

From the President's Desk

If you have been near the museum this past few months, it would be hard to tell there was much going on beyond the CLOSED sign on the door and the dearth of cars in the parking lot. However, appearances belie the truth that the museum has been a beehive of activity with staff, students, temporary workers and volunteers all beavering away to complete the task that the board has set for them.

In short, we are pulling out every single artifact that the museum owns, examining it, documenting and cataloging it, and then tucking it away safely to await final disposition.

We have installed some new computer systems to replace the aged systems that were only one blip away from failure, particularly our main server with all of our collection data on it. We moved the data to a new system and we have been updating and confirming the information there so we can have excellent and complete records of our collection. We have even managed to find some artifacts that we had no idea we had as they had been buried in storage and hidden from sight for many years.

The end result of this activity is that we are going to know a lot more about the collection that we have and we will also have the gallery space to display this material. In fact, we expect to have **FOUR** new galleries open to the public and new exhibits when we reopen.

As you can imagine, this activity has come at the expense of a great deal of work. Rooms that have not been accessible for many years have been cleaned out and are being pre-

pared to hold new exhibits. As a result of examining every artifact, we have learned a lot more than we ever knew about our collection.

I can tell you that the museum is not a neat and organized place right now as the main floor has material scattered everywhere. Some of it is awaiting disposal, some is being sent to other cultural institutions, and much is awaiting evaluation for eventual disposition.

What was the office is now a staging area holding many boxes that are to be examined, cleaned, and cataloged. The "metal" room is now empty and we are doing some cleanup work and repair on the chimney in the room. The 'large artifact room' has mostly been emptied and much of the material there has been examined and cataloged.

What was the gift shop is a scene of chaos filled with material awaiting disposal and disposition.

Does anyone have use for a suit of armour? In the large exhibit gallery we have set up two assembly lines to go through everything in the museum. Objects are brought to the staging area from storage or from old galleries and then it is brought into the main gallery to be cleaned, examined, and catalogued. Some of this material is then put in temporary storage, some is disposed of, and some is offered to other museums or cultural organizations.

The following few pages will show you some of the work that has been going on over the past few months.

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Jason Davis
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Sarah Thomas

President's Report

The following few pages will give you some idea of what has been happening at the museum for the past few months. It will give you a sense of the scale of the task we have taken on and why we had to close the museum to accomplish our task.



The 'Infamous Metal Room'

This room is located directly over the room that was used as the office. As you can see from this shot, the room was filled with tonnes of metal artifacts that were putting strain on the building and were probably responsible for cracks appearing in the ceiling of the room below. The room was emptied and the artifacts have been inventoried, cleaned and put into storage in the basement of the building. We will be going over each item to determine its function and provenance and removing any items that do not fit our collection.

The New Gallery!

With the relocation of the metal artifacts into the basement, we suddenly have a new gallery available for the display of many artifacts that have not seen the light of day for decades.

It was interesting discovering the fine room that was exposed when the storage racks were removed.

The fireplace is in quite bad disrepair and will require some work, but in the meantime, we are going to remove the debris from the firebox and replace the fine metal cover that was with the fireplace. As well, there will be some repairs needed to the plaster and wallpaper in the months to come as funds become available.



President's Report (con't)

Gift Shop Chaos

Even the gift shop has not been spared the chaos of this process. Many items have been placed here prior to being disposed of. Not everything in this photo is heading for disposal, but it is a convenient area to store material while a determination of final disposal is made.

There are many items that are no longer needed such as the large desk in the corner. We are looking for a good home for it before it goes to the dumpster.

We are still considering what to do with this space. Formerly, it was a small gallery, but we are considering using the space for a small tearoom. That determination will be made at the end of the current process.



Storage Wars!

The biggest problem the museum has is too much stuff and too little storage. We are cramming artifacts into any available space. In this picture, staff are reorganizing the former 'ceramics' room to better utilize the space. Not only will it still contain all the ceramics that we have in storage, but we hope to put other items in this room as well.

