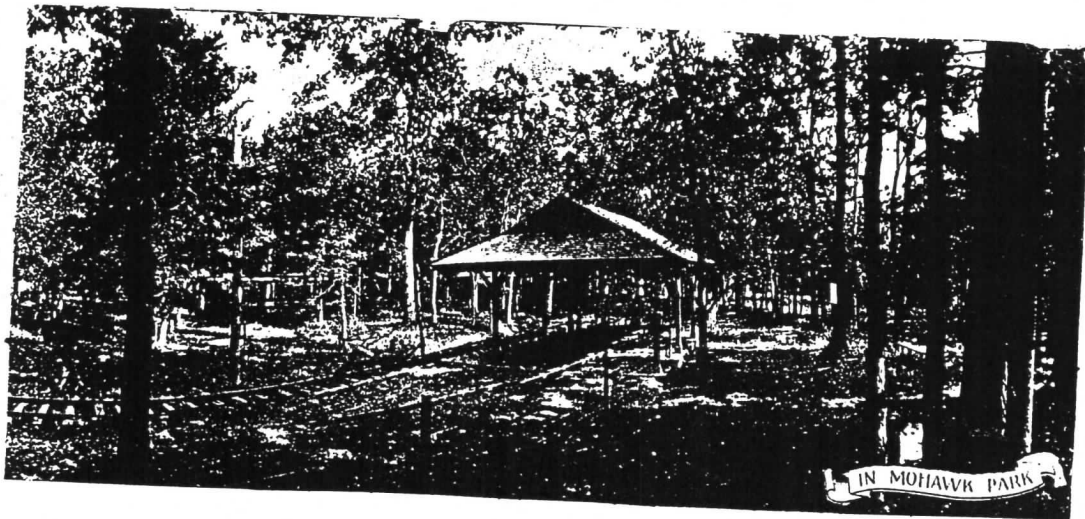


History of Mohawk Park 1895 - 1995



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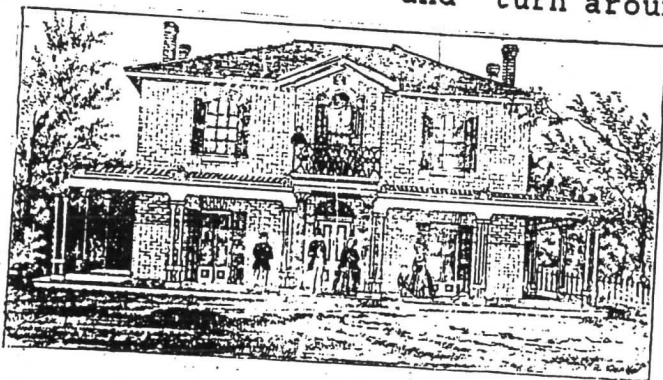
Mohawk Park

Ruth Lefler

One hundred years - a century ago - happy birthday Mohawk Park! This park bounded by Greenwich Street to the south, Forest Road to the east, and Glenwood Drive to the north, was originally part of the Lovejoy estate. John Lovejoy was born in Ohio, U.S.A. in 1800. Later he came to Canada, first settling in Ancaster and later moving to the Brant County area. On December 20, 1836, a crown deed for a large tract of land, east of the Glebe lands, was granted to him.

He set up part of the road on the Hamilton Road (today known as Colborne Street) and collected toll for the use of the road.

In 1854, at the present location on the southeast corner of Park Road South and Colborne Streets, Lovejoy built a large brick house called "The Manor". This house has since been torn down to make way for the BSAR on Park Road.



The Lovejoy Residence, Brant County Atlas, 1858.



The Noisy Boys Camp at Lovejoy's Bush, 1891.

Near his estate was a beautiful grove of trees which became known as Lovejoy's Grove or Lovejoy's Bush. In this same area was also found a wetland which was developed into a lake when the Grand River Navigation Company built the canal through Brantford in the 1840's. It was part of the three mile "Brantford Cut" which by-passed 15 miles of the meandering Grand River. It has been said that the lake was used as a storage area and turn around point

for barges. This area became very attractive to industries that established themselves here because of the convenience of receiving and shipping goods. With the coming of the Grand Trunk Railroad to Brantford in 1854, the canal's use gradually dwindled until about 1879 when the Navigation Company ceased to operate for the transportation of goods.

