

Winter Newsletter

2016

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November 22

From the President's Desk

Sometimes when you volunteer to help organizations, many people do it for a variety of reasons. These may include wanting to help the less fortunate, keeping busy, having fun and social interaction, or because their children are involved. Whatever the reason, however, most of us wonder if we are achieving something positive and are having an impact. Although I have always believed that time devoted to the Brant Historical Society is directed towards realizing positive goals, it was not until I spent the past several months delivering the Seniors Program that I can truly say that our programs have a positive impact.

While I am certain that those involved in delivering the Education Programs, Walking Tours, Client Research, Members Events, and Exhibitions feel the same way, I can only speak from the experience that I have had in working with the seniors. Each month, the Society delivers between ten and twelve senior programs. The topics are planned a year in advance. Those I have been involved in included the Impact of Food on the Development of Brant and Brantford, Crime and Policing in Brantford, and the Victory Parade of World War I. Preparation usually takes a couple of hours and generally it's a great learning experience. Delivery of each program is about an hour and usually includes photographs and

artifacts from the Brant Museum and Archives. In my experience, the program evolves as the month progresses, largely due to the questions asked by seniors.

Although learning new information is a reward in itself, the real reward comes from the interaction with the seniors. Many remember events related to the topic and in sharing them, bring a new perspective on how we see past events. In some cases, their ancestors were directly involved in events. Some have shared photographs. In one case, one of the people I was talking about was actually in the audience. Fortunately, I didn't get myself into trouble.

Many seniors look forward to the Historical Society's monthly visit. For me, the reward comes at the end of each program when they get an opportunity to ask questions and provide an opinion on the program. They raise some interesting points. Some have asked me for a copy of photographs that included their relatives. This interaction tells me that they have listened and enjoyed our hour together. More importantly, I feel that we have had a positive impact and in some small way made their day a little bit better!

Michael St. Amant
President

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Nathan Etherington
Sarah Thomas
Jason Davis

Operational Report

Since our last update in the Newsletter, the Brant Historical Society has had many events that have had a great impact in the community and aid us in achieving our mandate. When I have compared the attendance and research numbers, our results are comparable to last year.

During the summer, our student Jessica was a great help in scanning scrapbooks loaned to us by the Agricultural Society, which aid us in gleaning information on what was important to farmers. She also organized, catalogued, and made a digital finding aid for a donation of several historical and monarchy-based magazines. All of this collections work is valuable in making the collections that we possess more usable for members of the community.

In mid-September, I was able to attend an Education Programs Course in Strathroy to continue professional development for the staff. Over the three day course, we had numerous activities and guest speakers to give us the full knowledge to take back to our museum. We are required to do an assignment for each of these courses and I find ways of making the course content relate directly to an upcoming event we have at the museum.

On October 1st, we hosted Culture Days and had numerous exciting events with the same attendance as last year, despite dreary and damp weather. This we tried to focus activities based on the theme of local authors. The Grand River Chorus attended and sang a few songs from their June concert focused on the poetry of Pauline Johnson and we hope to continue this partnership in the future. Brian Moore led several people on a Walking Tour focusing on local authors. Mike Hand presented very interesting talk about what made him interested in writing about history.

After Culture Days, we also had a Fall Exhibit to put together. Exhibits require a substantial investment in time, research, meetings, and money to put together. My goal has been to have three exhibits a year – A travelling exhibit for Heritage Week in February, a Museum Month Exhibit, and a

Fall Exhibit. This is the first year in sometime that we have been able to contribute in this way to engage our community. Our new staff member, Jason Davis, was incredibly helpful in making the Map Exhibit come together in a very short time period and Ruth Lefler assisted with reviewing the text panel content.

With this exhibit, I built on the successful implementation for the May exhibit and added an Education Program. I am happy to announce that we have successfully booked museum visits for this program. The added benefit of this program is that it will become a portable education program that teachers will be able to book for an in-classroom experience.

In preparation for a multi-partner exhibit for next year, I met with Tarah Brookfield from Laurier Brantford. We are excited about this opportunity to work with these students who will conduct research on some of our collections. This will aid us in making these collections more relevant to our community.