With the opening of 4 new galleries, we hope to have many artifacts on display to the public that have not seen the light of day for generations.

Inevitably, this means that there is a lot of material that will have to go. Staff are examining every artifact in the building with an eye to determine whether or not it fits with our mission and if it has a known provenance. The end result will be a better, more focused collection that will better tell the stories of our community.

President's Report (con't)



The Main Galleries

Brant Square
Created as a Centennial Project in 1967, Brant Square and Brant's Corners have remained largely the same for the past 50 years. The basic concept is a very good one, however, it has suffered because of little or no interpretation. Thanks to a grant from the city, we are going to purchase new video display terminals that can be used to interpret these wonderful displays so that future generations may continue to understand our community. Right now, of course, it is used for temporary storage as we clean and inventory the entire collection. We are seriously looking at doing something with the floor as funds become available as the entire space is dated.

Brant Corners

The other section of the main gallery has not been spared. Right now, it is being used to store part of our textile collection during the photography and inventory phase of our project. Like the Brant Square exhibit, this gallery has stayed the same for many years and is in desperate need for the same kind of work that Brant Square needs. Here we plan to use video display terminals to provide signage and interpretation for the exhibits. Everything could use a good cleaning as well.



President's Report (con't)

Large Object Room

These two photographs illustrate the problem that we are faced with. The top photo shows the Large Object room before we started this project. As you can see, it is crammed with 'stuff' and



is completely unusable as a gallery. Even after the room has been cleaned out and the artifacts cataloged and cleaned, we still need to use it temporarily as a storage room while we work on other rooms. The difference now, of course, is that we



now know what is contained in the room and everything is in proper, labelled containers. At the conclusion of our project, this space will be one of our 4 new galleries.

Special Thanks!



Here are all the people we could get stopped from their work long enough to get a picture:

- Top Left: Esther Brower
- Top Right: Jessica Verschoor
- Bottom Left: Lillia Dockree
- Bottom Right: Nathan Etherington





More Helpers!
Top Left: Bev Golden
Top Right: Ryan Timms
Bottom: Lynn Elsie

Found Objects!



The Nerve Centre!

Staff took over the large exhibit room to process the artifacts. They formed two 'assembly' lines to stage, clean, photograph, and inventory each piece. Decisions were made on which pieces we were keeping and which were destined to be disposed of. Some were sent to other museums, some were sold, and some were put in the dumpster. This is not as bad as it sounds... there was a lot of junk found that should have been thrown away years ago. The rest were cataloged, inventoried, and put back in storage until the process was complete.



New Galleries!



This is the Edwardian bedroom display that has not seen the light of day for a long time. The top picture shows what the room looked like before we started our project.

As you can see, it is almost completely inaccessible and has been used as overflow storage.

The picture below it shows how the room looks after it has been partially emptied of the extra material that has been stored here.

Clearly, this room is not finished, but it is well on its way, but you can get an idea of just how much work has been done. There were many rooms in this condition, but we are slowly working our way through them.

This is one of the four new galleries that will be open to the public when we reopen.



The picture to the right is our ceramics collection in its usual storage location. To date, we have completed our inventory and organization of the objects in this room and we hope to have many of these objects on display in the near future.



Found Objects!

One of the nice things about doing a complete inventory is that you find objects you did not know you had or, you find objects that you knew you had, but had not seen in a long time. Our project is no exception and we present a sample of objects that you will soon be seeing in future exhibits.



Clockwise from top left.

- Major Hamilton's Hat
- Trowel used laying cornerstone for Graham Bell School
- Thomas Costain's Typewriter
- Pauline Johnson's Dress



Myrtleville House News

Overall we have had a very successful season of summer camp. We have welcomed back many campers from last year and many new friends as well. Without any need for advertising we nearly fully booked camp. We have had between 20 and 25(max) campers each day at \$30. By offering individual days instead of only full weeks we do lose out on some revenue as Mondays and Fridays usually end up with a few empty spots. I would say that we are in track to match if not exceed last year's revenues.

