

ISSUE
3

January
2016

A VERY HAPPY & PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR 2016
TO YOU & YOURS!
From all of us at BHS

NOTE FROM THE BOARD

As the Brant Historical Society moves forward, the Board of Directors has been working on a three-year strategic plan. One of the key components of the plan relates to the development of educational and exhibition opportunities focused on the multicultural communities that have contributed to the history of Brantford and the County of Brant.

Our local history has been impacted by the arrival of many new cultural groups that bring with them traditions and a heritage that forms part of our community's multicultural composition. Unfortunately, only a small part of this rich and dynamic background forms part of the history we talk about. Part of the problem in exposing the ongoing contribution of these communities is that there are limited venues that present their history to the public. While the International Villages and limited displays at local churches and mosques do provide some exposure, it is limited.

The Board believes that the Brant Historical Society can play a greater role in working with each of these communities. During

the course of the next year, we will be reaching out to the multicultural community. Our objective is to create educational programs that can be used at both the primary and secondary schools outlining the history and impact of immigration on the growth of Brantford and the County of Brant. The second objective is to invite these communities to participate in ongoing exhibits that reflect their past and mark their contribution to the development of our community.

Recognizing the diversity of our community is in itself an important goal. At the same time, by recognizing the role of the cultures that have contributed to our history throughout various periods, we have the opportunity to enhance our understanding our past and hopefully create opportunities to make the Brant Museum and Archives relevant to a broader market within our community.

Michael St. Amant
President

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OPERATIONAL REPORT

Over the past couple of months, we have wrapped up a very successful year that saw many firsts for the organization. This past year we created effective marketing tools for our annual Walking Tour Series that wouldn't be possible without the assistance from one of our dedicated volunteers, Brian Moore. In 2014 our Walking Tour Series had an attendance of 87 people and revenue generated was \$100, while in 2015 we had 168 Visitors and revenue generated was \$500. For 2016 Brian has put together a list of Walks that we anticipate to be equally successful.

Our Seniors Program has also seen considerable growth over the last year. We delivered 13 additional programs in 2015 over our 103 programs in 2014. We initiated a \$5 increase in the cost of the programs to make them a bigger contributor to the Historical Society. As a result, we were able to increase our revenue by 35%. We have advanced bookings for this year which will help maintain that 35% increase. Some of our more popular programs this year were Hats and Seasonal Celebrations: Victorian Christmas Traditions.

We have continued to receive artifact donations to the Historical Society; several large donations have come in over the past year which has added more value to our existing collection. We have added over 400 items to the collection in the last year which include both archival and artifacts materials. We are working towards adding new items from the Brantford General Hospital and the Brantford Police Service to our collection.

December also was a busy time of year for our Gift Shop with season's presents. We launched a Social Media campaign, which reached over 5,000 people in Brantford, highlighting many new and popular items in the gift shop. As a result, we had double the revenue generated in the gift shop over December 2015.

Over the past month, a staff member attended exhibit planning and design course in Orillia as part of Staff PD. This has resulted in a number of new ideas for exhibits and will allow us to meet the requirements for our Operating Grant due in June. December also saw us work on grants such as Operating Grant from the City of Brantford and Summer Student positions.

Thank you for all your support in the past year, and we trust it will continue into this New Year and into the future. We look forward to an exciting and busy new year 2016 and trusting to seeing each one of you alongside. We have an array of exciting events planned for this year. We encourage you to continue spreading the word about BHS happenings, and invite your family and friends to these events as a way of promoting the museum and increasing our membership.

