



## **President's Report**

As a recent article in the Brantford Expositor explains, City Council has agreed to purchase the Brant Museum & Archives building. This places property management with the City as is the case with the Bell Homestead, Glenhyrst Gallery, and Canadian Military Heritage Museum. We are still working through the details of the lease agreement which should be able to be shared at our next Annual Meeting.

The sale of the museum only gets the Society part way toward the desired goal of self-sufficiency. What this means is that we need to do some dramatic fundraising so that we increase our endowment fund to a figure closer to \$3.5 million. Further, we need to find some funds to move all our exhibit space to the main floor so that the building meets accessibility regulations to which city properties must comply. We are exploring various funding sources to cover some of these realignment expenses.

This purchase comes with the expectation that the Brant Museum & Archives will relocate to the museum district which the City is designing within the redevelopment of the Greenwich-Mohawk Tract. As a result, discussion has begun with members of the Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre Board of Directors, as well as select members of the Canadian Military Heritage Museum. This is an exciting and challenging time as each group comes to the table to envision a new museums complex. Perhaps groups like the Ontario Genealogical Society of Brant and others may choose to join us in this venture.

## BRANT HISTORICAL —SOCIETY—

Established on May 8, 1908, the Brant Historical Society is an independent registered charity operating two museums uniquely positioned to make a difference in the lives of Brant citizens.

Our purpose is to collect, preserve and share the history and heritage of Brantford, Brant County, Six Nations, and the Mississauga of the Credit Indigenous Nation.

Inside this issue

- President's Report
- Executive Director's Report
- Christmas Events & Closures
- Myrtleville House News
- Updates from the Brant Museum and Archives
- Notes from our Co-op Students
- Brant Moment
- Past BHS Events

Contact Us  
519-752-2483  
information@brantmuseums.ca

## **President's Report Continued**

Within our strategic planning process three topics have risen to the top: financial stability, capital assets, and marketing & public relations. The Directors have scheduled meetings in the new year to deal with these three issues. The intention is to give the Board some focus for the next 3-5 years before we move on to mapping plans for the next 5-10 years.

A team has been reviewing the constitutional by-laws for the Society. We plan to bring recommendations for revisions to the next Annual Meeting. Watch for these recommendations in the package being sent to you in February.

The Board has approved the creation of a Committee to Review Applications for the Wall of Honour. Leisah-Marie Jansen has agreed to be the Board Director on that committee and recruitment of the team should be happening now.

I hope those with an interest in the work Dan and Carol-Lyn Brown put into the Crystal Cottage had an opportunity to see the finished restoration at their recent open house. We are so pleased that the project has ultimately resulted in a positive outcome.

Finally, while many of you will hear this message at our Christmas Social at Myrtleville House on December 18th, I cannot say this enough: thank you for your interest and support of the Historical Society. Also, I extend to one and all a very joyous holiday season, whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or some other festival, and that 2025 brings a successful and satisfying year for each and every one.

-Murray Angus, Brant Historical Society President

## **Volunteer Appreciation**

Brant Historical Society Staff and Board Members would like to take the opportunity to extend our appreciation to our volunteers that offer their valuable time to projects and events that the Society offers. It truly is a team effort, and your support does not go unnoticed!

Whether it is helping with children's programs, offering assistance in the archives, looking after the lawn and gardens, or other tasks around our sites, we are so thankful for all that you do.

**Happy Holidays!**

Please keep our holiday hours in mind when planning your visit to the Brant Museum and Archives or Myrtleville House museum over the coming weeks. If you wish to visit Myrtleville House during the month of December, please remember to call ahead! Esther has a full schedule of children's programs, and will not be able to accommodate other visitors while there are classes on site.

The 2024 BHS Christmas Social, is being held on Wed. December 18th from 7:00 - 8:30pm at Myrtleville House! Be sure to RSVP to 519-752-2483 or [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca) by Mon. December 16th if you are planning on attending.

