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Different styles add to the attractiveness of the houses on Lincoln Square in Lansdowne Park.

Photo courtesy of Cindy MacDonald

Another first for Brantford

By Ruth Lefler

Lincoln Square is one of Brantford's best kept secrets. How this square received its name and why it was built is a most interesting journey.

The story begins in 1907 with the arrival of the industrialist William Platts Kellet from the United States. Here he organized and financed the Lake Erie and Northern Railway (L.E.&N.) and became the chief engineer and general manager of the company.

He also became involved with the Ker and Goodwin Company, which manufactured munitions. Kellet left this firm and, in 1916, built and opened the Dominion Steel Products Limited at 85 Morrell St. adjacent to the L.E.&N. Railway. Harding Carpets Limited later occupied this building.

In January 1917 day and night shifts worked on production for the British and United States governments. Gun mounts were built for U.S. battleships and propeller shafting for troop and

merchant ships, battleships and destroyers.

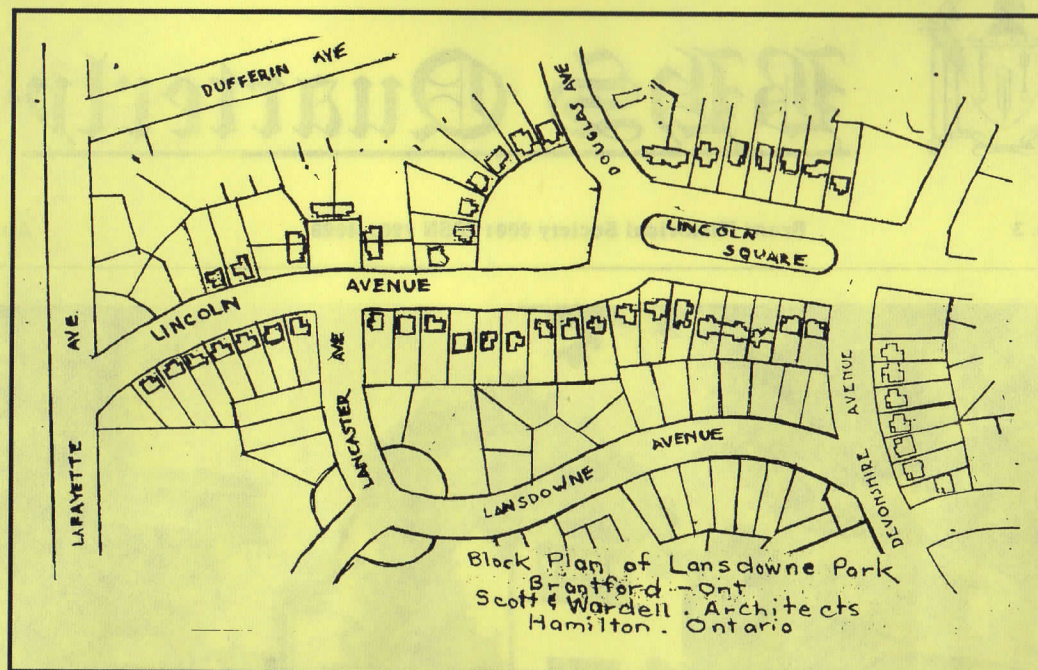
An acute housing shortage prevailed in Brantford because of the influx of workers involved in making war

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Celebrating 93 years of preserving local history



A 1918 plan of development for Lincoln Square in the Lansdowne area of Brantford.

Lansdowne development was another first

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equipment. Kellet saw the need to develop an excellent housing development to attract a large number of mechanics needed to keep manufacturing production at a high level in his plant. Thus Lansdowne Park was developed.

In 1918 some 33 acres were purchased in the Dufferin Avenue, Parkside Drive area in the vicinity of the company's plant. A subdivision plan was drawn up to accommodate 250 houses. This was followed by grading, sewers, roadways, sidewalks and landscaping. Scott and Wardell from Hamilton were the architects and the firm of H.B. and L.A. Dunington-Grubb of Toronto were the landscape architects.

By 1919, 50 houses were built around the village green or park known as Lincoln Square. Houses were arranged in groups and courts to provide privacy. Ten styles of two-storey houses of different sizes and designs were built. Four different kinds of stuccoes finished the exteriors to give a variety of appearances.