*To learn more about programs and volunteering opportunities at Brant Historical Society, please contact **Nathan Etherington** at 519-752-2483 or nathan.etherington@brantmuseums.ca*



OUR HISTORY MATTERS

Major Gordon James Smith

Second President of the Brant Historical Society



MAJOR GORDON J. SMITH, INDIAN SUPERINTENDENT
BRANTFORD

Major Gordon James Smith was the second President of the Brant Historical Society. Unlike his predecessor, Judge A. D. Hardy who lent his name to causes in the broadest sense, Smith was more focused on details and administration. A lawyer by training and a patriot by inclination, he brought his talent for administration to his role as Superintendent of Indians for the Six Nations of the Grand River and as an officer in the First

he was a member of the Paris Tennis Club and participated in several social organizations. Smith also became active in the local militia, spending two years with the Brant 2nd Dragoons and seven years with the 25th Brant Dragoons rising to the rank of Major. On September 7th, 1895, he married Alice Matilda Morson of Hamilton. The couple rented a house at 10 Banfield Street, Paris. On March 16th, 1897, Alice gave birth to their only son, Hugh Morson Smith.

In 1906, Smith was appointed Superintendent of Indians for the Six Nations Reserve at a salary of \$2,000 per year. He and his wife moved to Brantford where they rented 155 Chatham Street. He sold his law practice to J. R. Layton who carried on business to 1918.

As Superintendent of Indians, Smith's reports were filled with details of life on the Reserve. He seems to have had a particular focus on agricultural development and encouraged interaction between Six Nations and local farming organizations. He was also responsible for obtaining financial assistance to support several innovative businesses. His approach was certainly paternalistic and was occasionally delivered with a firm hand. For example, when the First Nations engaged a lawyer to address financial issues related to the Grand River Navigation Company in 1907, Smith was directed to stall this attempt until Section 141 of the Indian Act was amended making it illegal for Indians to hire a lawyer and preventing anyone from creating a fund to pursue claims. This law was not repealed until 1951. In other instances, he organized a medical response to deal with an outbreak of cholera on the Reserve.

In 1910, Smith was elected President of the Brant Historical Society and led a delegation to the Ontario Historical Society Annual General Meeting. There, the Society members, including Smith, presented several papers. The Ontario Historical Society published Smith's paper *Capt. Joseph Brant's Status as a Chief and Some of his Descendants* in 1912. During the two years he was President, Smith published several papers including *Whiteman's Creek* and *Land Tenure in Brant County*.

World War. His influence over the Historical Society was significant, and in 1920 he produced a Manual to guide the organization in its development.

Smith was the eldest son of Alexander Smith and Elizabeth Roger Hall of Peterborough. Alexander had emigrated from Scotland in 1833. He was sent to Peterborough as an Agent for the Toronto Dominion Bank around 1850 but soon established himself as a successful lumber merchant. Elizabeth was the daughter of a successful local tanner. They married on January 7th, 1864 and Gordon was born on January 3rd, 1865. He was one of eight children. Alexander died of a stroke in 1877.

Fortunately, Alexander left the family well positioned financially. Several of the children attended university including Gordon who graduated from Queen's University in 1886. Upon graduation, he pursued a legal career, articling with the firm Thompson, Henderson & Bell of Toronto. Called to the Bar in 1890, he set up a practice at 476 Spadina Avenue in Toronto. In that year, his mother passed away and he moved in with his siblings in Toronto. By the end of 1891, he left Toronto and established a law practice in Paris, Ontario.

Smith appears to have been quite active in Paris. He maintained several offices in the downtown core. In 1891

Continued.....

Our History Matters - "Major Gordon James Smith – Second President of the Brant Historical Society" Continues.....

In 1914, when Canada joined the war, Smith encouraged First Nation members to enlist in the war effort. On November 4, 1914, he and several officers from the 37th Haldimand Rifles addressed the Council of Six Nations on the idea of forming a company, 100 strong, officered and composed entirely of native Indians into active service with Second Canadian contingent. By 1915, the Brantford Reserve had sent 292 soldiers to the front. Of these twenty-nine had been killed in action and fifty-five were wounded. The majority of these had enlisted 114th Battalion. Two entire companies were formed and the officers were from First Nations. He also encouraged the formation of a branch on the Women's Patriotic League to support the war effort on the home front. Numerous care packages were sent overseas as a result of the efforts of this group.