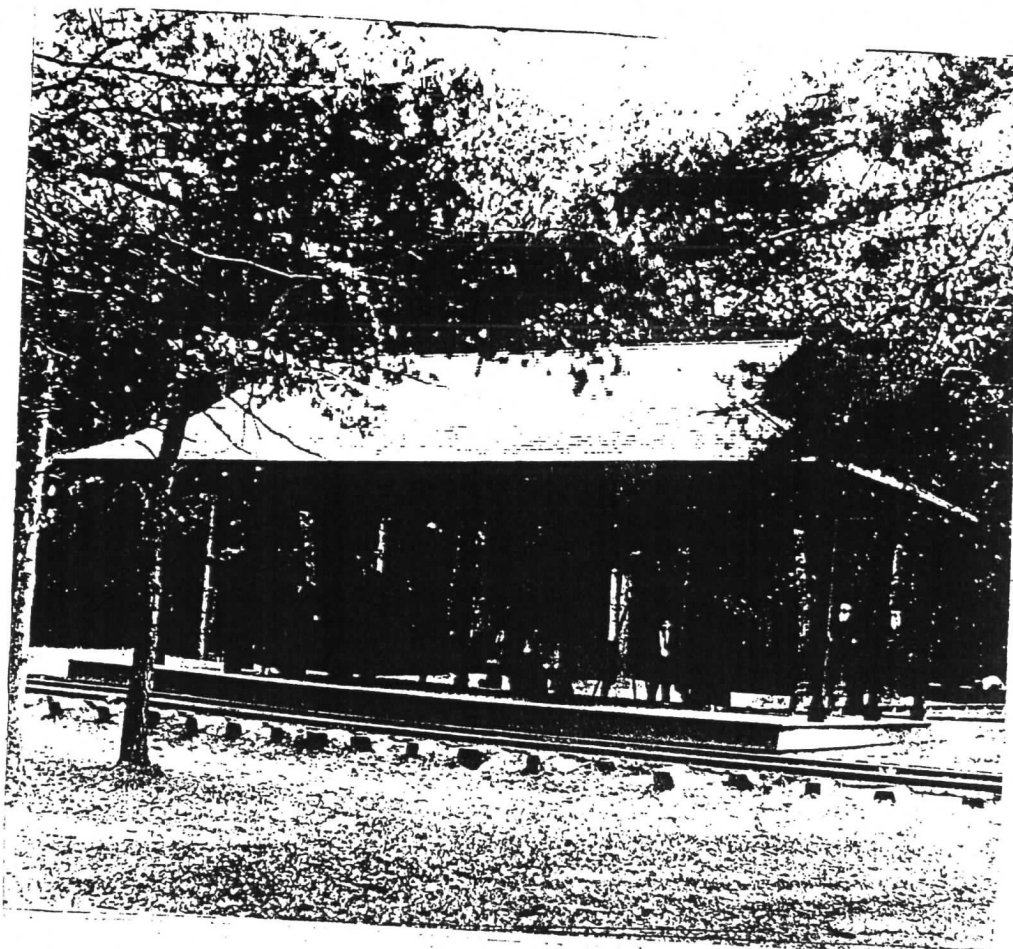
In 1879, in the City of Brantford, an enterprising group of private investors established the Brantford Street Railway Company. But it was not until 1886 that the Railway began to operate for the use of passengers. In 1894, the Brantford Street Railway Company leased Lovejoy's Grove from the Lovejoy family and extended their line east on

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arranged with several local men; - fencing - Mr. Stewart; levelling and clearing the park, building a cricket crease and tennis court - Mr. Cook; construction of the railway station and other buildings - Mr. P. Secord. The total estimated cost for preparing the park for this season was estimated at about \$1500". (Brantford Expositor, p. A4, March 23, 1995).