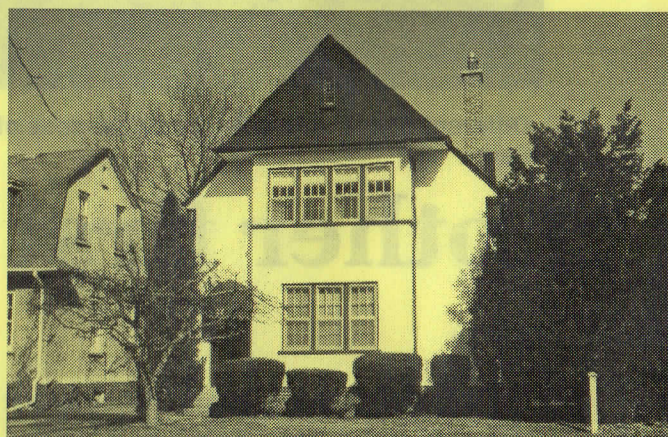
Street names in this area indicate Kellet's heritage in both the United States and Canada:

Devonshire Avenue is named for the Duke of Devonshire, governor general of Canada in 1916.

Lafayette Avenue is named for the Marquis de Lafayette who helped the American colonists win their independence from Britain.

Lansdowne Avenue is named for the governor general of Canada 1883-1888.

Lincoln Avenue is named for U.S. president Abraham Lincoln.



Varieties of stucco add individuality to the homes on Lincoln Square. Photo courtesy of Cindy MacDonald

Over the years, the homes in the Lansdowne Park area have maintained their value because of their setting among the mature maple trees, their attractiveness of design and their quality of workmanship.

Our community salutes William Platts Kellet as one of our outstanding entrepreneurs.

Notes:

Brant News, Feb. 7, 1999, Page 4, "John Merriman's Brantford."

Brantford Expositor, June 30, 1967.

"Construction," H. Gagnier Limited, Publishers, Toronto, November 1921.

Brant Historical Society, Signposts, Brantford, 2000.

President's Reflections

The summer heat wave and dry spell have broken and I am sure we are all breathing a sigh of relief. I hope all of you had a chance to relax and take some well-deserved vacation before the general activity of life picks up again this fall.

I would be remiss if I did not express my sincere appreciation to the museum staff for the wonderful Volunteer Appreciation Night in June. I think that everyone who attended the dinner or joined in the program at Kanata Village really enjoyed himself or herself. It was also nice to have certificates of appreciation for our volunteers, courtesy of our M.P.P. Dave Levac.

As we move into the fall and our regular program, I hope we can provide you with interesting and informative presentations at the regular monthly meetings. You will

see in this newsletter that our September meeting will be held at the Princeton Museum, where we will enjoy a presentation on the Birchall/Benwell Affair, an area murder that stirred a certain amount of controversy. A map has been included to help get you there. I would like to thank John Bonfield for suggesting this and for his willingness to arrange it. We are always looking for good program ideas.

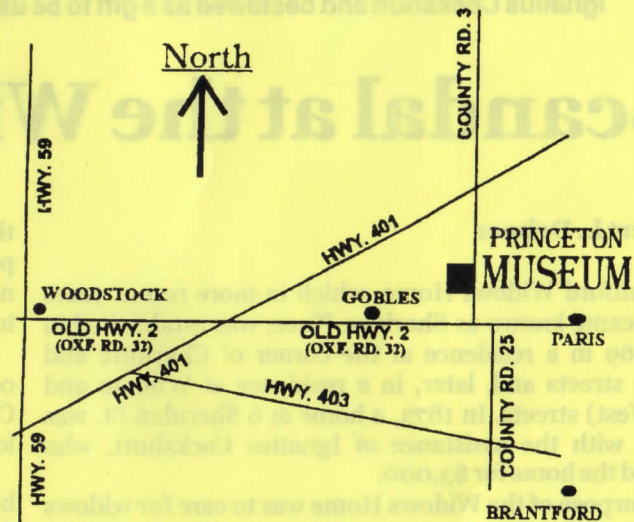
During the fall and next year I anticipate we will be grappling with the immediate and long-term needs of the museum in terms of funding and facilities.

I will keep you advised of the progress in this and hope that during this time you will be thinking about your vision of the museum's future.

John Wyatt

Directions

The museum is located in the Village of Princeton, along Old Highway 2 (Oxford Road 32), between Woodstock and Paris. Turn north onto Main Street. The museum is a quarter mile from the intersection on the left hand side.