Finally, I have just returned from the Ontario Museum Association's Annual Conference which was held in Mississauga November 3rd and 4th. The theme for the conference was *Towards the Future: Diversity and Inclusion* and was successful in representing the Brant Historical Society actively in the conference. I present a talk on *Queering History: Including Queer Content in Museums*, which directly relates to our Vision Statement on "making a more inclusive and accepting society". About half of the museum professionals attended with one questioning "Why is this the first time that we are talking about this?"

At our Annual General Meeting the following morning, I was on the slate of candidate nominated to council for a term of two years. I look forward to bringing a voice to concerns that directly affect the Brant Historical Society and other heritage organizations within the coming years.

Nathan Etherington
Program Coordinator

New Staff Member

If you've been to the Brant Museum and Archives recently, you may have seen a new face. New staff member, Jason Davis, has been with the museum since the end of September. A recent transplant to Brantford, Jason comes to us from Kingston, Ontario where he worked at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes.

Originally from Northern Ontario, Jason has lived and worked all over the province. His previous work experience is quite diverse. He's been a forest fire fighter, desktop publisher, touring musician and software tester to name a few. He is now the Communications and Operations coordinator. When he's not at work, you can find him cycling around Brantford on the street or on the trails, working on his vintage motorcycle, playing guitar or tinkering with his computers.



Myrtleville House News

As the weather turns colder, The Myrtleville House Museum welcomes a new year of students through its doors to learn about our local history. This fall we have released a new education programming rack card to distribute to teachers. With a modern design and highlighting our new and best programming, this promotional material has been well received by teachers. Our bookings for the Good Cheer Education program in December are well on their way to being fully booked.

To adjust to the increase in booking, we have put out a call for new volunteers. The Myrtleville House Museum is seeking volunteers to assist with delivering curriculum based education programming. Volunteers will have the opportunity to lead small groups of students, grades Kindergarten through eight, in activities including touring the historic house, baking in the historic kitchen and making crafts and toys. No experience is necessary.

PD Day and March Break programming will continue again this year. In addition to this, the museum has decided

to add a New Year's camp. The holiday break falls late this year with students not returning to class until January 9th. To accommodate the late start, we will be providing our camp from January 2nd to the 6th. This additional programming will provide a helpful option for parents and bonus revenue for the museum.

In addition to children's programming, the Museum also provides for adults. Myrtleville was very pleased to host another Paint-Club session on October 23rd. Instructors Aliko and Kim lead the group through painting a lovely scene of the Grand River at dusk. Participants paid \$50 for a two hour session including a \$15 donation to the museum. Our next session will be in February. Keep an eye out on our website and Facebook page for details.

Sarah Thomas
Education Officer

In search of History

When I go for a walk around Paris, I am aware that history is constantly around me. Having grown up in the community, sometimes I feel like a walking encyclopedia of Paris History pointing out interesting bits and pieces of information. When I find a new area that I haven't explored yet, it is a time for adventure and exploration to see if I can find any remnants of the past, other than post-modern garbage.

Recently, I tried to find a pathway that led to a Riverside Park in Paris, which was a commonplace for cricket matches in the community. One of my random recollections was that it was located on the west bank of the river and north of the railway bridge. My faint memory of a picture that I recall seeing had it on a large flat plain. When talking with local historians, they remember walking under the railway bridge to get there.



I needed a place to follow the river from downtown, across the dam, underneath the train bridge, and find and access to get back to the roadway. I discovered the trail leading from the parking lot behind the businesses north of William street (see map). Not long after I started walking closer to the river, bedrock was suddenly exposed. A small



seam of gypsum was mined here as Paris was originally settled as a mining town.

I continued on my journey up a very steep slope to access the Lawn Bowling Greens and then underneath the train bridge. Just on the north side of the bridge, I noticed the old telegraph lines that were still strung across the river, tightly gripping their insulators for support. These lines would have been used to send messages along the tracks and keep communication open between neighbouring communities.
(con't...)

In search of History (con't)

Finally, I located this shell of a structure with branches arranged overtop acting as a roof. On the east and west sides of this structure were entry and exit pipes. I peered through the doorway, littered with garbage and clutter



a saw a large piece of mechanical equipment. As I looked up the hill, I was half way between the railway bridge and Penmarvian. It was in no doubt in my mind what I had found.