May 24, 1895 - Queen Victoria's Birthday - the grand opening of Mohawk Park. The Park comprised of 55 acres of shade trees and from the high bank one could view the surrounding farm land and the Mohawk Chapel. This park was one of the finest parks to be found anywhere in this region.

Dignitaries boarded the railway (continued over page)

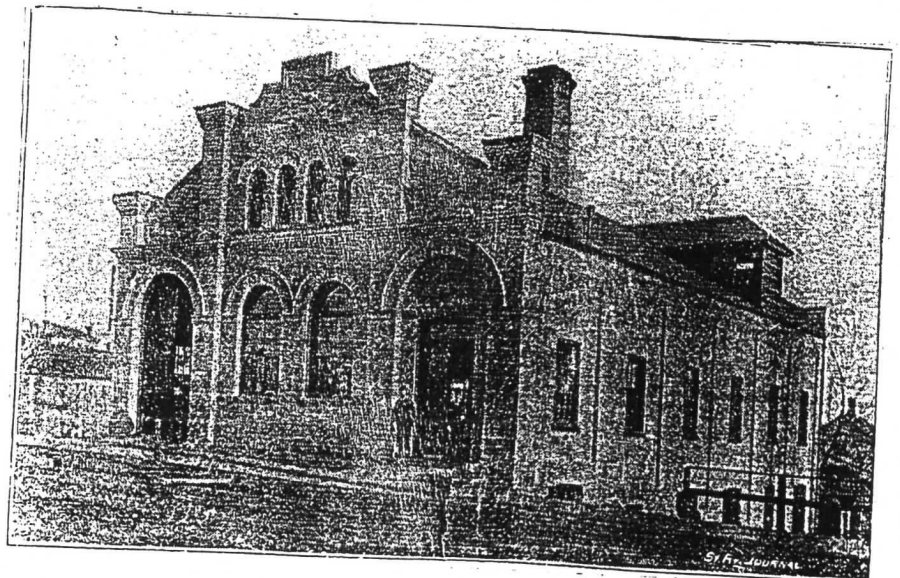


The Brantford Street Railway Station in Mohawk Park.

Colborne Street and Hamilton Road to the Park. In the middle of the Park a small station was built beside the circular track.

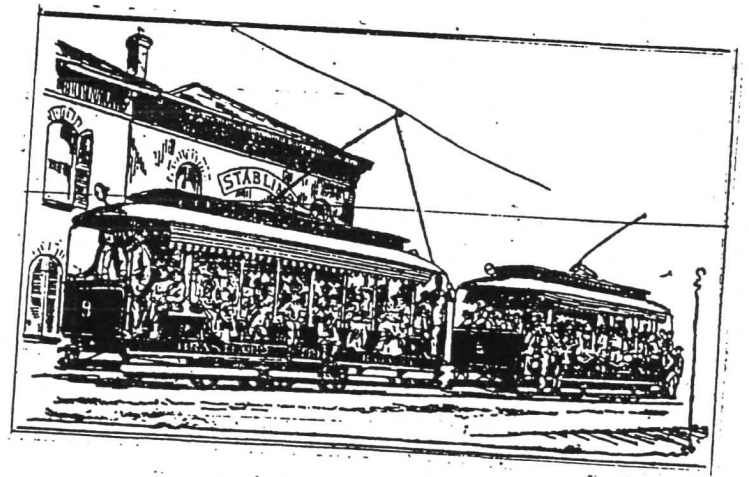
"During 1894, Mr. Madden who was the manager of the railway company, oversaw the preparations of Mohawk Park. Contracts were

On December 20, 1894, local dignitaries and a group of men from the Railway Company made the first trip over the tracks from the powerhouse on the southeast corner of Colborne and Clarence Streets to the park. This trip was made without incident and the journey was very pleasant. While at the Park, the men entered a discussion about what to call the park. Brant and Mohawk were among the most popular names.



Powerhouse for Brantford Street Railway Company.

cars at the powerhouse and proceeded to the park only to learn that the directors of the Railway Company who were to have been a major part of the formal opening ceremonies, would not be arriving from Toronto because of a railway mishap. This part of the programme was cancelled but, nevertheless, the day was a rousing success.



