



BHS Quarterly

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Brantford's Market Square over the years

Compiled by Robert L. Deboer

This is part two of a three-part article offering a historical perspective on changes to Brantford's Market Square.

In the early 1950s, the list for downtown improvements was topped by the proposal to demolish the City Hall and relocate the market. Whenever a proposal of any commercial deal was made for the Market Square, the Six Nations Confederacy refused to recognize the city's right to sell the property under the rationale that city council had no right to interfere with a treaty made between the Imperial Government and the Six Nations Indians. The claim was countered with the assurance from the city solicitor that, in accordance with the conditions set out in the 1920 Brantford Bill, the square could be sold after a vote on the matter by ratepayers.

Unsuccessful proposals

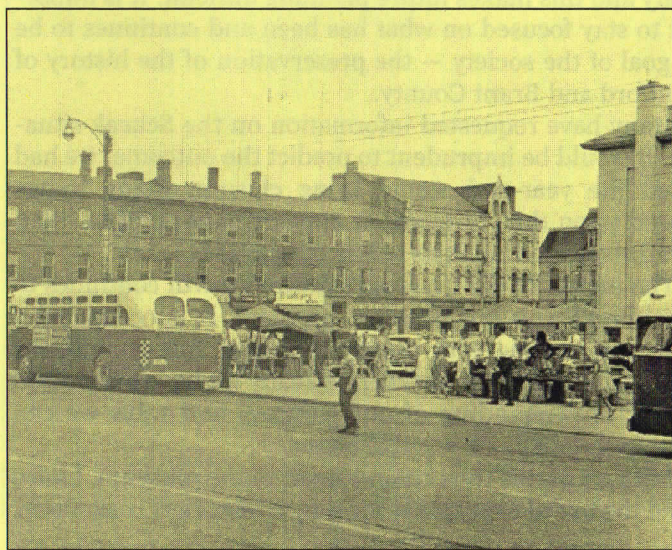
In April 1951, a Toronto investment company presented a proposal to city council for development of the Market Square from which nothing evolved.

In 1957, the city purchased the YWCA building on the northeast corner of Wellington and George streets with the intention of eventually using it for a site for a new City Hall, which is where the City Hall now stands. After demolition of the YWCA building, the property was used as a municipal parking lot until the new City Hall was erected.

In 1958, there was a verbal offer made by an unnamed American investment group for the City Hall and Market Square, with a proposal to erect a five-storey business building that would include a two-level underground parking garage. This proposal also lapsed.

City Hall moves

Even with the purchase of the YWCA property at Wellington and George streets and a 1951 decision to move the market to the former canal basin area east of South Market Street, as the decade ended, city council was still debating the advisability of relocating City Hall



On Market Day, looking north on Market Street. On the right, part of old City Hall is visible, and in the foreground are city buses. In the background is Dalhousie Street.

Photo courtesy of the Brant Museum & Archives

and the market, and questioning whether the square should be sold or converted into off-street parking.

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Celebrating 96 years of preserving local history

President's Reflections

December brings evaluation and that signals the year-end. The temptation is to articulate the negatives and forget the positives. Certainly BHS has a few bumps in its path. The most pressing is our financial situation. Our budget predicted there would be challenges if there was no increase in financial support. The truth is now reality and this makes future planning difficult. It is important to stay focused on what has been and continues to be the goal of the society — the preservation of the history of Brantford and Brant County.

Many have requested information on the Scheak situation. It would be imprudent to predict the outcome; we had hoped the year-end would bring closure. Many things depend upon this; however, it appears sooner rather than later dreams and realities will need to clash.

The matter of the museum's future growth continues to be explored with our museum partners. It is occupying a great deal of time with weekly meetings, but preliminary important steps must be taken. Already we have discovered a fuller understanding of our partners and ways we can assist each other — a positive bonus.

Because of this time commitment to the museum, I have asked the board to consider forming a historical committee.

This group would be charged with the task of proactively growing our museum collection by identifying archival and research gaps. It would assist present committees in this important task. Please share with me your thoughts.

We have visited all political leaders. Their response was consistent: "You are doing a good job, keep us informed — but don't expect money." Rarely has there been any show of commitment to the important task BHS plays in the community. Heritage preservation seems directed at buildings, but there is a failure to understand the importance of the preservation of the community's story. Heritage preservation is not understood as an important aspect of any well-rounded community. If you cannot document where you have been, how can you hope to know the tools at your disposal to arrive at a destination?

The board has received and accepted the resignation of our treasurers. We knew it was coming, but we hoped it would never materialize. Glenn and Julie Gillis have shown a strong dedication to the goals of the society and their financial expertise will be greatly missed.

