

MARCH 26 2024 | BRANTMUSEUMS.CA | 519-752-2483



Testing... testing... is this thing on? Wonderful! It has been a few years since our last edition, so let us catch you up on some of the things the Historical Society has done since 2017:

- Our volunteers have been hard at work assisting in the Archives: with their help we have been able to organize all 16 boxes of the W. Ross Macdonald collection, and are steadily working our way through the 'Information Files' – the BHS collection of newspaper clippings.
- The Events Committee has offered a wide range of programs for BHS members to enjoy, including Speakers Series, Walking Tours, the Members BBQ, and more. BHS staff are thankful for all of their hard work!
- Through the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted a large amount of our programs to be offered online! Speakers Series presentations from 2020 – 2024 are available on our YouTube Channel (@branthistoricalsociety), along with other video's like "Archival Discoveries" and "Brant History Happy Hour".
- Myrtleville House was host to a multitude of events as well! We welcomed visitors for Family Day, March Break, and Easter. Campers continue to enjoy attending Summer Camp, and we have partnered with the Myrtleville/Mayfair Neighbourhood Association for two successful Hallowe'en events.

The next editions of the BHS Quarterly will be sent out in June, September, and December, so keep an eye out! If you would like to contribute an article (or an idea for an article) for future editions, contact Lillia at lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca.

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 Nations.

Inside this issue

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- Updates from the Brant Museum and Archives
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Contact Us
519-752-2483
information@brantmuseums.ca

From the Recipe BooksMrs. W.C. Good's Favourite
Oatmeal Cookies

The Good family has a long tradition with oatmeal cookies. Eliza Good, the grandmother-in-law to Mrs. W.C. Good, would pack up all of the leftover cookies from the week at the weeks end. She would then bring them to Sunday service at Grace Anglican church and give them to her children so that they would stay quiet during long services.

Ingredients:

1 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup warm water
1 tsp cinnamon
1 1/2 cup oats
1/2 cup butter
Pinch of salt

Directions:

Cream together the sugar, salt and butter.
Add oatmeal soaked in warm water.
Add flour and cinnamon.
Roll thin and cut into desired shape, or drop by the teaspoonful onto a greased pan.
Bake in a moderate oven (350 for 8-10 minutes)



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

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

Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm



Myrtleville House is celebrating its 187th birthday in 2024! The Good family arrived from Ireland in early 1837, and spent a few months in Montreal as Allen had taken a job as a banker. Not long after, Eliza gave birth to their fourth child, Charlotte.

Following an unfortunate encounter with the McGill family that resulted the loss of the bank job, Allen and Eliza picked up and moved to a small plot of land in the (then) village of Brant's Ford, which Allen had purchased as an investment. The house was built on a hill that could overlook their entire property, and the contract described a "two storey, nine room house" with the builder agreeing to finish it "in a plain good workmanlike manner and find all materials to the turn of the key, for the sum of 467 pounds, 5 shillings, and 9 pence halpenny." This equals just under \$114,000 in today's currency.

Eliza's godparents' home in
Cork, Ireland

(Photo courtesy of the
National Trust's collection
at Myrtleville House
Museum)



The house was originally stucco, like its inspiration: Eliza's godparents' home in Cork (the original Myrtleville) but was soon switched to the wooden siding we see today. The home faces south, and the driveway leading up the hill gives you the perfect view at any time of day; though the original entrance used to come up from the west, through the barn yard, and then later from the east, off Balmoral Drive.



One of the many bookshelves in the library, full of books owned by the Good's.

Allen spent the first years on the farm clearing land. He purchased another 100 acres of uncultivated Crown land adjoining his original acreage in late 1837, and an additional 100 acres in spring 1838. In the Museum's collection of the Good's books, there is a book on farming dated to this time. One can almost imagine Allen's newly calloused hands running through the pages and studying for the summer to come.

Both Allen and Eliza were sturdy, intelligent, and fast learners. They had been used to servants doing the work for them in Cork and Montreal, and they had at least one maid at the house. Though they had plenty of farmhands as well, both seemed to get stuck in on the settler experience and recorded clearing land, making butter, dipping candles, and baking in an outdoor bake oven themselves.

Eliza was comfortable letting her children play all across the south field up to a point where there lay a large stone, known as the Bear Stone, because there had once been a bear spotted at that point.

The family still enjoyed their wealthy comforts, as shown in the piano forte that Allen's brother John had ordered from London, England for them. It arrived at Myrtleville in 1840 wrapped in blankets, which the family kept for generations, and cost a total of 46 pounds (\$10,100 today). It is said to be the oldest piano in the city, if not southern Ontario, west of Hamilton. The instrument still sits in the parlour, a testament to the family that loved music, art, adventure, and the house they called home for four generations. Happy Anniversary, Myrtleville.