<b>Brant Historical Society Holiday Hours</b>	
<b>BRANT MUSEUM &amp; ARCHIVES:</b>	
<b>DEC. 21</b>	1:00 - 5:00PM
<b>DEC. 22 - JAN 1</b>	CLOSED
<b>JAN. 2</b>	1:00 - 5:00 PM
<b>MYRTLEVILLE HOUSE MUSEUM:</b>	
<b>DEC. 20</b>	9:00AM - 4:30PM
<b>DEC. 21 - JAN 5</b>	CLOSED
<b>JAN. 6</b>	9:00AM - 4:30PM

You may have noticed that our staff complement has been reduced recently. This has meant that we have needed to modify the hours of public access to the downtown museum to Tuesday to Saturday from 1-5 PM.

Personally, I extend thanks to our staff for all the effort they put into presenting our heritage to the community.

Our media profile and related publicity are also being reviewed. Lillia has done a superb job of resurrecting the Society newsletter, which has resulted in compliments from several sources. The launch of our new website has taken longer than anticipated, but it should be available early in the new year. The website will include the application form for members to submit recommendations for additions to our Wall of Honour.

The need to sell the downtown museum has resulted in a thorough review of our property management needs with some supplementary assistance being recruited to help us be our best. It is anticipated that we may have to rearrange our public exhibit space, office and storage space. This may result in a new set of exhibits needing to be prepared with the appropriate artifacts displayed; it will bring a new look which we have needed for many years. New research and artifacts at Myrtleville House Museum have also provided an opportunity for staff to develop new exhibits that cover the four generations that lived at that site.

This season we have benefited from having Coral, a co-op student from BCI, who has been transcribing Bruce E. Hill's book *The Grand River Navigation Company* so that new print templates can be created. We expect that reprinting of the book should follow shortly after the templates are prepared.

Finally, in this holiday season I wish to extend my thanks to the various volunteers who support our staff so that our program offerings can be further enhanced. You each provide an important addition to what we can offer to the community, and our staff very much appreciate that. Thanks, and happy holidays.

Marion McGeein

**PA Day Camps**

January 20, 2025: Escape The Day (A Myrtleville House escape room)

April 11, 2025: Farm to Table

June 6, 2025: Art Through The Ages

\$35.00/day, per child  
Drop off 8:00 – 9:00am  
Pick up: 4:00 – 5:00pm

Ages 4\*– 11 (\*must be in Kindergarten)

Contact Esther for more information or to register:  
519-752-3216 or  
esther.brouwer@brantmuseums.ca

**Family Day**

Monday, February 17th from 1:00 - 4:00pm. Learn about the history of printed fabrics, and join us for a screen printing workshop!

**March Break**

March Break runs from Monday, March 10 - Friday, March 14 2025!

Keep an eye on our social media pages for events taking place at Myrtleville House Museum.

Myrtleville House Museum  
34 Myrtleville Drive  
Brantford, Ontario N3V 1C2

519 – 752 – 3216  
esther.brouwer@brantmuseums.ca

Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm



The Holidays are upon us, and that might make some of us, especially those who are members of Historical Societies, think of the past and how traditions are passed down.

At Myrtleville, it's an easy leap from the early days of the family's celebration to modern Christmas. We still decorate the house the Victorian way, and we teach the school kids that come to visit what a Christmas dinner would have looked like (not that different from a modern one!). The food included a roasted turkey or chicken, which would have replaced the goose of a hundred years earlier. Some families even placed a duck inside the turkey, and a partridge and pigeon inside that, sound familiar? The dessert popular during this time that followed Christmas dinner has remained popular in Britain: the Christmas Pudding.



Christmas Pudding, as showcased on the dining room table at Myrtleville House

From the Recipe Books

## Gingerbread Cookies

## Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp molasses
- 8 tbsp water
- 2 cups flour
- 2 pinches salt
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cloves
- 1 tsp ginger

## Directions:

- Add butter, sugar, molasses, and water into a bowl, stir until combined
- In the same bowl, add flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger. Stir until combined.
- Form dough into a ball, knead in flour until no longer sticky.
- Roll out on a floured surface until 3/4cm thick and cut out cookie shape. Bake at 350 for 10-12 minutes.