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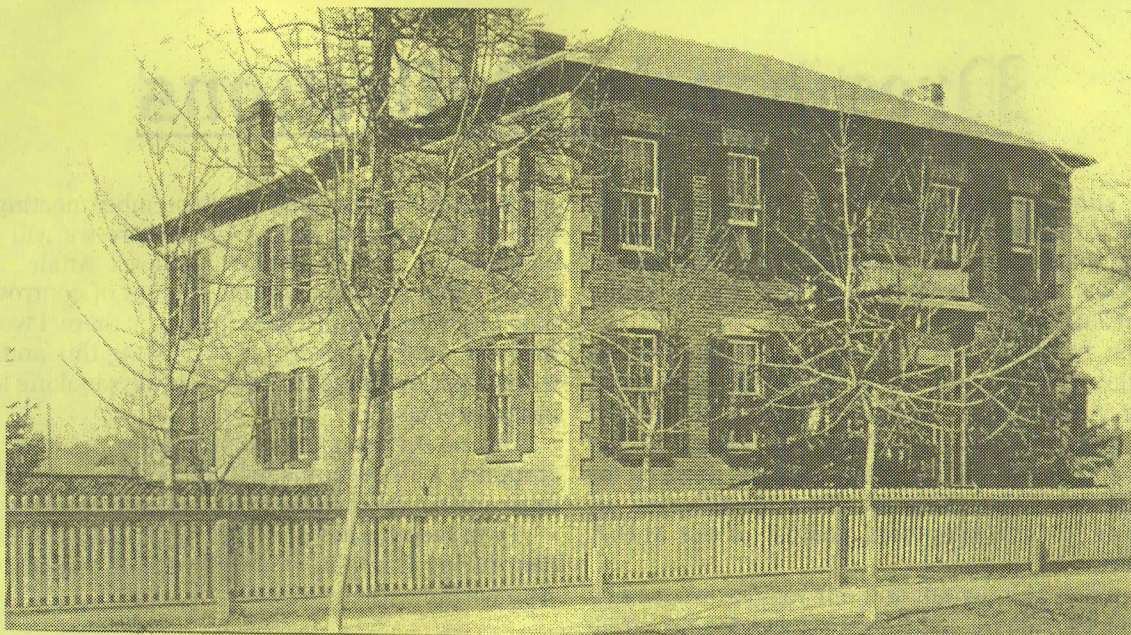
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The Widows Home as it likely would have appeared in 1873 when it was purchased by Ignatius Cockshutt and bestowed as a gift to be used as a permanent “home” for old women.

Scandal at the Widows Home

By Robert L. Deboer

Brantford Widows Home, which in more recent years became known as Sheridan Place, was established in 1869 in a residence at the corner of Charlotte and Colborne streets and, later, in a residence at William and Cedar (West) streets. In 1873, a home at 6 Sheridan St. was provided with the assistance of Ignatius Cockshutt, who purchased the home for \$3,000.

The purpose of the Widows Home was to care for widows from Brantford and Brant County who found themselves in difficult circumstances. In more recent years until it closed in 1994, Sheridan Place was a retirement home for ladies.

At all times, the home had in its employ a matron to help manage the home, assist the ladies of the Board of Management, and to look after the needs of the residents or, as they were initially called, “inmates.”

This story is about one of the matrons, Mrs. Watt, who was hired in September 1890. The minutes of the Board of Management record that on Aug. 3, 1895, one Fred Shackell was shot in the arm by Mrs. Watt while he was apparently trying to enter the home.

The matter was investigated by the local constabulary with the end result that Shackell was charged with attempting to enter a residence with intent to commit a felony and Mrs. Watt was charged with intending to maim.

The Brantford Expositor reported that in court Mrs. Watt admitted she had known Shackell for six years. She claimed that a very drunken Fred Shackell had been on the grounds of

the Widows Home two weeks previous but had fled when the police were summoned. He had returned later that same night and Mrs. Watt claimed she had fetched Shackell's wife to take him home.

Mrs. Watt claimed Fred Shackell had followed her on occasion and in July he had been arrested by County Constable Adams when in a drunken state he had been loitering around the home.

Mrs. Watt stated that on the night of the shooting she had been awakened by a noise at about 10 p.m. She stated that she discovered Shackell and warned him to leave or she would shoot. Mrs. Watt then stated Shackell went to another window and tried to enter where she confronted him and in the ensuing struggle, Mrs. Watt fired her gun and Shackell was struck in the arm.

Mrs. Watt claimed she had not meant to shoot Shackell but only to frighten him away. She said that Shackell then pounded on another window, swearing he would kill her and then he left. Mrs. Watt then stated that at 4:30 Shackell returned to the Widows Home with his wife and another man and they only left the area when Mrs. Watts fired another shot.