Street Cars on opening day of Mohawk Park, 1895.

Imagine the festivities! Over 7500 fares at 5 cents each were collected that day. The Canadian Order of Foresters Band played all afternoon and the boats from the gleaming boathouse covered the lake. Two football games were played, one between Brantford Collegiate Institute and Galt Collegiate Institute with Brantford winning 1 to 0.

The merry-go-round or carousel operated at peak horsepower providing

rides to the tune of "Sweet Marie" and light refreshments were available from the many vendors. Families gathered together for picnics in all areas of the park. In the evening, several thousand people came to see the park lit very brightly with electric lights and to dance in the pavilion.

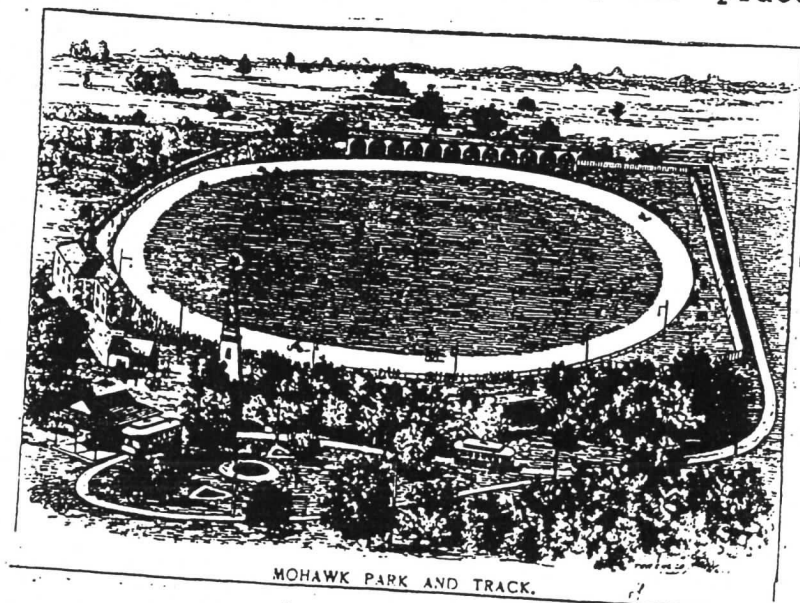
In the early days Mohawk Park became well known throughout this area of Ontario as a great place to

hold large picnics for churches, businesses and lodges. Canoeing was at the height of its popularity at this time and the regattas and illuminations held on the lake were spectacular. The park offered much to the summer visitor - theatre, "shute-the-shute" into the lake, rides such as the razzle-dazzle and the ferris wheel; cricket matches and football games in the sports area beside the grandstand and a bicycle track.