The final food tradition I will mention is the classic gingerbread. Looking through the family's recipe book that came with them from Ireland, and has recipes from the mid 1700's onward, I find the Pudding and Gingerbread recipes fascinating and definitely worth a try! You can find the translated versions here:

*To make a Rich Pudding:*

*Take 7 eggs, 5 cooking spoonfuls (this could be equal to 15 tbsp.) of sugar, and the same of fine flour. Beat them all together then add to them one pound of suet cut small, and one pound of raisins, a little lemon peel, and half a noggin (about ¾ cup) of brandy or sack. The mixture must be wrapped tightly in cheesecloth to form a cannonball shape and boiled for six hours.*

*To make the right English Gingerbread:*

*Take two pottles of flour (8 cups) and rub half a pound of butter (1 cup) in it. Half an ounce of cinnamon, an ounce of ginger, an ounce of caraway seeds, a quarter ounce of cloves, a pound of sugar (2 ¼ cups), two eggs, one pound of treacle (1 1/3 cups molasses). Mix together, roll out and cut out with gingerbread cutter. Bake until done (15 minutes).*



It seems obvious at this point that these recipes were meant for large families eating together around the dinner table. Allen and Eliza filled their home in Brantford with ten children, two maids, and quite a few farm hands as well. Would they have them all in the dining room or parlour on Christmas Eve? The tradition of being with the ones you love during this time of year, seeing out the darkest nights of the year under the candlelight and evergreen boughs, has always been a staple of humankind.

Looking to volunteer?  
These positions are  
available:

- Yard maintenance
- Cleaning/tidying exhibit spaces
- Helping with children's programs
- and more!

Email [volunteering@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:volunteering@brantmuseums.ca) for more information



### Photo Spotlight

This photo shows just how different the downtown core looked in 1955.

Clockwise from Colborne Street are Water Street intersecting with Greenwich Street, the Lorne Bridge, Grand River Avenue, Brant Avenue, and Bridge Street. In the foreground you can see the Lake Erie and Northern station, and the clock tower of the Federal Building (now City Hall) stands proudly in the center-back of the image.

Brant Museum and Archives  
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

519 – 752 – 2483  
[information@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:information@brantmuseums.ca)

Tuesday to Saturday  
1:00pm – 5:00pm

Sunday & Monday  
CLOSED



### **From the Archives: Christmas Days of Brantford's Past**

Editors Note: The following article is an excerpt taken from the December 24, 1904 edition of the Brantford Expositor, titled "Christmas Days of the Past Dozen Years in This City". Enjoy!

*The Expositor to-day presents a few lines on Christmases in Brantford during the past ten or twelve years in the hope that readers may be somewhat interested in perusing a short sketch of this character at this particular Yuletide season. In doing so it is perhaps pardonable on the part of the paper to seize this opportunity to express the hope that the Christmas of 1904 may be a very joyful and happy one to its readers continuing, if possible, all of the pleasures and remembrances that have contributed to the success and enjoyment of similar occasions in the past.*

*The Christmas of 1892 fell on a Sunday, and that is possibly one of the reasons why nothing transpired that can be viewed as of particular importance. The holiday was observed on Monday, although the Christmas services in the various local churches on the Sabbath were of a special order. Dr. Secord and Mr. Thos. Elliott were in the field for mayor, and a scorching campaign was in progress.*

### **An Unprecedented Flood**

*Long to be remembered, because of the distress and havoc which were wrought, is the Christmas of 1893, which also fell on a Sunday. At daybreak the ice in the Grand River broke as if charged by dynamite and within a few hours West Brantford and Eagle Place experienced the worst flood in their history.*

*Some residents were awakened by their houses being undermined by the raging torrent, which was sweeping everything before it. Others slept on and rose at the usual hour, only to find their homes flooded and household effects ruined. It was, indeed, a sorrowful Christmas in some quarters. Whole families moved upstairs, where they remained until they could be taken out in canoes, etc., etc. The fire department assisted in the rescue. Down in Eagle Place Chief Calder found two ladies floating around on a sidewalk in the street in front of their house. The White Mill bridge at the foot of Alfred Street was swept away and an excavation 150 feet in length was torn by the raging waters in the embankment along the south of Lovejoy's pond, now called Mohawk Lake. Murray Street bridge tottered and the headgates trembled. The flood, coming as it did, at that time of the year, was unprecedented.*