Col. Cox, who has appeared in previous editions of the newsletter, had built a large house for himself on Grand River Street and he was well known around town

for his gardens. In 1903, an article appeared in the Brantford Expositor "He has received many letters congratulating on the exceedingly fine appearance of his lawn. Captain Cox regrets very much to be obliged to do away with the fine bed, but it is impossible to get sufficient water from the town during the hot weather." This shell of a building is Col. Cox's pumphouse and still out-survives his gardens.



Nathan Etherington
Program Coordinator

Our History Matters

Major Joshua Smith Hamilton: 1848-1931



By 1900, Brantford had established itself as the third largest exporter of industrial goods in Canada. Names such as Massey-Harris, Verity Plow and Cockshutt were well known throughout the British Empire, Europe and the United States. Yet, it was not just these large industrial firms that drew attention to Brantford. The firm of J. S. Hamilton and Company was equally well known both domestically and abroad. The company, a manufacturer and wholesaler of wines and liquors, marketed and advertised its products domestically and in-

ternationally and proudly promoted the fact that it was from Brantford. Its owner, Joshua Smith Hamilton was a pioneer in the Canadian wine industry, an entrepreneur of considerable talents, and a citizen who played an important role in the development of Brantford.

Born in Hamilton on October 12, 1848, Joshua Smith was the eldest son of Robert Hamilton and Eliza Dunlop who had immigrated to Hamilton from Ireland. In 1851, Robert moved his family to Echo Place, Brantford, where he established a floral business and a nursery. Joshua attended local grammar schools and in 1865, he moved to New York City where he was employed in a local warehouse. In the

spring of 1867, he returned to Brantford where he worked for Ignatius Cockshutt in his dry goods store. Having saved \$1000, Joshua decided to launch his own wholesale business in 1871, and two years later, he formed a partnership with R. S. Dunlop in which they wholesaled wine and liquor products. Hamilton, Dunlop and Company was located on Colborne Street.

In 1874, Hamilton became associated with Thaddeus Smith of Point au Pelee Island. Smith was an American who had moved to Canada in 1865 to establish a winery on Pelee Island which had a unique microclimate for growing quality grapes. With partners, he purchased forty acres of land and planted 25 acres of grapes. His Vin Villa Vineyards, produced a quality wine, but the company faced difficulty in marketing their product. Hamilton, Dunlop and Company was hired as agent for the newly formed Pelee Island Wine and Vineyard Company with J. S. Hamilton appointed as president and managing director. His efforts to market "Pelee Island" wines did not go unnoticed when the Canadian Postal Service changed the name of Point Au Pelee Island to Pelee Island. Under his direction, a three-storied winery with a 1,000-gallon tank was built on Pelee Island.

In 1877, Dunlop retired from the business, probably due to a difference of opinion on the ambitious expansion plans proposed by Hamilton. The following year, the business was renamed the J. S. Hamilton and Company Limited. Hamilton opened a business branch in Montreal, but closed it within a few years due to the distance and complexity of operating a business so far away. That same year he purchased a large property on 91, 93 and 95 Dalhousie Street from George Watts and Sons. The property was converted into a warehouse and retail operation.

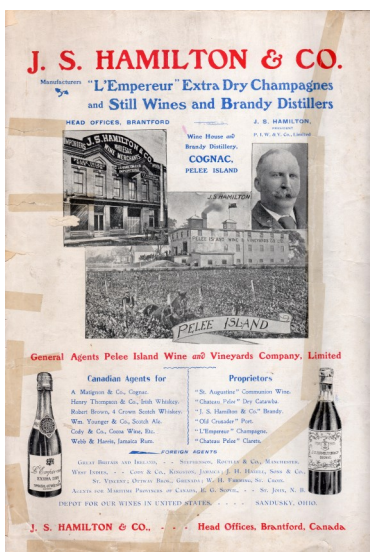
Our History Matters (con't)



Although J. S. Hamilton and Company marketed a variety of imported wines and liquors, their efforts to promote the Pelee Island wines did achieve some success. In 1878, Pelee Island wines won a bronze medal at an Exhibition in Paris. The Princess of Wales tasted Pelee Island wines and made it known that he was pleased with the flavour and quality of the product. The wine also won a Gold Medal at the 1878 Jamaica Exhibition. Under Hamilton's stewardship, St. Augustine Communion Wine became a staple of the ecclesiastical market in Canada, United States and the West Indies. In 1929, the Anglican Bishop of Montreal stated the "I know of no other wine equal to it for sacramental purposes."

