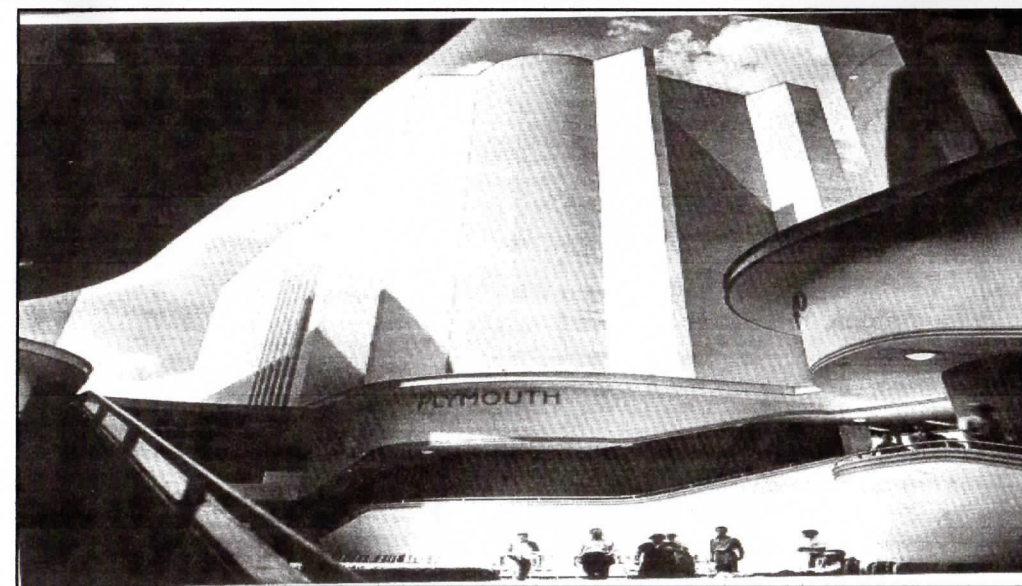
For fifty cents admission, one could wander among the eighty-two miles of exhibits in the Art Deco Buildings made from prestressed concrete and sheet metal. The Art Deco Building was located on new land created by filling a small part of Lake Michigan. Is it any wonder that people suffered from weary feet in walking through the Art Deco Building?

6. The Sky Ride.

One of the most interesting rides at the fair was the Sky Ride. It stretched between two spidery towers, one on the mainland and one on Northerly Island. Stream-lined cars shot back and forth along steel cables two hundred feet above the fairgrounds. What a popular ride it became for the young!

7. The Chicago Fair 1934.

Judged a resounding success in 1933, the fair



The "Century of Progress" Fairgrounds, shown here in 1933, stretched along the lake front from the Alder Planetarium to 37th Street. In the left foreground is the Travel and Transport building, which featured a roof that "breathed".

reopened for a second year. In its two seasons, it drew 38,867,000 visitors and turned a profit, a remarkable feat for any World's Fair. When the gate closed for the last time, the buildings came down, and the Depression was still on.

Marilyn McDonald, a staff member of The Brant County Museum kindly shared the following story with us.

"My parents Laurence Smith and Dorothy Graves were married on May 30th, 1934 at the Scotland Baptist Church by Rev. C.C. Anderson. Great

Aunt Clara Nelles had enjoyed the fair the previous year and suggested that the young couple spend their honeymoon at the Chicago Fair.

Taking a direct train route to Chicago from Galt they stayed at the Dalton Hotel. During their three day stay they walked endlessly on the fair grounds to observe the displays of eighteen nations. One of the souvenirs purchased was a silver necklace with colour changing prisms".

Although the rumor that the Canadian Dionne Quintuplets

were to appear at the fair was false, there were many other interesting people at the fair: movie stars, dancers, boxers, wrestlers and even the comedians Abbot and Castello. The spirit of the 1930's was embodied in the Chicago Fair.

ENDNOTES

1 Daniel, Clifton, Editor-in-Chief "Chronicles of the Twentieth Century" Chronicle Publications, Mt. Kisco, N.Y. Pg. 426.

2 Brantford Expositor, May 15, 1933, Front Pages News.

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

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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Wilbik
Pamela J. Young

Paris Toll Bridge continued from page 3

bridge for one year for 100 pounds. Arnold was well placed to operate the bridge. He had bought property in 1836 from Robert Roseburgh in the triangle of land opposite the bridge on Arnold Street. Arnold had been a gunsmith in England and was listed as a general blacksmith in the 1860s. He was the father of Charles and John Arnold who are remembered as horticulturalists and long time Paris municipal councillors.

Isaac operated the toll bridge during the troublesome times of the Mackenzie Rebellion and, by February 1839, he was experiencing a problem about which he wrote in a letter to the 73rd regiment's Col. Frederick Love who commanded the area. He said that troops were passing over the bridge so frequently without paying that he was in financial trouble. In his own words, "His Majesty's forces having to pass over it so frequently as they do and for which I cannot collect any toll - In addition to this the express riders, Dragoons and teams in the service of the army are daily passing over frequently in numbers- so that I am deprived of the means to realize sufficient from the tolls..." It would appear that Arnold did not give up trying to make the operation of the toll bridge a success as the 1841 bridge report noted the balance of his contract due in August 1840 was not paid until November 1841.

The subsequent toll keeper, Mr. Robert Kirkwood was also late paying the balance of his contract due in March 1841. He was eventually able to pay in November 1841. The toll keeper after Kirkwood, Mr. Darby Quigley, was able to make his first quarter payment but fell behind and had to wait until December to make his September payment. In 1843 the Bridge Committee was still trying to collect money owed by Quigley through legal means. From a careful check of the accounting report it does not look like the toll keeping business was a money making venture at that time.