### **Brantford's Largest Market**

*The largest market ever held in Brantford was to be seen on the familiar old square on Saturday, preceding the Christmas of 1894. To-day turkeys sell at 18 cents, but then the prevailing price was 8 cents per lb., while chickens could be had as low a rate as 30 cents per pair, while 60 cents would bring the finest pair on the market. Many of the farmers were in their places on the square at 2 o'clock in the morning, and at 6 every available stand was occupied. There was an I.O.F. (Independent Order of Foresters) band in Brantford in those days, and they celebrated the occasion by serenading prominent citizens at their homes.*

### **Calvary Church Opened**

*In 1897 the Christmas fell on a Saturday and was royally celebrated. W.G. Raymond and Thos. Elliott were in the field for the mayoralty, both doing excellent work in extending the glad hand. On the Sunday following, the new church of the Calvary Baptists in the East Ward was formally opened when Rev. Dr. Thomas of Toronto preached morning, afternoon and evening.*

### **The Day Last Year**

*Last Christmas was quietly observed. Religious services were held as usual. The great majority of people spent the day in their homes. To add color to the occasion a number of very pretty weddings were celebrated. The nurses at the hospital were given a sumptuous Christmas dinner by the ladies hospital auxiliary. The various candidates for aldermanic honors were in the field conducting a thorough canvass. At the opera house, the Brantford minstrels held forth. The police had a quiet day, although they occasionally met with an old pard\* who had partaken of the cup of good cheer "not wisely but too well."*

*\*Pard: 1840's Americanism, sort for partner, companion.*

## Digitizing the Expositor Collection

Submitted by Madeline Jenkins

My name is Madeline, and I am a student at Laurier Brantford studying User Experience Design. During this past fall semester, I had the opportunity to complete a volunteer placement at the Brant Museum.

During my placement, I worked on scanning and digitizing archival documents. This process involved retrieving the physical documents, adjusting them for optimal scanning, and editing the images to remove any imperfections. Lastly, I saved the scanned images into the database.

I specifically focused on a box of negative film that the museum had received from the Brantford Expositor. These negatives captured a wide range of events that shaped Brantford's history from the 1950s to the early 2000s. Digitization is essential not only for preservation but also for enhancing access to important cultural information. It was rewarding to see how my efforts contributed to making these historical materials more accessible to the public.

My placement also highlighted the importance of organization within a museum setting. The Brant Museum houses a vast array of documents, artifacts, and historical materials. Working there made me appreciate the crucial role that effective organization plays in preserving our history. By observing the systems implemented to categorize and digitize these items, I gained a greater appreciation for the dedication and diligence required to maintain such an important repository of heritage.

Throughout my time at Laurier studying User Experience Design, I have learned about the importance of creating meaningful and accessible experiences for users. I have gained an understanding about how we can use technology to increase accessibility of products and services. The digitization of historical documents breaks down accessibility barriers and allows everyone to engage with history regardless of physical location or mobility.

My experience at the Brant Museum has deepened my understanding of the museum workplace and the vital role it plays in cultural preservation. I am grateful for the knowledge and skills I've acquired, and I look forward to applying them in my future.