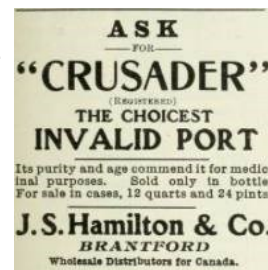
In 1885, a rival company, Turner Wine Company, opened offices in Brantford. Its founder, Robert Turner had developed a popular product, Turner Tonic Bitter, but his efforts to compete with Hamilton were unsuccessful and the

business was moved Toronto in 1890. Hamilton recognized that for a company to be successful, it needed a variety of products. In 1891 the company opened a distillery on Pelee Island that produced a Brandy that was instantly popular. By 1898, a Champagne product, "Empereur" was launched in both Sec and Extra Dry. Although Hamilton moved the Pelee Island Wine and Vineyard Company to Brantford in 1897, he financed the development of several



vineyards located in Essex County throughout the 1890s. At its peak in 1904, there were 1,794 acres of grapes under production in the County and more than half of Canada's 41 wineries were located in the Windsor-Pelee Island Corridor.

In 1913, Hamilton built a large warehouse on 44-46 Dalhousie Street. The property also contained a retail operation from which he sold wines and liquors. He also advertised continued to advertise his products in medical, pharmaceutical and trade publications. While sales appear to have been growing throughout this period, two events would significantly impact Hamilton's business.



On September 16th, 1916, Ontario, under pressure from the Temperance Movement, passed legislation bringing into force prohibition. The Temperance Movement had a strong presence in Brantford and was supported by many civic leaders such as Charles Good and Henry Wade. Temperance was also the subject of many Sunday sermons and was promoted by several women's organization. This had a significant impact on Hamilton's business and he was forced to move his liquor operation to Montreal and St. John, New Brunswick until these provinces also passed legislation. The Ontario operation was limited exclusively to its Canadian wine business which was licensed by the Board of License Commissioners. This license exempted wineries using Ontario grapes from the legislation though sales were limited to one dozen quarts or five-gallon kegs. Although Prohibition may have aided the development of the wine industry, it clearly forced Hamilton to rethink his business model. He now was forced to rely on his best-known brand, St. Augustine's Communion wine that was sold in Canada, Great Britain, the United States, the West Indies, and Newfoundland. In Quebec and Ontario, wine could also be sold to druggists, physicians and householders for personal use. In other provinces, it could only be purchased through government stores. When war was declared in 1917, there was a strong movement to discourage the sale of wine for fear that it might impact men enlisting in the armed forces.

While temperance hurt Hamilton's business, his business was further impacted by a problem with the grapes that were the source of his wine. A disease had ravaged the vineyards on Pelee Island and also affected several vineyards in Essex County. The sourcing of grapes may have had a significant impact on production. It appears that Hamilton took steps to consolidate his business. In 1919, he merged the Pelee Island Wine and Vineyard Company with J. S. Hamilton and Company. In the early 1920's, he moved to a residence in the city and sold his estate. He also brought his nephew, Theobald Hamilton, into the business to assist him. When the Ontario Temperance Act was repealed in 1927, the Ontario Government introduced the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and restricted the sale of wines and liquors to government outlets. Wine producers with licenses continued to be exempt and were allowed retail operations on their manufacturing site. By this time, however, Hamilton's health had begun to deteriorate and the business operated on a much more modest scale than in previous decades. It did survive Hamil-

Our History Matters (con't)

ton's death and was eventually sold to the London Wine Company in 1949.

Hamilton's presence in Brantford extended beyond his business activities. He was elected to Brantford's first City Council in 1878. He served as director and superintendent of the Southern Fair and as a member of the Lorne Bridge Committee that was responsible for rebuilding the bridge after the original iron bridge had been swept away. In 1880, he was a member of the Brantford School Board, a position that he held until 1888. In 1882, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Commercial Traveler's Association of Canada, a position he held until his resignation in 1926. In 1886, he joined Company F of the Dufferin Rifles with the rank of Captain. Two years later, he was appointed paymaster of the Regiment and served in this capacity until he retired with the rank of major in 1912. In 1900 and 1901, he served as President of the Board of Trade and played a leading role in successfully convincing the Grand Trunk Railway to divert its mainline through Brantford. This had an important economic impact on the City as it provided increased opportunities to move industrial goods through the East-West corridor.