In his cross-examination of Mrs. Watt, Shackell's lawyer, Mr. C.B. Heyd, tried to establish this had been a liaison between the two protagonists. He suggested Shackell had bought Mrs. Watt clothes, jewelry, that the two of them had spent weekends together in Toronto, Buffalo and St. Thomas, that Shackell often spent the night in the Widows Home in her

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Do you remember?

George Street across from the 'old' Market Square



Do you remember the counters and seed bins in Hankinson Seeds, the variety of fish and seafood in Silversteins's, the rich colours of wool in the Wool Centre and, of course, the Kerby Hotel steeped in local history?

Photo courtesy of the Audrey Scott collection

Scandal at the Widows Home on Sheridan Street

Continued from Page 4

quarters with her, and that Mrs. Watt usually left a window unfastened so that he could enter. Mrs. Watt vehemently denied the suggestions, calling them "filthy stories."

Fred Shackell told the court that he had slept with Mrs. Watt every night from the first of June until mid-July and that on several out of town occasions he had introduced her as his wife. According to Shackell, on the night of the shooting an "arrangement" had been made with Mrs. Watt for him to spend the night.

The Expositor reported that the magistrate reduced the charge against Shackell to trespass, fined him \$5, and ordered the managers of the Widows Home to investigate the charges made against Mrs. Watt by Shackell.

The magistrate subsequently dismissed the charge against Mrs. Watt. He noted that under the circumstances the use of a weapon was justified on the grounds that Fred Shackell was an intruder who was seeking admittance at a late hour into a house where there were only women.

On Aug. 12, 1895, a special meeting of the the Board of

Management of the Widows Home was called to consider the charges made against Mrs. Watt by Shackell. A list of the most specific charges had been drawn up by C.B. Heyd, who had acted as counsel for Shackell.

Mrs. Watt denied emphatically all the statements. She was questioned by the president and the ladies of the board, still denying all and protesting her innocence.

In a surprise move, Mrs. Watt tendered her resignation as matron. The board adjourned and took no action until the following Friday when her resignation was accepted.

There is no record of what happened to Mrs. Watt after she left the employ of the Widows Home.

The ladies of the Board of Management are to be credited for dealing with this serious matter so expeditiously to ensure the home's credibility in the community as a caring, concerned, well-managed organization.

Extracted from Brantford Widows' Home – Sheridan Place Retirement Home for Women, A History 1869-1994, by Robert L. DeBoer, published by the Brant Historical Society.

Staff Summer Update

Shanna Dunlop, Assistant Curator

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the projects I have been working on since my return to the staff of the Brant County Museum three months ago. Since May, I have tackled a backlog of cataloguing and, with the help of former co-op student Ashley Cartwright and our summer student Heather Macdonald, have made great progress. There is still, however, much more cataloguing to be done -- including two unique donations of antique woodworking tools. I invite anyone interested in helping to catalogue these and many other objects to contact me at the museum.

I have also been busy with the research and installation of our current temporary exhibit "To the Nines", a collection of period fashion accessories featured at our Market Square location. The whole exhibit process has been most enjoyable for me, and I urge you all to view the end result before October 5th. Special thanks go to Stacey McKellar and Cindy MacDonald for their help with the installation. I am currently in the process of planning our next two exhibits, so stay tuned for more details!

I am looking forward to speaking at a meeting of the newly-formed Paris Kiwanis Club in September about the Brant County Museum's collection and archives. It is my hope that similar guest lecture opportunities will arise among Brantford's organizations. We have a great museum -- a valuable resource that more people should know about and utilize!

In closing, I again invite those interested in volunteering to get in touch. We can match any level of skill, interest and time commitment with museum projects. Especially needed are volunteers to sew garment bags and padded hangers, and of course to help with the previously mentioned cataloguing of artifacts and archival materials. I look forward to seeing you soon. -- *Shanna*

Debbie Olsen, Program Officer

The summer camp programs kicked off with "Survivor", a fun-filled program loosely based on the popular television show. Our eight "tribesmen" weren't voted off the museum

island; rather, they learned about survivor skills and pioneer life, completed colourful crafts, visited our local fire station and Myrtleville House, and spent the last "challenging" day at Mohawk Park. "C is for Creativity" was loads of fun for our budding artists, who wrote poems, told stories and made dream catchers -- all in a day's work. "Mummies Alive" had ten able archeologists discovering the ancient secrets of Egypt and creating some interesting "artifacts" during the program's five days. Our last one-day camp was "M is for Museum" and our seven careful curators learned about what it takes to run a well-organized and efficient museum. Debbie Olsen and Adam Schoenborn organized and ran the programs, with the assistance of young high school volunteers. We have to agree with Carmen, one of our young campers, whose comment was, "It was really cool." -- *Debbie*