Enjoy the coming holiday season and bring your refreshed enthusiastic support into the coming year.

Calvin G. Diegel

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Brant Museum & Archives

57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6
519-752-2483

Admission: Adults \$2.00 Seniors/Students \$1.50
Children \$1.25 Under 6 free B.H.S. members free

Hours: Wednesday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.

For July and August: Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.

Web site: www.brantmuseum.ca

The Museum in the Square A Satellite of the Brant Museum & Archives

Main Level, Market Square Mall
1 Market St., Brantford, Ontario 519-752-8578

Admission by voluntary donation

Hours: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
For July, August and December: Open Saturday

Curator's Corner

I can't believe it's that time again. We are very busy here at the museum decking the halls and trimming the trees. Again this year we are turning the museum into a whirlwind trip around the world at Christmastime.

The parlour is brimming with Victoriana and the Log Cabin upstairs is festive with its pioneer decorations. Please visit us and look at all of the very interesting international holiday traditions. We have "raided" the Scheak collection for all sorts of interesting items to help us illustrate festivities such as Ramadan, Diwali, Chinese New

Year and, of course, the Christian origins of Christmas.

Our new program officer, Maggie Ord, has been busy decorating the program room and preparing for all of the schoolchildren who will be visiting us over the next few weeks.

We had a successful open house on Dec. 5, with cider, cookies, entertainment, live music, crafts for the kids and visits from Queen Victoria and Santa.

From all of the staff here at the museum, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Stacey McKellar

Changes for the market and City Hall

Continued from front page

The dilemma of the downtown area, and the attendant problem of what to do with the Market Square in general and City Hall in particular, came into sharper focus as the city expanded to the north and suburban malls began to appear. It was becoming obvious that concerted efforts would be needed to check the growing commercial decline of the city's downtown business section, which provided the city with 25 per cent of its tax revenue.

Integral to the revitalization of that area was the question of how best to develop the Market Square. In Mayor Richard Beckett's 1961 inaugural address, he mused about a business development of the square and immediately received inquiries from three interested parties. A year later, a study was commissioned to examine the possibility of turning the square into a commercial development, which would include above- and below-street parking, a City Hall and a department store.

In 1963, Mayor Richard Beckett's recommendations concerning the square became more definite. Noting that, "probably the most valuable single block of land in the whole city is being used to locate an ancient, too small, inefficient City Hall that has been the object of derision for more than 50 years," he pushed for a referendum on the square that would authorize council to sell to "any purchaser who could meet the city's price and who would enter into a legal and binding agreement to erect on the site a multiple use facility." The proceeds from the sale would be used to build a new City Hall, which, in turn, would allow money already set aside for a City Hall to be put toward an arena. This proposal set off a yearlong chain of events that led nowhere, but sparked public interest.

The search for a buyer persevered and the result was an

agreement on Jan. 24, 1964, by which the Ontario Management Corporation of Toronto was to purchase the Market Square for \$450,000 after the sale was approved by a civic referendum.

The referendum was approved by a four-to-one margin, although only a disappointing 43 per cent of the eligible ratepayers bothered to vote. The developer immediately stated that it hoped to have the \$25 million project completed by August 1965. The result of the referendum did not completely settle the matter, as its results were questioned by the market vendors, who objected to the proposed move to Greenwich Street and by the Six Nations Confederacy, who threatened to take the issue to the United Nations. In spite of the protests, ownership of the square was passed to the developers and the city agreed to vacate City Hall as of Jan. 1, 1965.

Market vendors finally agree to move

Closely connected to the square development was a new location for the market. With the sale and impending development of the square, market vendors were demanding that the city provide suitable alternative accommodation. The vendors considered the city-selected site on the former site of the canal basin unsuitable. Referring to the wording of the 1920 Brantford Bill, which declared, "No By-Law shall be passed . . . until the Municipal Council of the City of Brantford shall provide a suitable site for market purposes," in January 1965, the vendors applied for and received a temporary injunction preventing the final sale of the Market Square, the imminent demolition of City Hall and adjacent buildings on the square and the removal of the vendors from

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the Market Square, for eight days. In February, the injunction was extended pending a trial to resolve the matter. However, the matter with the vendors was resolved and they accepted an offer for a completely covered steel building that provided space for 15 meat and 35 produce vendors.

New City Hall

The building of a new City Hall was also linked to the whole downtown and the Market Square question, and was ranked by many as the city's number one priority. Although the proposal to build a new City Hall on the property at Wellington and George streets was initially defeated, city council gave its approval to that location in April 1964.