The piano forte, as it stands in the parlour at Myrtleville House Museum today.

Collections:
By The Numbers

Archives: 65,625

Photos: 11,881

Objects: 14,130

Brant Museum and Archives
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

519 – 752 – 2483
information@brantmuseums.ca

Monday to Friday
12:00pm – 5:00pm

Saturday
10:00am – 5:00pm



Over the fall, we started digitizing some boxes of ledgers that contained some bookkeeping records from 1799, the Boundary Commission in 1839, and ledgers from an early Black blacksmith. Once completed these were added to the database with finding aids.

The Ellis family ledger (Accession # 986.81.3) was indexed through entry of over 3,000 lines or data points in Excel and then sort by last name, first name, and folio number. Once sorted, an alphabetical list is created in Word that lists the folios that list the individual, converted to a PDF, and posted on our website. This allows researchers interested on the Burtch family to identify the six members and the level of business conducted with the Ellis family around the 1837 Rebellion. This has facilitated some national and international researchers being able to access our unique collections.

The province of Ontario has had many structural changes to its district and county systems over the years. In 1839, Brantford was in the District of Gore and the County of Wentworth. Paris and St. George were part of the same District, but part of the County of Halton and Oakland and Burford were in the District of Oxford and the County of Brock. It wasn't until 1851 when these portions were carved together to make Brant County.

Each area set up a commission to settle land disputes that would function similarly to the Ontario Land Tribunal today. The Boundary Commission of 1839 was composed of three Commissioners – John Willson, John Chisholm, and Lewis Burwell – who collected evidence and exhibits in hearings before issuing a judgment. This meeting book is part of the museum's collection (Accession # 1996.56.3).



Photo Spotlight

Lester's Candy Store Front, 1919 - 1932. (298 Colborne Street) Mr. Benjamin Lester came to Canada from England in 1911, and served overseas during WWI. He returned to Brantford in 1919 and opened "The Sweet Shop".

According to the City Directory of 1920 Mr. Lester had a store and ice cream parlour on the premises. Lester opened a second store at 5 Colborne Street in 1925 on the south side of Colborne street by the old L.E. & N. Station and the Lorne Bridge. In 1926 another store was opened at 154 Market Street operating from 1926-1928.

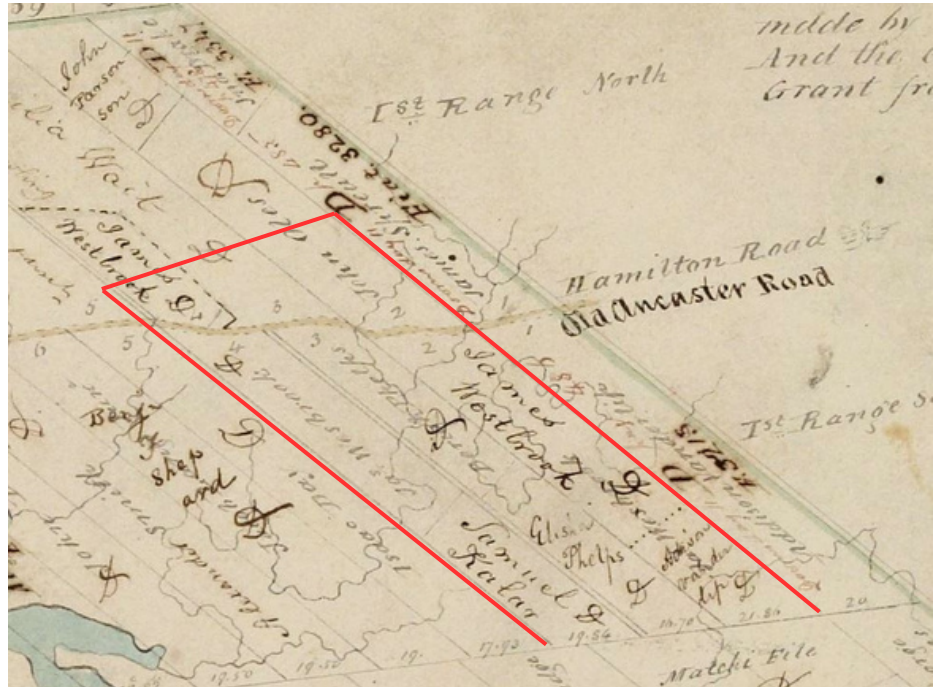
This photo was taken in 1919 ahead of the visit from the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

It doesn't take long to find a case related to Brantford that occurs by James Westbrook against Beriah Phelps. The hearing starts in Brantford on February 26th, 1839 at James' Westbrook's Inn to settle the dispute between the boundaries of lots 2 and 3 and 3 and 4 south of the Ancaster Road.