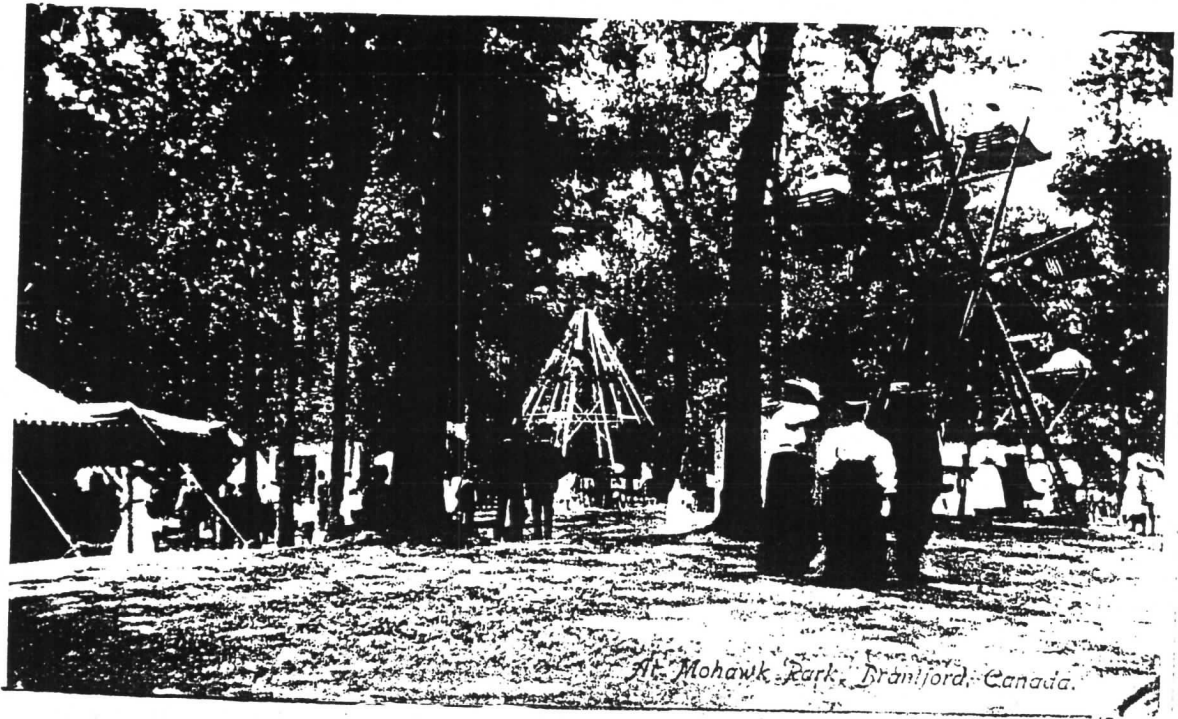
In 1915 the Brantford Street Railway Company and Mohawk Park were taken over by the City of Brantford. The park was purchased from the Lovejoy estate on a long term mortgage for \$25,000.

On Labour Day, 1915, the City of Brantford once again celebrated another phase of Mohawk Park. Over 4,000 people attended the festivities marking its new ownership.

(continued over page)



Mohawk Park and Track, 1897.



Mohawk Park in Brantford.

Mohawk Park has touched the lives of many residents in the Brant County area. Many children and adults have attended a Sunday School picnic here and participated in various events such as the wheelbarrow and the three-legged races, potato sack races and the shoe scramble. All of this would be followed by a feast prepared by the ladies of the church. You also might remember spending a pleasant afternoon or evening at the park with friends and family.

The tale woven by the Mohawk Park carousel is very interesting. It was manufactured in Kansas about the time that young Dwight D. Eisenhower, who later became the 34th president of the

United States; was working in this factory. He may have worked on some part of this carousel. It served the visitors to Mohawk Park until the 1930's when the City of Brantford put it up for sale. It was purchased by the Agricultural Society of Roseneath which is located southeast of Perterborough. In the 1980's funds were raised to restore the carousel and each year during the Roseneath Fall Fair it continues to give its many customers much pleasure.