Hamilton maintained an active social life in Brantford. In 1871 he married Mary Stewart Foster and the couple had two daughters. Mary died on January 14, 1927 and the following year he married Ann Motherwell Hossie. From his home at "Langley Park" on the outskirts of Brantford, he hosted many social events and provided hospitality to many dignitaries visiting the City. When travelling, he made an effort to contact former Brantford residents and reported on their condition upon his return to the City. He maintained an active correspondence with the Dowager Marquess of Dufferin who had visited Brantford with her husband, the Earl of Dufferin, when he was Governor-General. Through his efforts, Ava Road was named after her eldest son. Throughout his adult life, Hamilton was an active Mason. He was a life member of the Brant Lodge A.F. and A.M. and a fifty-year member of the Mount Horeb Chapter, Royal Arch Masons. In 1898, he was made a life member of this chapter. He attended Grace Anglican Church where he held the post of Warden several times.

Hamilton died on March 7th, 1931 at his home. The Expositor summarized his contribution to Brantford when it wrote that Hamilton "was a man of many parts. A staunch Britisher, although Canadian born, he was a citizen who had given largely of his abilities to the development of this city, and while in recent years he had been handicapped by blindness and his health had gradually given way, he retained his courage to the last..."

Michael St. Amant
President

Special Event

You are invited to our John A. Macdonald Dinner.

Join the Brant Historical Society to begin celebrating Canada's Sesquicentennial at a John A. Macdonald Dinner on Wednesday, January 11th, 2017 at The Brantford Club, at 98 George St.

The evening begins with a reception at 6pm and dinner at 7pm. The dinner will be based upon several menu items drawn from the book "Sir John's Table" by Lindy Mechefske. The program will include our town crier and several historical re-enacted speeches throughout the evening.

Member ticket price: \$75 - Non member price \$90—\$20 charitable receipt will be issued. Period dress is encouraged.

For tickets, visit The Brant Museum and Archives at 57 Charlotte Street or call (519) 752 - 2483.



Special Contributor

The Brant County War of 1812 War Loss Claims Index

Compiled by Fred Blair
Copyright November 7, 2016

An Introduction to the Brant County War of 1812 War Loss Claims Index

During the War of 1812 a number of people in Brant County suffered losses to people representing either the British or American forces. In 1813 and after the war, residents were allowed to present claims to the British for war related losses. For a number of reasons, the British and their allies were dependant on local supplies but were often unable to pay for what they purchased, rented, impressed, destroyed, or stole from local settlers. Common losses included buildings, bridges, boats, wagons, livestock, crops, food, trees, building materials, tools, household furnishings, clothing, books, and rental payments. This index is a portion of my index for the Upper Canadian war loss claims collection.

Most of the Brant County losses to Americans occurred early in the month of November, 1814 when Brigadier General Duncan McArthur conducted a raid through the British settlements north of Lake Erie, east from Detroit to Brant's Ford, south to Port Dover, and then back west to Sandwich. He weakened the British presence in the area by destroying mills and supplies.

Having easier access to these documents will allow historians to make comparative studies of the war losses and gain insights into life in the county at that time. For family historians and biographers, the indexes will provide insights into the connections within families and between neighbours and may reveal interesting details about the life of ancestors and other people living in those communities. The claims can also be used as a partial census of who was living in the county at the time.

This index is for two communities that had been settled in Brant County at the time of the War of 1812. The first section includes claims made by residents of Burford Township and the second, those from the Grand River Tract. Claimants reported their place of residence during and after the war. The claims were usually made in 1813, 1815-1816, and/or 1823 and later. Some people changed their place of

residence between 1812 and the 1820s and may have made their claims from two or more different communities. Some claims were probably made from areas outside Brant County for losses in the county but those claims would not be found in this index.

Different claims commissions looked at losses to the British, their allied Natives, the Americans, and their allied Natives. A claimant may therefore have made two or more individual claims. These may have been bundled together in the collection or have been filed separately. There was also a collection for papers which were not filed with the claims. This was one of the reasons that a reliable index was needed.

Claimants were supposed to answer who, what, where, when, why, and how, in their claims. Many claimants however omitted some of these details. As many claims were also made over ten years after the event, the original claimant was sometimes unable to resubmit their claims. Agents, widows, and heirs submitted claims on the behalf of the infirm or deceased. Appraisers, like carpenters and merchants, assessed the value of the losses.