Although he continued to perform his duties as Superintendent of Indians throughout the war, in January 1916 Smith was called into service when the Canadian Mounted Rifles created a Depot Regiment with headquarters in Hamilton under Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Brooks. Brooks had served in the 25th Dragoons militia along with Smith and no doubt recognized his organizational capabilities. Initially appointed as a Squadron Commander, Smith was soon appointed second-in-command. Under Brooks and Smith, the Regiment recruited, trained and sent 1500 junior officers and men overseas. While Brooks went overseas with the Regiment, only to be sent back to Canada, Smith was not granted permission to go overseas from the Department of Indian Affairs. As a result, he resumed his responsibilities as Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Throughout the war, Smith had remained in contact with officers overseas and was able to report on the status of many local residents as a result. One such example was a letter dated July 31, 1915 from Lieutenant Hilton Wilkes of the Royal Canadian Dragoons who reported that despite constant bombardment, no casualties had occurred. In another letter dated July 24, 1918, regarding his son, Lieutenant Hugh Morson, who went overseas with the 125th Battalion, Smith reported that he was recovering well from an undisclosed illness Royal Free Hospital in London. He and his wife, Alice, also supported the local war effort. In December of 1914, he served on a committee responsible for bring Christmas to the children of men serving abroad, Alice participated in the efforts of the Independent Order Daughters of the Empire and Women's Patriotic League.

In the period following the Great War, Smith concentrated on his role as Superintendent of Indians. His primary focus centered once again on the development of agriculture and industry on the Reserve. Agriculture improved during his administration. The number of acres under production, growth in herds and crop yields, and an increase in farm implements being utilized reflect these improvements. Notwithstanding the improvements in agriculture, other areas were a cause of concern. Fredrick Ogilvie Loft, a successful businessman and from the Six Nations Reserve, and the League of Indians were actively criticizing the control that the Department of Indian Affairs exercised over the Reserves. In response, Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indians, devised a plan to enfranchise Indians that were deemed well-educated or successful businessmen. By removing their Indian status, he believed their effectiveness would erode. He instructed Smith to inform Loft that he would be enfranchised, a position that Loft ardently opposed. Although Smith delayed sending the letter to Loft, it was ultimately sent several months later. Though the issue of enfranchisement would drag on, Loft was successful in keeping his Indian status.

Despite issues raised nationally by the League of Indians, the Six Nations Reserve was not without grievances that became clear in Colonel Andrew T. Thompson's *Report on the Affairs of the Six Nation Indian (1923)*. Though not all related directly to Smith, the Grand River Navigation Company issue had not disappeared. There were also all egations made against the local Council of Chiefs, whom Smith supported, that they were usurping powers. Concerns related to the Mohawk Institute, the state of local roads, Sunday Lacrosse games and unwed mothers were also discussed as grievances. Although this report was published a few months after Smith's death on May 25, 1923 and did not directly reflect on him, the issues raised were certainly prevalent during his tenure as Superintendent of Indians.

Sometime in 1921 Smith had learnt that his heart was failing. He and his wife moved to 160 Dufferin Street where he died of a heart attack. His eulogy was read by Dr. G. A. Woodside of Zion Presbyterian Church who referred to Smith as having had an "upright life, unflinching courtesy, and splendid and unvarying characteristics as a citizen and head of home." He was given a military funeral and his coffin was marched through the streets to the train depot from where his body was shipped to Peterborough to be interned with his family. His wife Alice remained in Brantford and purchased their former home on Chatham Street.

***Michael St. Amant,
President***

Volunteering With The Brant Historical Society



Volunteers are the foundation of any successful art, culture, and heritage organization. Volunteers provide time, expertise, and passion for a cause. The number of active volunteers and their commitment to an organization is directly proportional to its success. This has a bearing on the breadth and variety of programmes and events that can be provided. An organization that is able to engage its community is an organization that is relevant to its community.