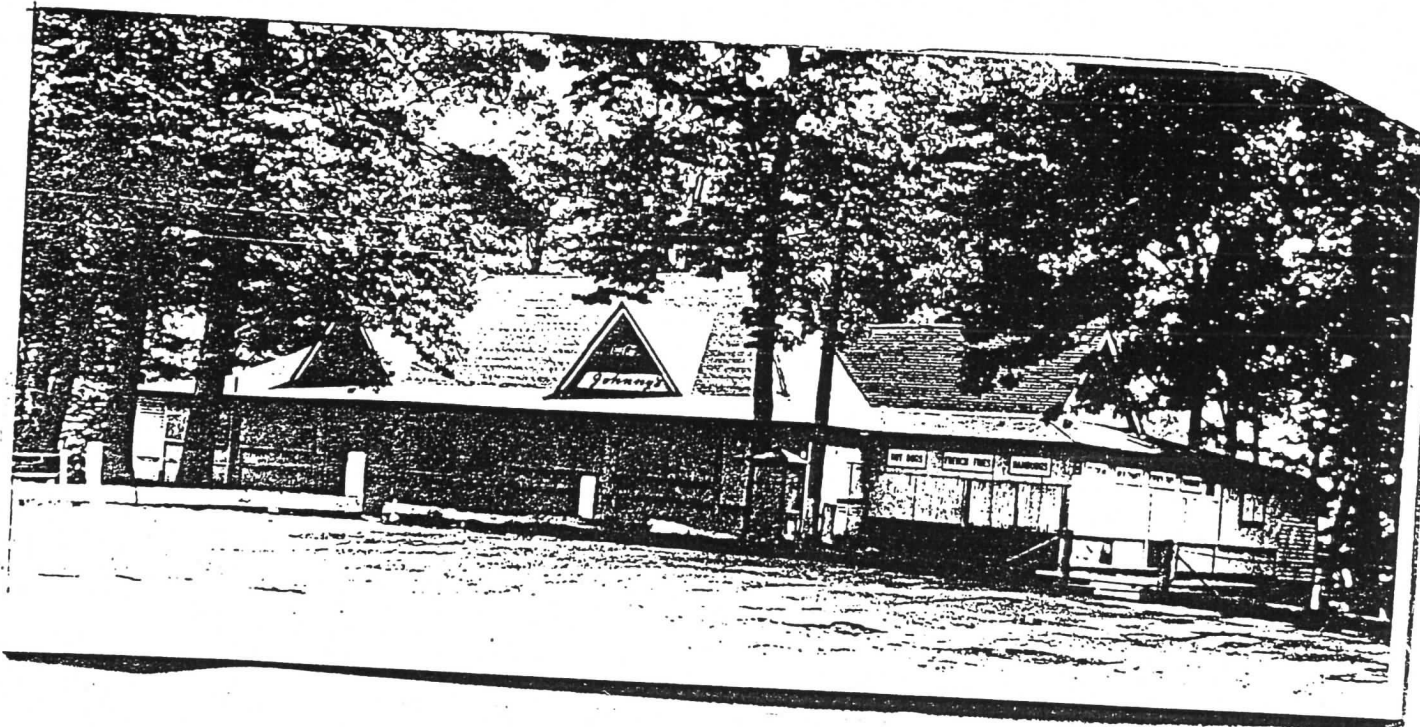
Once again the Mohawk Park area is receiving much needed attention. Throughout the last hundred years, this area has been the hub of industrial activity bringing about pollution and unsafe water. In the last 40

years, four major studies and countless reports have been completed regarding the cleanup of the lake, canals and region. Viable solutions for cleaning up the lake and developing the land of the area have been proposed.

Presently the City of Brantford, with funding from the Government of Ontario, is undertaking a \$6-million rehabilitation project of the lake and park. The project also includes the expansion of parkland on the south side of the lake. Public input is being sought as to how the new park should be developed.

In 1995, we are looking forward to the centennial celebrations and to the rebirth of Mohawk Park.

(continued over page)



Mohawk Pavilion and Food Concession, ca. 1959.

Endnotes:

1. Brant County Atlas; Page & Smith, 1875.
2. Brant County Museum & Archives - Photo Collection.
3. Brantford Courier newspaper, May 25, 1895.
4. Brantford Expositor newspaper, December 21, 1894; May 25, 1895; March 23, 1995; May 21, 1994 - Yesterdays by Gary Muir.
5. Cottrill, Kathryn; The History of Mohawk Lake as a Functional Region; unpublished paper; Brantford, 1994.

6. Echo Place Women's Institute Tweedsmuir History Book, 1913-1949; Volume 1.

7. Hill, Bruce E.; The Grand River Navigation Company; Image Quest; Brantford; 1994.

8. Reville, Douglas F. History of the County of Brant; Hurley Printing; Brantford; 1920.

Picture #2

The Noisy Boys Camp At Lovejoy's Bush lists the following people on the back:

Back Row - Ray Broomfield, Joe Howard, L. Toffer, Dick Mulligan
 Middle Row (sitting) - Al Viles [?], Art Coulback, C. Parker, D. Parker, Geo "Stud" Hardy, Bob Ruddle, H. Grummett, Judge Fullerton, J. Horseman, Bert Inglis, Chas Nichol
 Front Row - Dick Robinson, Redy Whichkhair, Bozzo Miller, H. Heaton, H. Kester.
 Noisy Boys Camp Lovejoy's Bush now Mohawk Park
 H. Grummett
 Lovejoy's Bush 1891