Negatives that were included in the Expositor Collection



Digitizing *The Grand River Navigation Company*

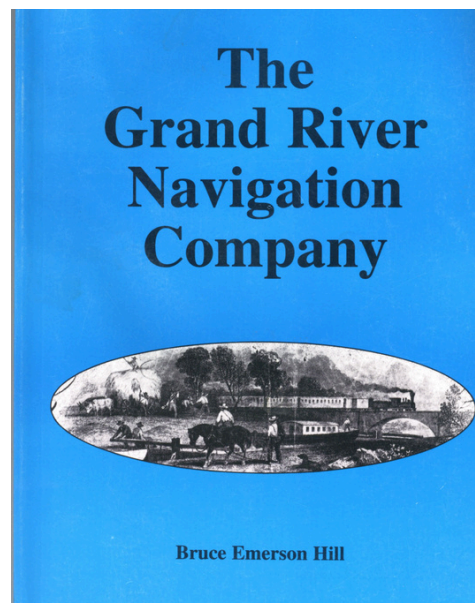
Submitted by Coral Adlam

Over the past month of my Co-Op placement at the Brant Museum & Archives, I have been working on retyping *The Grand River Navigation Company* by Bruce Emerson Hill along with reconfiguring the tables and images with the intent of reprinting the book. Coming in as a high school student from Brantford Collegiate Institute, I had little preliminary knowledge about the extensive history surrounding the many canal projects across North America and most importantly within Brantford.

While working on the digitization of the riveting research, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the history surrounding the Grand River Navigation Company and have an enriched perspective on the economic demand that saw the Company rise and the systematic corruption that caused its demise. Bruce Emerson Hill's knowledgeable account touches on many different facets in which the Grand River Navigation Company interacted with the community of Brantford and surrounding Brant County area.

*The Grand River Navigation Company* is rich with cultural awareness that transcended what I had been taught within the high school curriculum, allowing for further exploration into the inequalities the Six Nations community experienced in their dealings with the mismanagement of the Grand River Navigation Company. In addition to learning about the Grand River Navigation Company, I developed an insight into the writing process and broadened my awareness in the steps it takes to get a book published. The digitization process has provided the opportunity for me to examine a book in a way I have never done before and learn from a skilled writer, witnessing firsthand as I typed the account how coherent narratives were structured.

The unique learning experience the Brant Historical Society has entrusted me with has been a satisfying project to complete as I have been able to see a book be constructed before my eyes. The task of digitization has been intellectually stimulating as it is creatively rewarding as well as appeals to attention to detail. I feel honoured to have played a small factor in bringing Bruce Emerson Hill's thought provoking research into current publication and look forward to having a physical copy available to the public.



Copies of *The Grand River Navigation Company* will be available for purchase at the Brant Museum and Archives. Keep an eye on the Brant Historical Society Facebook page for updates!

## **Two 1838 Brantford Fires**

Submitted by: Roger Sharpe, local military historian

A very interesting account of two Brantford fires in 1838 was found in the diary of John Moyle Jr. John was from the Moyle's who eventually settled on Paris Road around the current Olde School Restaurant, which is actually a former school called the Moyle School. The Moyle's had not yet moved to their Paris Road farm and were living in Brantford operating a grain store.

At the time of the fires, it had only been a couple of weeks since the Duncombe revolt in Scotland had been put down. Mackenzie's rebellion was still in progress as he waited entrenched on Navy Island, contemplating the overthrow of the Canadian Government. A large contingent of troops, that contained men from both Paris and Brantford, were down at Niagara opposite Navy Island guarding against possible attack by Mackenzie and his little band of Patriots. In addition, at this time the covered bridges across the Grand River at Brantford and Paris were being guarded 24 hours a day while the militia checked those who wished to pass and detained suspicious persons. So, there would have been something of an armed camp mentality, as the little detachment at Brantford changed the guard and escorted prisoners, arms and ammunition through the area. It was in this environment that the fires occurred.

At three o'clock Monday morning in January 1838, Henry Moyle and his sons were called to help fight a fire on the main street of Brantford at Master's and Day's Confectionery. Within minutes, the whole block was engulfed in flames. The main street was so hot the men could barely cross the street. The Moyle boys poured water over themselves to try to cool off, despite it being the middle of winter. When the fire engine arrived, the men formed a line but they did not have enough buckets to be effective. It was soon discovered that it would be impossible to save the Wilkes' block, although several men did try to carry out the contents of furniture and equipment.