The first day of hearing the second document tabled is Lewis Burwell's original survey on which he is now a commissioner, followed by a series of affidavits of numerous people. While it doesn't indicate when they started, they concluded at 7:30 P.M after hearing 17 pieces of evidence.

The next day starts at 10 A.M. and concludes at 7 P.M. hearing another 10 pieces of evidence including the final piece an affidavit of Lewis Burwell requested by the Board (which he is sitting on).

The Board is then able to produce its very lengthy ruling after summarizing the evidence. It rules that the original boundary surveyed by Burwell in 1837 remains upheld. The court needs payment for its costs of holding the tribunal of £28.13.9. In today's courts, James Westbrook would be ordered to pay costs. However, the Board rules 1/3rd of the cost to Mr. Westbrook (£7.11.3), while Beriah Phelps has to pay 2/3rds of the cost at £15.2.6.



Red lines denote the boundaries of the dispute between Westbrook and Phelps

16.
 At a meeting of the Board of the Boundary Commissioners of the District of Gore convened at James Westbrook's Inn in the Township of Brantford on Tuesday the 26th day of February 1839 on the application of James Westbrook claimant, against Beriah Phelps, Respondent for the purpose of adjusting the lines of Boundary between lots No. Two and three, and Three and four, on the Southernly and Easterly side of the old McChaw, or Ancaster Road in the said Township of Brantford,
 Present, John Chisholm
 and Lewis Burwell.

Entry from the Boundary Commission meeting book regarding the dispute between Westbrook and Phelps

Scotch Tasting:

Our 2nd Annual Scotch Tasting fundraiser was a huge success! Hosted at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum on January 26th 2024, we had 35 people in attendance, as well as staff and volunteers. The five scotches sampled were: Glenmorangie Original Single Malt, Glenrothes 12 year, Aberlour A'Bunadh, Dalwhinnie 15 year, and Talisker Storm.

Guests also enjoyed a sample of haggis, expertly piped in by James Williams of the Caledonia Pipe & Drum Band, and a demonstration of highland dancing by the students of the Angus Highland Dance Academy. Any leftover scotch was auctioned off at the end of the night.

Our thanks to Tim Philp for being our Master of Ceremonies for the evening, to Bob Ion and the Canadian Military Heritage Museum for hosting, and to all those that made the night run smoothly.

T.O.P.S Fundraiser:

Our second fundraiser of the year was "An Evening with the Spirits", run in partnership with The Ontario Paranormal Society (T.O.P.S). On February 24th, T.O.P.S offered tours through the Brant Museum and Archives, explaining the process of a paranormal investigation to those in attendance. Tours were offered at 6:45pm, 8:15pm, 9:45pm, and 11:15pm. A final tour of the building began at midnight, and concluded with a Ouija board session in the attic. All five tours were well attended, with positive reviews following each tour.

With the success of this event, BHS and T.O.P.S will be scheduling another "Evening With the Spirits" for later this summer. Keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram for more details!

Speakers Series:

BHS has held two Speakers Series presentations so far this year, both were very well attended!

On January 24th, we heard Murray Angus' presentation on "A Few Family Businesses of Downtown Brantford". Murray remarked that that there were almost too many to choose from, but he was able to narrow it down (for this presentation at least) to businesses that were run by three or more generations of family members.

Our presentation on February 28th was hosted at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum, where Meghan Cameron spoke about "Local Women's Involvement in the Two World Wars".

Past presentations can be found on our YouTube Channel: @branthistoricalsociety.



Upcoming Events:

- Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 30th from 10:00am - 1:00pm at Myrtleville House Museum. The hunt begins at 10:00am SHARP!
- **Annual General Meeting:** Tuesday, April 9th at 6:30pm. Hosted at Myrtleville House Museum
- May is Museum Month! Keep an eye on our website for event details
- Speakers Series 2023/24:
 - April 24th @ 7:00pm- John Bullen from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, "History of the Lancaster Bomber". Hosted at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum
 - May 22nd @ 7:00pm- Tracy Cain, "Black History of Brantford". Hosted at the Brant Museum & Archives
- Superior Court of Justice Tour: May 24th at 4:00pm.

