



President's Report

Our current board has had a main goal to stabilize the financial situation of the Brant Historical Society. Discussions were undertaken with the City of Brantford to figure out an answer and last December the City purchased the building at 57 Charlotte Street. This money was deposited into our Endowment Fund and is the beginning of our attempts to bring the BHS closer to being self-supporting.

Another undertaking of the board was an updated Strategic Plan. The vision, mission and core values of the organization have been updated, and we are working toward finalizing these plans. Fundraising has been identified as a main goal, and various strategies are being reviewed and talked about. Some of our more ambitious ideas will be difficult to execute currently because it's going to take a lot of manpower to manage large fundraising campaigns.

We have had a very busy year, and we have managed to accomplish some very lofty goals and none of it would have been possible without the input and support of the board members and our volunteer Executive Director, Marion McGeein. Our staff and our volunteers have put in extra effort to keep things running while we are operating with a bare minimum of employees. My deepest thanks to everyone who has been doing what is necessary during these challenging times and a special 'tip of the cap' to Brian Moore who keeps the Historical Walks moving and keeping our Speakers Series going with a variety of guest speakers presenting talks on a variety of topics.

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.

The Brant Historical Society is dedicated to preserving, educating, celebrating, and sharing the unique history, culture, and stories of the Brantford/Brant area, fostering a sense of connection and pride among its residents and visitors.

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

President's Report (Cont'd)

I have mentioned before that I feel "we have become something that is greater than the sum of its parts" and I feel a great sense of pride for the things we have accomplished as a team.

-Murray Angus,
Board Chair

P.A. Days

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

Summer Camp 2025

Registration for summer
camp is now open!

Registration forms and
weekly camp themes can
be found on our website:
brantmuseums.ca/summer-
camp/

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

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

Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm



On March 10-14, Myrtleville opened its doors to visitors of all ages for its March Break programming. Staff and volunteers welcomed kids, parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents and invited them all to take part in activities taken on by their early settler predecessors who lived in Brantford.

On Monday morning visitors rolled up their sleeves and got to work making butter the old fashioned way. With a supply of heavy cream on hand, a choice was made between mixing with a "horsehair whisk" (a modern BBQ brush), a small mason jar with a marble for agitation, or helping with the large jar mixer with a wooden paddle on a crank spinner. It was determined that the horsehair method turned a quarter cup of cream into butter within 15-20 minutes, the marble jar was almost 20 minutes on the dot, and the large jar mixer, with about half a litre of cream in it, took exactly an hour with many hands helping to turn the crank. In the end, after separating the buttermilk out from the butter and chilling, each participant got to spread the fresh butter on a cracker and taste their success. Most of the comments received was that without salt, it was quite plain tasting!

Tuesday morning was sunny and warm enough that the apple fritters planned could be done outside in the workshop. Visitors helped peel and core the apples using early tech tools, they were then sliced into rings, dipped into batter, and deep fried. The recipe used was from the original Good Family recipe book that was brought with them from Ireland, dating this particular tasty treat to about 1760! (although substitutions had to be made for things like brandy and cooking the fritters in lard).

We were outside again for Wednesday, but the chilly wind did not deter the visitors from gathering by the open fire pit and making some hand dipped beeswax candles. The easiest method was to dip a long string of hempen cord into the liquid wax about 10-15cm deep, then straighten the hardening waxed string soon after removing it from the pot, then doing the same to the other side. This process repeated for each visitor 10 times until each were left with two candles about 2cm thick. Another method was to wrap the string tightly around a slim wooden frame a few times, then dip the whole frame into the wax. This ensured straight candles, but had a lot of waste wax built up on the frame too!

On Thursday we went back to the workshop and tried our hand at potato fritters, this too from an old settler recipe (not the same resource as the apple fritters). Although the batter didn't quite set the way we had hoped, we managed to turn the potato squares into potato spheres and the taste was just as good!

We ended the week back inside in a studio style environment where visitors created Victorian style silhouettes using lights, shadows, and a centuries old tool called a Pantograph. Attendees then filled in the outline of their faces with black paint to finish their artwork. While waiting for paint to dry, and during all other activities that week, visitors were encouraged to partake in a daily scavenger hunt inside the museum involving a collection of ever moving toy mice.

The afternoons on each of these days included guided tours of the museum, a fire outside with roasting marshmallows and hot chocolate for those hoping to enjoy the fresh spring air. Overall the week was a smashing success, and we can't wait to welcome everyone again for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 19!



L-R: Esther and participants making candles, a completed silhouette, and apple fritters with cinnamon sugar



Photo Spotlight

This edition's photo spotlight features an image of Fred Westbrook, taken in 1880.

The photo description reads that "Westbrook was the winner of the bicycle championship of 1882 and winner of the Professional Ten Mile Championship of 1897. On both occasions he rode a Brantford, both the old style and the new, proving their supremacy over other wheels."

He was also the proprietor of the Belmont Hotel, located at 159 Colborne Street in Brantford. The Belmont was built around 1860, and destroyed by fire in 1974.

Brant Museum and Archives
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

519 – 752 – 2483
information@brantmuseums.ca

Tuesday - Saturday
1:00m - 5:00pm



The Brant Historical Society has been lucky this school year, as we have hosted a number of co-op and community service learning students from local high schools and Wilfrid Laurier's Brantford campus.

Last semester Coral Adlam joined us from Brantford Collegiate Institute, and spent the bulk of her time with us transcribing and re-formatting Bruce Hill's "Grand River Navigation Company" book, which is now available for purchase in the Brant Museum and Archives gift shop. Madeline Jenkins, a User Experience Design student at Laurier Brantford, completed a placement with us last term as well, where she began digitizing our collection of photo negatives from the Brantford Expositor. Coral and Madeline both shared their placement experiences with us in the December 2024 edition of *BHS Quarterly*.