We were very happy to welcome two students Mia and Coralie from Quebec from the YMCA for 6 weeks. We also had the help of 3 young gentlemen from the Grad Erie District School Board as well. These young team members efforts were so greatly appreciated by the staff and campers alike. We were thrilled to offer them some first time job experience. As always funding from the Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs grants allowed us to hire several university students to organise and run day to day activities for our campers.

Some highlights of the summer so far have been a visit from a magician in our first week. Exploring the museum and lives of the Good family during pioneer week was a hit. Every Wednesday we enjoy a visit to the Anne Good perk around the corner. Baking treats in the afternoon is always a favourite as well. Next week we are looking forward to a visit from a reptile show. Camp will end September 1st and we look forward to another year of PD days and March Break camp.

As always if any members have children or grandchildren looking to fulfill their volunteer requirement for high school we would gladly welcome them to camp. We always need help doing crafts, games, and monitoring free time. They can contact me at sarah.thomas@brantmuseums.ca or 519-752-3216.



Calling all Volunteers! By Tim Philp

Recently I traveled to Richmond Virginia and, as is my custom, I love to visit museums. Richmond is filthy rich in history and abounds with museums. One that I found especially interesting was the Chimborazo Medical Museum which rests on the site of the largest civil war era hospital.

There is nothing left of the original structures, but the site itself is a beautiful park overlooking the city. The museum is housed in a former weather bureau building and is about the same size as our museum in Brantford. I wanted to have a look at how it was run and what lessons it could teach us for our own museum.

One of the main takeaways of this museum is their use of volunteers to help guide visitors as they tour the museum.

As a result, we are hoping to start a docent program at the museum that will see volunteers trained and manning the museum to help relieve professional staff to do research for people, plan new exhibits, do outreach to the community, and to manage the collection better than it has in the past.

In short, to make our museum all it can be!

Of course, this program can only work if members and others are willing to put in some time to make this work. Staff are developing a docent training program that will get you familiar with the museum and its collections. There will be positions available at the gift shop as well as guiding visitors through the museum.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for members to learn, not only about our history, but to learn about how a museum works.

If you would like to volunteer to help out at the museum, send an e-mail to:

volunteering@brantmuseums.ca

I look forward to meeting you at the museum!