By 1841 the bridge was in a dilapidated condition and 21 pounds was spent for new planking on the east side approach. The report also noted that the local Justice of the Peace William Granville Curtis had fined a user \$2.00 for going over the bridge at "faster than a walk." There were also several other expenses noted such as 1 pound to Levi Boughton, the local builder of Paris' beautiful cobblestone houses, for repairing stonework on a bridge pier. In 1842/43 the government spent a further 313 pounds on improvements to the bridge.

The author of the 1843 report noted that the tollkeeper or his employee would have to be more diligent in watching the

bridge as he had crossed with a wagon and had met two others who had crossed without being asked to pay tolls.

The Tolls for the Paris Bridge in 1844 were as follows:

Wagon with 4 horses...9 1/2 Pence
Wagon with 2 horses.....7 1/2 P.
Wagon with 1 horse.....5 P.
Saddle horse and rider.....1 1/2 P.
2 oxen and cart or wagon...3 1/2 P.
Each extra yoke of oxen.....2 P.
2 horse cart or caleche.....3 1/2 P.
Horse, each.....1 P.
Cow, ox, or colt without shoes, or
other quadrupeds.....1 P.
Every foot passenger.....0 P.

The contract to operate the bridge in 1843 and 1844 was for 140 Pounds.

The 1843 report also mentions that Duncombe had kept about 175 pounds of the Bridge Commissions assets when he made his escape to the United States in 1837.

Local history says that in March 1852 a great flood carried the toll bridge away isolating the village. To replace it, an engineer who was building the Great Western Railway bridge, was contracted to replace it and completed the new bridge within 30 days. Yet from government sources it was reported that the bridge was burned down in 1847. After this report no further mention of the bridge is found in government reports. Clearly further research is needed to reconcile the two accounts. *continued on page 10*

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 \$81,531 up from \$79,000. We thank the following donors for their generous recent contributions to the Endowment fund:

In memory of Wayne Elwyn Bannister
Marilyn McDonald

In memory of Mrs. Alexandra Johnston
Brant Historical Society
Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Files

Summer students at the Brant County Museum and Archives

Each summer the Museum receives a number of grants to hire summer students. This year we were able to hire four students. Nicole Livet, a student of languages at McMaster University, was hired as our Archives Assistant. Stacey Mckellar is a graduate from both the University of Guelph, history, and the Sir Sanford Fleming Museum Curatorship program. Stacey was hired as the Collections Assistant. Jasmine Aitcheson was hired as our summer program assistant. She is a student at North Park Collegiate and will be graduating next year. A former museum club participant, Aimee Bissonette, was also hired as program assistant. She attends St. John's College and is starting grade 12 in the fall.

Paris Toll Bridge continued from page 10

No picture of Paris' early bridge has yet been found but it must have been a quaint addition to, "The Prettiest town in Canada."

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- Appendix (Q)-1843, Schedule C and Schedule E.
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- Smith, Don, At the Forks of The Grand, Vol.1, Pgs. 22, 44-45. Advance Printing, Paris, 1984.
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HAPPENINGS

July

Exhibition

"Ex Libris - Harrison M. Scheak: An exhibit on the Art of Collecting."

May 22 - July 17, 1999
The Museum in the Square

If you are an avid antique collector or a beginner collector, you'll want to visit the Museum in the Square. On display will be the wonderful Harrison M. Scheak collection of books on subjects ranging from armour to Wedgewood china, with a sampling of related objects from his own collection. Identify your own collectibles using books such as, Geoffrey Godden's *Encyclopedia of British Pottery and Porcelain marks*.

Exhibition

"Child's World"

July 24 - September 11
The Museum in the Square

This summer become a child again with a new exhibit devoted to childhood. Explore toys of your past and your great grandparents past. For children, a Child's World activity centre will be open. Children can try on clothes from the past and play games their grandparents may have played. Admission to the activity centre is \$2.00. Accompanying adults free.

Museum Club

"All the World's a Stage"

July 12-16
Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte Street

Explore the art of the theatre. Design costumes, masks, puppets and stage a performance for a grand finale!

Ages 6-12
Cost: \$20/day \$10/half day
10% discount applies to members

Toy Making Workshops
Museum in the Square

July 29: Optical Toys
August 5: Dolls and Soldiers
August 12: Puppets
August 19: Noah's Ark
August 26: Mechanical Toys
Ages 3-6: 10am to noon
Ages 7-12: 1 to 3pm
\$6/child

September

BHS Lecture Series
Wednesday September 15, 1999
8:00 pm
Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte Street

Join us as Bob Hasler recounts the role of the merchant George Taylor who resided in the Paris Junction between 1869 and 1957.

October

Exhibition
"Age of Chivalry"
October 2 - December 31, 1999

Museum in the Square

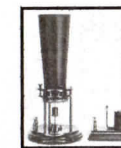
Knights in shining armour, damsels in distress, is what we typically think about when we hear the word Medieval. This fall the Museum will explore the medieval world with an exhibit about the Middle Ages. Learn more about armour and armament from this period. Compare the feudal system of government to your own. Look at stained glass inspired by this period.

BHS Lecture Series
Wednesday October 20, 1999
8:00pm
Brant County Museum
57 Charlotte Street

Ruth Lefler and John Johnson, Directors of the Brant Historical Society, will present some highlights from the Harrison M. Scheak Collection.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the Bell Homestead on the 125th anniversary of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell. Can you imagine our world without this invention.



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