Problems with Market Square development

While the project for a new City Hall moved ahead, by October 1965, cracks were appearing in the Market Square development agreement. After announcing that the complex would have a five-level parking garage and that Loblaw's would be the major tenant, the developer requested a six-month extension on the grounds it was still negotiating with possible major tenants.

Demolition of the old City Hall and the other buildings on the Market Square began on July 29, 1965. The new City Hall at Wellington and George streets was officially opened on Nov. 28, 1967, by then governor-general Roland Michener.

As the city began to examine its options should the deal collapse, in May 1966, the new owner asked for a relaxation of the conditions of sale, citing honest mistakes in its projections and claiming it was not economically feasible to proceed with the original plans.

Arguing that what the developer now wanted was not what the city's ratepayers had voted for, Mayor Beckett pushed for a foreclosure on the mortgage, and in February 1967, the city regained possession of the square. The search for a Market Square developer was on once more. The square was then used for many years as a municipal parking lot.

In April 1972, to facilitate the sale of the square, council passed a new City of Brantford Bill which rescinded the former 1920 statute. The new bill authorized elected municipal representatives to sell or lease the Market Square for commercial development without the consent of the electorate. In October 1972, the Humber Oak Corporation presented a Market Square development proposal that included a department store, supermarket, shops, banks, offices, a restaurant and parking. In July 1973, city council signed an agreement with Humber Oak to lease and develop the square.

In June 1974, Humber Oak presented scaled-down plans

for the Market Square development and announced that there were major financing problems and that Metropolitan Stores would no longer be a major tenant.

The curse

At this point, the situation was given a unique Brantford flavour when a 1908 curse, placed by a medicine woman of the Six Nations Confederacy on any development of the square, was renewed by Clan Mother Alma Greene, who repeatedly warned that any development on the Market Square would be doomed to fail because of the curse placed on the land. Greene claimed to have witnessed the placing of the curse in 1908 and claimed that only she could remove it. She further insisted that the Six Nations tribes neither sold nor surrendered the land on which Brantford was built.

Homestead Projects

By August 1974, only one of the original developers was still involved in the Humber Oak proposal and the company had changed its name to HOF Developments. Extensions were granted to the firm, but the company failed to meet a city-imposed deadline of Nov. 15, 1974, which resulted in foreclosure by the city.

Another development proposal for the Market Square arrived in 1975, but was dropped when financing problems arose. In 1977, two further proposals were received and in November of that year council accepted a \$20 million proposal from a Brantford-based firm, Homestead Projects, whose plans called for the development not only of the square but of the area around it, and included the construction of a parking garage that would necessitate closing Market Street.

It was announced in August 1978 that the Ontario Downtown Revitalization Program had given the project a \$3.2 million loan for the acquisition of land and the provision of support facilities.

The project did not go unopposed. Alma Greene once again renewed the curse on the square. Serious concerns were expressed by Eagle Place residents about the decision to close Market Street to make way for the proposed parking garage. In spite of all the apprehensions and after working through all the objections and legalities, an official agreement between Homestead and the city was signed on June 1, 1979. The development was to be known as the Homestead Centre.

Partnership with Campeau and Eatons

Again, problems arose with the developer, two extensions had to be granted to Homestead and it appeared that the Homestead proposal might suffer the same fate as the two previous attempts to develop the square. On Oct. 30,

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Changes for the market and City Hall

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1979, it was announced that Campeau Corporation, one of Canada's largest real estate firms, was to become a partner in the development of the Market Square.

In order to qualify for the provincial revitalization program loan, the development required a major department store as part of the project. That problem was solved when the T. Eaton Company agreed to be part of the development. By mid-November 1979, Campeau and Homestead were having problems agreeing on the terms of a partnership and the inclusion of Eatons as the department store required major changes in the design and financing of the project, as Eatons was demanding to be a half partner.

On Nov. 24, 1979, Homestead announced that it had a new partner, leaving city council with the choice of either Campeau or Homestead as the developer. Council opted for a Campeau-Eatons combination, a decision which required asking the Ontario Government for twice the money that had been allotted for the project and a further extension in the application for the revitalization loan.

In January 1980, the Ontario Government agreed to a \$6.4 million loan for the Market Square project. The plans included a full-line Eatons department store to be built east of the square, requiring the closure of George Street, a 550-space parking garage, retail space on the former Market Square and a 300-car parking garage at Colborne and Bain streets, with a skywalk to the Eatons store. Neither the parking garage at Colborne and Bain streets nor the skywalk would materialize in the scheme of things.