For continuity, organizations require a cadre of paid staff to support the day-to-day operating and administrative needs. Volunteers supplement the work of the paid staff in highly targeted ways. It is important for an organization to understand its needs and seek the necessary skills from volunteers in the community. To be successful an organization must ensure the needs of the volunteer are met, i.e. ensuring the skills and interests of the volunteer are understood and directed to meeting the needs of the organization, avoiding the temptation of asking volunteers to perform functions contrary to their interests and expertise.

Society members and current volunteers are a valuable resource for recruitment as they are already committed to the Society. A poster and brochure have been designed in to support the volunteer recruitment efforts of the Society. Posters and brochures are available at the museum for distribution by any member interested in assisting in this endeavor.

The Society's needs change and evolve. An events

committee was convened last fall to assist in developing and delivering events for the Society. An Exhibits Planning committee is in the formative stages. Unfulfilled needs of the Society include:

- Curatorial assistants to catalogue and care for the Society's artifacts
- Docents to conduct tours and walks
- Education assistants to support the delivery of education programmes and activities
- Library volunteers to manage and maintain the resource library
- Research volunteers to help with research requests and to help with the interpretation of written materials and artifacts making the Society's collection accessible to the community. This is envisioned to pique the community's interest in local history leading to more in-depth and detailed research
- Fundraising volunteers for those with an infinity to raising funds for specific events, programmes, research, or operations
- Book store volunteers to manage and merchandise the book store / gift shop

Those interested in volunteer opportunities at the Brant Historical Society can contact the Society at 519.752.2482 or volunteering@brantmuseums.ca indicating their area of interest and skills.

Jack Jackowetz
Board of Directors

FROM OUR COLLECTION "Brant-Ola"

Brantford has always had a bustling arts scene producing music at performances through many of the city's theatres and opera houses. However, people also wanted to enjoy entertainment in the comfort of their own home. In true Brantford nature, innovative ideas manifested in the creation of the Brantford Piano Case Company and spurred a brief industry in Brantford. As the name suggests, they built piano cases, but also gramophones and its well known Brant-Ola.

An ad for their Brant-Ola was published in the Brantford Courier on Saturday, November 25th, 1916 announcing their new product with 3 gramophone styles. Of these three styles, we have two in the collection at the museum.

Style C, was the "economic" model at only \$65 or \$1,200 in today's money equivalent. This smaller version was meant to sit on top of a table. This Brant-Ola is located in the Programming Room. Style A was the more expensive version; it was a piece of furniture complete with a cabinet to store all your records. This version sold for \$120 or \$2,200 in 2015 dollars. This Brant-Ola is in the Library Room.

As stated in the article in the Courier, The Brantford Piano Case Company was located on the south side of Alice Street, just east of Clarence and appears on the Fire Insurance maps produced in June of 1915 and was behind Buck Stove Works. The building was a two-storey brick structure 50 feet by 250 feet equipped with the most modern equipment. This new product took off so quickly that the company was barely able to keep up with demand, even in the middle of World War I.

The company was started with investments from local companies. The plant was owned by Mr. H. S Phelps who was president with W. D. Schultz as Vice-President, Joseph Ruddy (who owned Ruddy Manufacturing Company Limited) and James Adams as directors, and Gilbert Brereton as secretary-treasurer. The company quickly ran into trouble after the war and had closed by 1924.

Nathan Etherington
Program Coordinator

FROM OUR COLLECTION



MYRTLEVILLE HOUSE NEWS

In December Myrtleville was thrilled to host another run of the “Good Cheer Education Program”. This program is a very special Christmas visit for students and teachers. Myrtleville was proud to have 23 field trips between the November 30th and December 18th. Students enjoyed baking gingerbread cookies in the historic kitchen, touring the decorated house, making wooden toys and Christmas cards to take home. The Christmas program would not be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers. We thank you very much for your contribution.