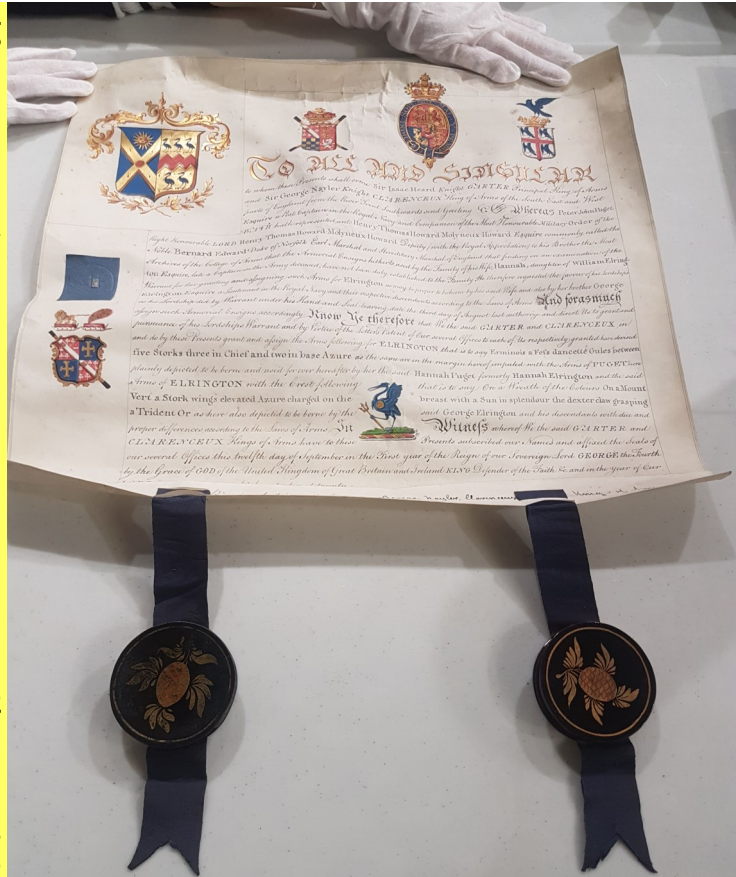


Chimborazo Medical Museum in Richmond Virginia.

Found at the Museum!

One of the great benefits to going through your collection, is that you never know what you are going to find. During the cleanout of the Large Object Room, there was a large piece of furniture that had been there for years. When that piece had to be moved, it had to be partially disassembled. When it was opened, we found a small box. Inside this box was an elaborate scroll with ribbons and large wax seals inside metal containers. The scroll was beautifully calligraphed and illustrated. Inside the case were two small glasses, presumably for a toast. The document was a grant of a Coat of Arms, specifically the right to use the gentleman's wife's family's crest. One of the wonderful things about old documents is the language that they use. It is a very florid style that conveys the solemnity and the dignity of the situation.

Particularly interesting is the description of the coat of arms: "On a wreath of the colours. On a mount Vert a stork, wings elevated azure charged on the breast with a sun in splendour the dexter claw grasping a trident." I guess this was the way they wrote official documents in the time of King George IV.



**BRANT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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We're on the Web!
Brantmuseums.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.

Coming Events

THE
BRANT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
PRESENTS
THE
2017-2018
SPEAKER
SERIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.BRANTMUSEUMS.CA OR CONTACT
MYRTLEVILLE HOUSE AT (519) 752-3216 OR EMAIL
INFORMATION@BRANTMUSEUMS.CA



"1917: A YEAR OF MEMORIES"
BILL MARFLER, PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER,
ONTARIO VISUAL HISTORY PROJECT &
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT;
ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST.
WED, SEPT 27TH, 2017.

**"WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE: AN
ONTARIO PERSPECTIVE"**
TARAH BIDDOKFIELD, AUTHOR &
PROFESSOR AT WILFRID LAURIER
UNIVERSITY-BRANTFORD CAMPUS
WED, OCT 26TH, 2017.

**"THE EARLY BLACK HISTORY
OF BRANTFORD"** SARAH
CLARKE, TEAM LEAD-RESEARCH,
ARCHAEOLOGIST, ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (ARA)
WED, JAN 31ST, 2018.

**"THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL:
BRANTFORD'S ARCHITECTURE
FROM THE 18TH TO THE MID-20TH
CENTURY"** CINDY MACDONALD,
PAST CHAIR OF THE CITY OF BRANTFORD
HERITAGE COMMITTEE
WED, FEB 28TH, 2018.

**"THE SEEDS OF THE PAST:
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM
ANCIENT SEEDS"** BUNNY
FECTEAU, ARCHAEOBOTANIST
WED, APR 26TH, 2018.

**"MR. CARROLL'S CONCOCTIONS:
EARLY SETTLER HEALTH AND
MEDICINE"** LISA ANDERSON,
COORDINATOR OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
PROMOTION FOR DIABETES CANADA &
PAST EDUCATION OFFICER AT MYRTLEVILLE
HOUSE MUSEUM OF BRANTFORD
WED, MAY 23RD, 2018.

ALL TALKS WILL BE LOCATED AT THE
MYRTLEVILLE HOUSE MUSEUM 34
MYRTLEVILLE DR. BRANTFORD
FREE 7-8:30PM LIGHT
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