Walking Tours:

- **Gadd's Alley Walk**, Sat. May 4th @ 10:30am, starting at the corner of Catherine & Ball Sts. in Paris
- **Brantford Canal Walk**, Sat. May 11th @ 10:30am, starting at the end of Beach Rd. in Brantford
- **Farringdon Burial Grounds Walk**, Sat. May 18th @ 10:30am, starting in the parking lot of Farringdon Church, 287 Mt Pleasant Rd, Brantford

Call 519-752-2483 or email information@brantmuseums.ca to register. The full schedule of walks can be found on our website.

A tour of the interior of W. Ross MacDonald school has been scheduled for Friday, April 19th 2024, beginning at 3:30pm. The tour will be lead by Principal Dan Maggiacomo. Registration is limited to 16 people, so be sure to contact the museum to secure your spot.

Join us on Wednesday, May 1st from 9:00am - 4:00pm for our Local Heritage Excursion Day! Stops include: City Hall, the Brantford Armouries, The Brantford Club, and the Local History Room at the Brantford Public Library. There will also be a 'surprise location' during the day. Tickets are \$40.00 for BHS members and \$50.00 for non-members (taxes extra). ****This is a walking tour**** - no bus, and elevators are not guaranteed. Contact the Brant Museum and Archives at 519-752-2483 or information@brantmuseums.ca to register.

Have you found that you have some available time in your schedule? Have you wondered if there other ways, beside membership, that you could support the Brant Historical Society? Volunteering some of your available time might be just the answer!

But what could one do? Here are just a few ideas that might work for you:

- Property support, which could include tending the gardens, or mowing the lawn at the downtown museum, or tending to the tidiness and neatness of the interiors and the displays.
- Offering a walking tour or more to community members, or your talent could be being a tour guide within either or both of the museums.
- The Program Events Committee is always looking for new members to provide inspiration, with new ideas and new energy.
- The Board of Directors is continually looking for people to share their skills and talents, whether from your work-life or from other volunteer experiences.

If these or other ideas stir your interest, please talk to one of our staff members or email volunteering@brantmuseums.ca for more information. Volunteering brings rewards beyond what dollars can provide, so please consider it.

Brant Moment: The Bell`s and Ballacheys at Myrtleville - 1870-1888

With the four youngest Good siblings (Tom, Bella, Mary, and Clara) living at Myrtleville in the early 1870's, the farm was a hub of social activity. Many attendants of Grace Church would recall how Mrs. Good (Eliza) would enjoy playing the piano for her guests to dance to. However, they also knew that when she would play 'God Save the Queen', that was their cue to leave.

Many of the neighbours would be in attendance at these parties, like the Moyles, Ballacheys, and Ushers. The Good's also hosted Alexander Graham Bell once or twice. He was a relation of the Ballachey family (Caroline Ballachey - formerly Bell - was married to Aleck's older brother before he passed away. She later married George Ballachey, Tom Good's brother-in-law).

- George Ballachey – Caroline Bell (m. March 1875)
- Sam Ballachey – Mary Good (m. December 1873. Mary G. referred to as "Molly" by the family)
- Mary Ballachey - Tom Good (m. March 1875. Mary B. referred to as "Mary Tom" to avoid confusion)

In her book "Myrtleville: A Canadian Farm and Family", Beth Good Latzer notes that "although his Brant County friends found his scientific obsessions very strange, they thought him a most likeable fellow. Mrs. Good (Eliza) especially admired his beautiful singing and piano playing".

"A few people now thought the telephone had commercial possibilities, but almost no one in Brant County did. Many of the Bell's friends and neighbours were sorry later that they had spurned the chance to invest in Aleck's creation... Anything the Good's could save was invested in Myrtleville, but they remembered that Aleck Bell had held six month old Willie (William Charles) on his knee and amused and tested the baby with his watch. His verdict was that the child heard well and seemed very bright".

Aleck's verdict would be proven correct, as in the summer of 1888, 12 year old William took the entrance examination for the Brantford Collegiate Institute on George St, almost two years younger than the average candidate. That being said, he ranked fourth amongst the ninety-four students being tested at the time.

One of William's close companions at school was his cousin, George Melville Ballachey (son of George Ballachey and Caroline Bell. George M. is also noted as being the first farm boy to have a telephone in his home, his "Uncle Aleck's" invention). Together, George and William built a forge in the workshop at Myrtleville, learning to lay bricks in the process. This saved them a trip to the neighbourhood blacksmith shop every time they needed to re-shoe a horse.

William constructed many tools and mechanical pieces, and there is a story that during one of Aleck Bell's visits to Brantford, Mary Tom proudly showed the inventor her son's creations. He was interested in William's ingenuity, and said "how I wish I had a son!"

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: _____