This winter Myrtleville looks forward to hosting several events that members are welcome to participate in.

Due to popular demand following the Lawren Harris Paint Club, Myrtleville will be hosting two additional Paint-Club fundraisers. The first is being hosted on Sunday January 31st. We will be painting a beautiful image of Mohawk Chapel in moonlight. The second Paint-Club event is scheduled for April 10th and will be painting an image of Myrtleville House in a spring field. For more information and to register, please visit our new web-based store at www.brantmuseums.ca.

The Myrtleville House Museum will be open on Family Day (February 15) 1- 4pm. Tours of the historic household and a blacksmith demonstration will be available for visitors. Historic crafts and scavenger hunt will make a fun

afternoon for families. Admission to this event is by donation.

The Myrtleville Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be hosted Saturday, March 26th at 10:30 AM. Crafts, games, and face painting will be available for families to enjoy before and after the hunt. Tours of the house will be provided at 11 am and at 12pm. Don't forget to bring your baskets! Admission is by donation.

Myrtleville is happy to continue its PD Day and March Break camp this school year. The Catholic and Public schoolboards have announced a new PD Day on Friday February 26th. The museum will host an additional camp on this day to provide students with a fun filled day of crafts and games. March break camp runs March 14th – 18th this year with a theme of Around the World. Crafts and games from different countries will amuse campers ages 4 to 11. There is still room to register; we invite you to contact Sarah Thomas the education officer for more information.

The Myrtleville House Museum is always in need of new volunteers for our PD day camps and education programming. If you, or someone you know would like to know more about camps, special events, education programming or volunteering at the Myrtleville House Museum please contact Sarah Thomas at 519-752-3216 or sarah.thomas@brantmuseums.ca.

BHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
EVENTS			
Mon, Feb. 15 th , 2016	Family Day Event Baking, tours, scavenger hunt with prizes, forge demonstrations, and crafts	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	1:00pm-4:00pm
Feb. 15 th – 19 th , 2016	Heritage Week Pop-up Exhibit		
	Mon, Feb 15 th	Myrtleville House Museum	10:00am-4:00pm
	Tue, Feb 16 th	Brantford Visitors & Tourism Centre	9:00am-5:00pm
	Wed, Feb 17 th	Brantford Public Library	9:00am-8:00pm
	Thu, Feb 18 th	Sanderson Centre	7:00pm-10:00pm
	Fri, Feb 19 th	Brantford City Hall	8:30am-4:30pm
Sat, Mar. 26 th , 2016	Myrtleville House Annual Easter Egg Hunt Crafts, face painting, prizes	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	Ribbon cutting at 10:00 am
Wed, Mar. 30 th , 2016	Members' Event Annual General Meeting	Brant Museum and Archives, 57 Charlotte St.	7:00pm
Sun, Apr. 10 th , 2016	Paint Club "Myrtleville In Spring"	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	1:00pm
CAMPS			
Fri, Feb. 26 th , 2016	PD Day Camp Theme: Space Explorers	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	Drop off in between 8-9am. Pick up between 4-5pm (\$10 for extended child care to 5:30pm)
Mar. 14 th -18 th , 2016	March Break Camp Theme: Around the World	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	Drop off in between 8-9am. Pick up between 4-5PM (\$10 for extended child care to 5:30)
Fri, Apr. 22 nd , 2016	PD Day Camp Theme: Spring on the Farm	Myrtleville House Museum 34 Myrtleville Drive	Drop off in between 8-9am. Pick up between 4-5pm (\$10 for extended child care to 5:30pm)
WALKING TOURS			
Sat, Apr. 30 th , 2016	Earliest History at the Fording Place Walk Join us for our first Walking Tour of the season!	Begins at Brant's Ford Park	10:30am

For more information on upcoming events, please contact
Nathan Etherington at 519-752-2483 or nathan.etherington@brantmuseums.ca