Summer students

My name is Adam Schoenborn, and I am the Assistant Program Director here at the museum. This summer I have dedicated a lot of time and energy to making this year's programs the best ever. Our "Survivor" camp was a resounding success and our "Mummies Alive" camp is in full swing at the time of writing. Having just completed our first live mummification, I can assure you this is an experience that I won't soon forget.

My name is Neil Macdonald, and this summer I had the chance to work here at the museum. As a Research Assistant, my responsibilities mostly revolved around answering inquiries that people had forwarded to the museum. From the earliest days of Joseph Brant right up to the present day, people are always interested in the rich history that our city has. It was a great experience working here, and I would just like to say thank you to everyone who made it that way.

My name is Heather Macdonald, and I am the Museum Assistant for the summer. My main job was to take inventory of the metal storage room, but I have been doing many other things also. From doing gift shop inventory to typing up signs, I seemed to have my hands full this summer. I will continue to be around the museum through the winter, as I will be staying on as a volunteer. I hope to be seeing you around the museum.

The Museum in the Square (A Satellite of the B.C.M. & A.)

Main Level, Market Square Mall
1 Market Street, Brantford, Ontario
(519) 752-8578

Admission by Voluntary Donation
Hours: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed Saturdays

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 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.

Web site:

<http://www.bfree.on.ca/comdir/musgal/bcma>

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Marion Weir

At the gift shop

Beautiful Coffee Table Books

Grand River Reflections

Photographer John de Visser takes you on a stunning journey down the Grand. A beautiful introduction to the Grand River Valley, and the people who live there.

People of the Dancing Sky -- The Iroquois Way

Photographer Myron Zabol brings to life the world of the people of the Six Nations.

*\$50.00 each less your membership discount of 10%.
These make handsome gifts for any occasion.*

Endowment Fund

In Memory of John Philip Partridge

Members of the Brant Historical Society

Robert and Anne Deboer

Marilyn McDonald

In Memory of Ralph Henry Dysart

William Fuller

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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 personal 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

MEMBERSHIPS

Happenings

Brant County Museum & Archives

Exhibits

"To The Nines: A Collection of Hats, Shoes, Purses & More", on now until October 5.

"Brant Visual Artists Show & Sale", October 18 to November 15. Show Opening: Saturday October 20.

"Eastern Treasures From The Harrison M. Scheak Collection", December 3 to March 8.

Volunteers

We are always looking for volunteers to do general tasks around the museum. If you would like to volunteer some of your time, contact the museum at (519) 752-2483 or (519) 752-8578, and it would be appreciated.

Curator's Corner

The summer has been a busy one at the Brant County Museum & Archives. The summer camps were a great success, with lots of little campers visiting the museum. As well, we were able to catch up on some of our backlog work. I would like to thank our summer students for all of their hard work. I was able to spend the summer working on our walking tour, writing grants and dealing with the day-to-day operations of the museum.

Special thanks go out to Irene Rae and Joyce Armstrong, our loyal library ladies, Ruth Lefler for her work on the Audrey Scott architectural collection and Cal Diegel for his help with the Constance Pole-Byers collection of John Turner material.

With the approach of the school year, we are hard at work on our school programs and gearing up for our popular Christmas program and upcoming exhibits. I hope everyone had a terrific summer and I look forward to seeing you at the general meetings and the Brantford Film Group nights.

Stacey McKellar



Brant Historical Society

Brantford Film Group

September 20	The Golden Bowl (Great Britain)
October 11	Everybody Famous (subtitled) (Belgium/France/Netherlands)
October 25	Here's To Life (Canada)
November 8	Le Placard (The Closet) (sub-titled) (France)
November 22	Greenfingers (Great Britain/U.S.)
December 13	Innocence (Australia)

General Meeting Speakers

September 19	Field Trip to Princeton Museum
October 17	BHS' Wall of Honour Unveiled
November 21	TBA
December 19	Ken Strachan: "Christmas 1901"

Zehrs' Tapes

Don't forget to bring in your tapes!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Brant Historical Society
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The County of Brant
The City of Brantford
The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture
and Recreation*