A series of problems erupted that led to frustration and delay and almost threw the project permanently off track. The government loan was dependent on Campeau and the city reaching an agreement by April 20, 1980. Slowing negotiations was the necessity of acquiring land surrounding the former Market Square. That, in turn, was being delayed by a lack of uniformity among downtown merchants, some of whom opposed the project. Eatons was threatening to pull out of the agreement if it was not allowed build on the section of George Street between Colborne and Dalhousie streets.

The city was required to amend its downtown plan as the original plan had been based on the Homestead Projects proposal and the new agreement was with Campeau-Eatons. Campeau added to the crisis by claiming that because of financing, the uncertain economic climate and the loss of possible tenants, it could not commit itself to

remain in the project if construction was delayed beyond the fall of 1980. In response to these pressures, the city asked for and received an extension from the province on its approval for the loan.

An integral part of the plan collapsed in June 1980 when Campeau announced its failure to attract a large food store as part of the project, a development which required another agreement and approval by the Ontario Municipal Board.

Eatons compounded the emergency in October 1980 by pulling out of the development as a partner, but remaining as a tenant, requiring that the city request yet another extension in relation to the provincial loan.

Brantford Mall complications

A final surprise in 1980 arrived in December when Eatons announced it was considering a complete withdrawal from the project if Brantford Township went ahead with plans to grant a building permit for a Brantford Mall expansion, which was to include a major department store. The City of Brantford convinced the provincial Minister of Housing to place a partial freeze on any enlargement of the mall. Just three days before the area where the Brantford Mall was located was formally annexed by the city, Brantford Township issued the construction permit.

Immediately upon annexing the area, the city approved its own bylaw limiting any development of the Brantford Mall. The mall owner launched a court action to force the city to rescind the bylaw. However, the issue was resolved in February 1982, when the city allowed expansion of the two existing stores in the mall to proceed. The key condition of the agreement was that the mall could not apply for its building permit until July 1, 1983, or until the foundations were installed for the downtown development project.

The city and Campeau reached a tentative agreement in March 1981, but several obstacles remained. The Ontario Municipal Board had to approve a debenture of \$1.8 million for use in the scheme and the construction of the parking garages. The city had to reach settlements with property owners on George Street and request an increase in financial support from the Ministry of Housing.

Source

Muir, Gary W. *Brantford: A City's Century*, Vols. 1 (1895-1945), 1999, and 2 (1945-2000), 2000.

In the Spring issue: The present-day Market Square.

Acknowledgments

The Brant Historical Society gratefully acknowledges support from the County of Brant, the City of Brantford and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

Visit the gift shop for unique Christmas ideas

From Dec. 1 to Dec. 24, the annual BHS Christmas sale is on at both gift shop locations.

Buy 1 BHS book, save 10%

Buy 2 BHS books, save 20%

Buy 3 BHS books, save 30%

Choose from many BHS titles, including

"The Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past," by the Brant Historical Society, \$8.95.

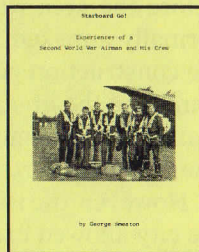
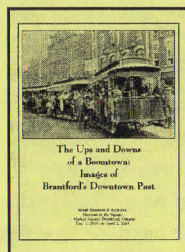
"Potteries and Potters of Brant County," by R. Deboer, \$14.95.

Signposts: Origins of Street Names in Brant County and Brantford, by Brant Historical Society, \$20.

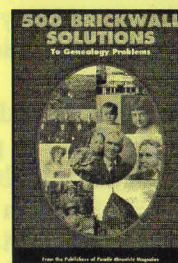
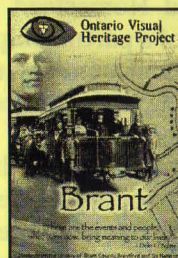
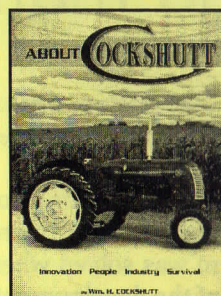
The Way We Were, by the Brant Historical Society, \$16.95.

and our newest publication —

Starboard Go!: Experiences of a Second World War Airman and His Crew, by George Smeaton, \$14.95.



BHS publications



Great gift ideas

• *About Cockshutt*, by William Cockshutt, \$43.95.

• *Dating Old Photographs*, by the publishers of Family Chronicle, \$15.

• *500 Brickwall Solutions to Genealogy Problems*, by the publishers of Family Chronicle, \$30.

• *More Dating Old Photographs*, by the publishers of Family Chronicle, \$20.

• *A Museum Called Canada*, by Charlotte Gray, \$49.95.