Some of the men attempted to pull down the Indian Council room that was beside Dr. Digby's store and they were able to extinguish the flames before it burned. Several of the buildings caught fire on the opposite side of the street, but the men were able to extinguish the flames. Mr. Wilkes' store and Mr. Day's house burned aggressively. Fred Wilkes' office was burned to the ground but the men managed to save the stove, books and furniture. By eight o'clock in the morning, the fire had finally been extinguished.

It was barely six weeks later, on Saturday February 17, 1838, fire again broke out on the main street at 1:30 in the morning. The men fought the flames in Mr. Hunter's and another of Mr. Wilkes' stores. They were able to stop the fire before it consumed Henry and McDougal's store but a shed behind it containing wheat and the Magistrate's office were enveloped in flames. This time Dr. Digby's drug store finally burned, but they did manage to save its contents. The fire was finally contained by about five o'clock.

This little account, gleaned from the diary of someone who lived it, is an interesting little glimpse of Brantford's past that had previously been lost.

The Brant Historical Society kicked off this season's Speaker's Series with a presentation by Carolyn Cresswell, the art teacher at W. Ross Macdonald School, who talked about "The Art of Lawren Harris," a particular interest of hers. As she introduced herself, she shared information about the art program at the school for the blind. The focus of her remarks involved the history of Lawren Harris's life here in Brantford. She also discussed the artistic styles of Harris as they evolved. Her presentation was very well received.

In October Murray Angus, the BHS Board Chair, presented "The Entertainment Centres of Brantford." These locations included various arenas, one of which was converted to an opera house. He provided a history of the city's opera houses, followed by the various theatres and what they offered from vaudeville to feature films. The audience was fascinated with the many pictures and stories that accompanied Murray's presentation.

The Land Acknowledgement which is read at Society events has led some members to ask how we could learn more about what we can do to fulfill our responsibilities. Dr. Darren Thomas was recruited from the Laurier Brantford campus to share knowledge of the "Haudenosaunee Culture and Traditions." Professor Thomas presented a great deal of valuable information, illustrated with interesting stories and anecdotes. It was clear that the evening could have gone on for hours.

Members have praised the calibre of our presentations. If you have missed past presentations or just want a refresher, go to the YouTube Channel: @branthistoricalsociety to view the recordings.

In the new year we will be welcoming back two of our past presenters. On Wednesday, January 29th, Sarah Clarke will talk about "The Archaeology of the Brantford Area" and her work in archaeology. Murray Angus will return on Wednesday, February 26th to present Part 2 of "The Family Businesses of Brantford." We hope you will join us!

## 3rd Annual Scotch Tasting

**Friday, January 24th, 2025 from 7:00 - 9:00pm  
Hosted at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum.**

**Tickets are \$50 for BHS & CMHM members, \$60 for non-members,  
and \$20 for a non-drinking seat.**

**Contact 519-752-2483 or email [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca) for  
more information.**

Each membership package comes with the following privileges:

- ✓ Advance notification and special invitation to all our Activities and Events, including Children's Camps and PA Days
- ✓ Free Admission to our monthly Speaker Series
- ✓ Free Admission to our Walking Tours (fee applies to all non-members)
- ✓ BHS Newsletter – all that's new and exciting at BHS
- ✓ 10% off all Gift Shop purchases over \$20
- ✓ Access to, and use of, our Research facilities - 5 hours of research time



Packages:

Student (\$20.00)  
(to 24 yrs with school/college/university ID)  
(One voting membership in all Brant Historical Society membership meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, plus all privileges)

Individual (\$25.00)  
(One voting membership in all Brant Historical Society membership meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, plus all privileges)

Couple (\$40.00)  
(Two voting memberships in all Brant Historical Society membership meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, and all privileges for two individuals living at the same address)

Family (\$80.00)  
(Four voting memberships in all Brant Historical Society membership meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, and all privileges for a family living at the same address)

Payment may be made at or sent to:

Brant Historical Society  
57 Charlotte Street  
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

Please provide the names of all individuals per package and indicate if over 18 years of age for voting membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 18+   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 18+   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 18+   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 18+   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 18+

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ PC: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

(Tax receipts will be provided for monetary donations above \$20.00)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cash  Cheque  
 Credit Card: \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MC

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_