Funds were not available in 1815 to pay the claims and they had to be resubmitted again in 1823. Most claims were not paid in full even then. A number were rejected for lack of proof or because they were thought to be fraudulent.

The indexes to the Burford Township and Grand River Tract claims were compiled alphabetically using the name of the claimant first and the names of some of the principal witnesses to the event below the claimant's name, their places of residence (when recorded), the number of the microfilm, the number of the first page of the claim on the microfilm, the date of the events (when recorded), and whether the loss was due to the actions of the allies or the enemy.

The claims may be viewed on the Collections Canada website at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-110.02-e.php?&q2=33&interval=50&sk=0&&PHPSESSID=nf5gb8qjdi09u45qfhi78sl726>

Fred Blair

Fred Blair has been researching life in Upper Canada for several years while trying to learn more about his family history. He has transcribed a number of documents and indexed document collections related to the War of 1812. As well as writing for his own website at <http://warof1812cdnstories.blogspot.ca/>, he has written articles for newsletters and magazines and assisted family historians, authors, archives, and historical societies with their research. He has also given one-on-one consultations at heritage events.

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We're on the Web!
Brantmuseum.ca

Donations

We are always accepting donations for the museum. Not every donation needs to be financial. We also accept office and museum supplies. If you have something you would like to donate, please contact us to make arrangements for your donation.



**BRANT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Your History Matters

From the Collection

Stories that we tell in museums tend to represent the dominant narrative of the day. Large portions of our collection support the Victorian era before the first wave of feminism and tell the male story, while women are largely left out in the cold.

To that end, I went searching through the archives for collections related to Women's Institutes and other societal groups made up of women. It was absolutely shocking to pull box after box of collections that have sat on shelves for years more or less stagnant. On top of the Tweeds-muir History Binders in the Library, I discovered six different Women's Institute Collections that we possess: Mount Pleasant, Oakhill, Grandview/Terrace Hill, Cainsville, Langford, and Onondaga.

Some of these collections of minute books are complete, other seemingly pick up in the middle of the story, but the largest spans from 1906-1997 when the Cainsville Chapter closed. Then began the struggle of how to transform this valuable information into a resource where it would be more accessible to the public and which information is valuable.

Originally, I was trying to take hand written notes to make a finding aid, but this became cumbersome and took about an hour to do a single month. Jason has been valuable in bouncing ideas off and suggested I try and do it digitally, which I was apprehensive at doing first, but was willing to give it a try. Jason posed the question of what information I was hoping to get out of this research and it instantly came to me.

I want to know what was happening through time with the Women's Institutes. Were they all focusing on the same issues and concerns? Did one chapter take the lead on an important issue? Are there connections between the institute chapters that are referenced in both sets of minute books?

At first, it was also complex in arranging the information and was taking just as long as writing it out by hand. Now, I can complete a month in around 10 minutes, assuming I don't get interrupted. In about the course of a week, I can accomplish one minute book or roughly 5 years of information. So far, I have completed 7 years and have over 600 entries. I will be working on these minute books over the next couple months to see what secrets they hold about our herstories.

Nathan Etherington
Program Coordinator

Upcoming Events

December 2016

Maps: The Evolution of Brant County— Extended until Dec. 22nd
Brant Museum and Archives—Monday to Friday 10 AM—4 PM
Christmas at Myrtleville—December 14th @ 7 PM

January 2017

New Year's Break Camp—Jan. 2th-6th—All things new —Myrtleville
John A. MacDonald Dinner – Wed., Jan. 11th – The Brantford Club (98 George Street)
PD Day Camp—Jan. 23rd—Knights & Dragons—Myrtleville

February 2017

Paint Club – February 12th – Winter's Lake – Myrtleville
Family Day—February 20th— My Canada —Myrtleville
Heritage Week Travelling Exhibit—February 20th-24th—Various Locations

March 2017

March Break Camps – March 13th-17th – Crafty Kids—Myrtleville
Annual General Meeting—Wednesday, March 27th—Brant Museum & Archives @ 7PM

April 2017

Easter Egg Hunt—Saturday, April 15th—10:30 AM—Noon—Myrtleville
PD Camp – April 28th – Dino Dig— Myrtleville