• *Ontario Visual Heritage Brant*. Videos \$15, DVDs \$20. Norfolk and Haldimand videos and DVDs are also available.

• *Ruben: Grandpa Jacob's First Christmas Donkey*, by Brantford children's author E.A. LaPalme, \$10.

• *Safe Harbour: Vintage Views of the Port Dover Waterfront*, a calendar, Port Dover Harbour Museum, \$10.00.

Please note the museums will close at one p.m. on Dec. 24, until Jan. 3, 2005.

Wade Hemsworth joins BHS Wall of Honour

Brantford-born singer, composer and guitarist Wade Hemsworth was inducted into the BHS Wall of Honour at the society's monthly meeting on October 20, 2004. Hemsworth is perhaps best known as the composer of "The Blackfly Song" and "The Log Driver's Waltz." Several other members of the Hemsworth family attended the meeting. The society's Wall of Honour was opened to the public at the Brant Museum & Archives in 2001 to honour local people of historical significance.

Brant Historical Society president Calvin Diegel, left, and the late composer's nephew, Wade Hemsworth Jr., right, display a plaque commemorating the artist's life and achievements.



MEMBERSHIPS

Welcome to our new members

Clayton Barker, Lillian Hayter, Betty Johnson, Peggy Lang, Bruce Lewis, Zig Misiak

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EXTEND Communications Inc.
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The Brant Historical Society
57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Endowment Fund: The interest from this fund goes to the operation of the museum.

Acquisition Fund: This fund is used to acquire and conserve artifacts.

Building Fund: This fund will be used for the museum — to renovate the existing building, to buy a new building and to renovate it, or to build a brand new museum.

Operations Fund: This fund is used for the daily operations of the museum, including staffing and programming.

Special Projects Fund: This fund will be used to complete special projects — some current projects include the Settlement Gallery, a new reception desk and repairs to the glass enclosure.

DONATION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Endowment Fund

In Memory of Robert Gillis

Brant Historical Society
Brant Museum & Archives staff

In Memory of Real Perras

Terry and Linda Smith and family

In Memory of Bob VanSickle

Terry and Linda Smith and family

In Memory of William Yarek

Terry and Linda Smith and family

A Brant Historical Society membership offers ...

- free admission to the Brant 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 \$20

Categories and fees

Benefactor	\$500.00+
Patron	\$200.00+
Friend	\$100.00+
Supporter	\$50.00
Family (2)	\$30.00
Individual	\$20.00
Student	\$15.00



Happenings



Brant Museum & Archives

Exhibits at the Museum in the Square

Lest We Forget, a military exhibit in association with the Canadian Military Heritage Museum. Nov. 11, 2004, to Feb. 25, 2005.

Christmas programs

Through December, up until Christmas, the museum will be running day-long programs that compare and contrast the traditions of an early 19th-century Christmas with those of a late 19th-century Christmas.

In sympathy

Robert Gillis — to Glenn and Julie Gillis

Zehrs' tapes

Please continue to save your Zehrs' tapes for the museum! The amounts add up and really do make a difference to our programs.

Call for newsletter articles

If you enjoy researching and writing, we would like to hear from you!

The Brant Museum & Archives publications committee invites submissions of articles or ideas for articles illuminating aspects of the history of Brantford and Brant County for publication in the BHS quarterly newsletter. Articles ideally should be between 500 and 2,000 words in length. Submissions become the property of the Brant Historical Society and may be reserved for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter.

Please contact the publications committee through either museum location for information or to submit an article.



Brant Historical Society

General meeting speakers

Brant Museum & Archives, 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 15, 2004 David Judd will revisit December 1904.

Jan. 19, 2005 Michael O'Byrne of the Heritage Mines Society will explore the history of mining in Brant County.

Feb. 16, 2005 Annual General Meeting

Brantford Film Group

The Brantford Film Group is a fundraiser for the Brant Historical Society. Films are screened on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from October through May at the Cineplex Odeon Brantford Mall Cinemas at 7 p.m. Advance tickets are \$7 and can be purchased at the museum. Box office tickets are \$8 and are purchased at the door. Visit www.brantmuseum.ca for film details.

Dec. 9, 2004	Being Julia (Canada/U.S.)
Jan. 13, 2005	Stage Beauty (U.K./Germany/U.S.)
Jan. 27, 2005	The Motorcycle Diaries (U.S./Germany/U.K./Argentina, subtitled, rated 14A)
Feb. 10, 2005	TBA
Feb. 24, 2005	TBA
March 10, 2005	Vera Drake (U.K./France/New Zealand)
March 24, 2005	TBA
April 7, 2005	TBA
April 21, 2005	TBA
May 12, 2005	TBA