This term, Emerson Hill is joining us from North Park Collegiate for his co-op placement, where he will assist with digitization and exhibit work. We also have four students from Wilfrid Laurier: Sathya Suresh, a Journalism student who has started digitizing articles in our Expositor Collection, as well as Sienna, Sophia, and Zianne, who are completing a placement as part of the "Memories, Monuments, and Museums" course being taught by Dr. Christina Han. They are working towards creating a travelling exhibit about the history of public health in Brantford.

Finally, we have been lucky enough to have hired Brooklynn Hambly on a part time basis until the end of April. Brooklynn is a recent graduate of the museum management course at Fleming College, and has been a huge help since she joined us in January.

Below are articles submitted by Emerson and Brooklynn. I tasked both of them with writing a short article about an aspect of Brantford's history that interested them. Brooklynn's article is particularly interesting - Richard and Crystal Hambly are her grandparents, and owned Hawthorne's Sporting Goods in the 1970's.

Needless to say, there will be many new faces around the museum for the next few months! Be sure to introduce yourself if you see our students during your visit to the museum. I am excited to see what they can accomplish this term.

-Lillia Dockree, Community Outreach Coordinator - BHS

Brantford's Forgotten Opera House

Submitted by: Emerson Hill, co-op student from North Park Collegiate

In the 1860's, James Ker, a successful grain dealer and the son of a prominent Dundas merchant, wanted to create a performance theatre as he had a deep appreciation for the arts. In 1866, he invested \$15,000 to construct Ker's Music Hall at 140 Colborne Street (Now Harmony Square).

This building was designed by architect John Turner, who also designed Brantford's original town hall, the Wynarden mansion, the Norfolk County Courthouse, as well as a few churches and other smaller buildings. However, despite his ambition and financial commitment, Ker's theater faced unexpected financial struggles. Ker sold the theater to a group of Baptists who used it as a tabernacle for ten years. Around 1876 Joseph Stratford bought the property and transformed it into the Stratford Opera House.

In 1902, Stratford transferred management to Frank C. Johnson and his three sons. Johnson remained the manager until a fire destroyed the Opera House on January 10th, 1908. In 1915 a new building called the Arcade Building was built in the same location. This held several businesses and later served as Brantford's Eaton's store from 1944-1965.



Hawthorne's In the 1970's

Submitted by: Brooklynn Hambly,
Brant Historical Society Staff

In 1973, Hawthorne's Bicycle's & Sporting Goods, a store that had been in business since 1897, was about to get new owners. Friends John Bridgewater and Richard Hambly were going into business together. The pair continued to sell bicycles, athletic, and sporting goods, including sports clothing, offering in-store screen printing for customization. According to Crystal Hambly, Richard's wife, fishing and hunting equipment & licences were popular items at the store.

When Hawthorne's originally opened, it quickly became known as the best bicycle repair shop in Brantford. Around 1974, they became known for another service – filling scuba air tanks (for a time, they were the only shop in town to offer this service). This same year, there was a sports show in town and Hawthorne's was there with a display of their air tanks for scuba diving. Their oldest son, Dale, was with them at the sporting goods show, and they put an air tank on him. Since he was only 2, he was the same size as the tank, causing the Expositor to take a photo of him.

By 1978, the Hambly's were the sole owners of Hawthorne's, which at the time was located on George St., between a wool store and a deli. When Hawthorne's originally opened in 1897, it was located at 73 Dalhousie Street.

Owning a sporting goods store lead the Hambly's to collect some interesting family heirlooms – genuine Soviet matryoshka & pins. In 1978, there was an international hockey tournament in Brantford, and the Russian Junior Hockey team came to Hawthorne's, trading matryoshka and pins for hockey pucks.

In 1979, the building's old wiring caused a small fire and smoke damage to Hawthorne's. The Hambly's decided not to reopen, since the block of stores was being demolished to make way for the Eaton's Centre.

The Hambly's often spoke fondly of their time owning Hawthorne's. After Hawthorne's, Richard and Crystal briefly owned a restaurant called "The Circus" in Brantford. Crystal thinks often about her time as a local business owner and loves to tell stories about that time to her grandchildren, with her son Dale sometimes jumping in with early memories of his own. After owning Hawthorne's and The Circus, Richard spent the rest of his working life as an electrician/business owner (ASM Electric), and Crystal worked as a medical typist at the Brantford General Hospital.

Richard passed away in 2017, and John Bridgewater passed away in 2024.

Scotch Tasting:

Our 3rd Annual Scotch Tasting fundraiser was a huge success! Hosted once again at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum on January 24th 2025, we had 32 people in attendance, as well as staff and volunteers. The five scotches sampled were: Monkey Shoulder, Aberlour 12 year, Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban, Bowmore 12 year, and Lagavulin 11 year (Offerman Edition).

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 Geoff Kempster for being our Master of Ceremonies, to Bob Ion and the Canadian Military Heritage Museum for hosting, and to all those that made the night run smoothly.



Five young dancers from the Angus Academy of Highland Dance

Photo: Caelan Beard, Brant Beacon

Speakers Series:

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

On January 29th, 2025 we hosted Sarah Clarke, a local archaeologist (and BHS Board Member), who spoke about archaeology in the Brantford area and her work on the south side of Colborne St.

Murray Angus presented once again on February 26th, 2025, returning with a talk entitled "Brantford's Family Businesses: Part Two", a follow up of his January 2024 presentation.

We have two Speakers Series presentations remaining on the 2024/25 schedule:

- Wednesday, April 30th @ 7:00pm: Kelly Morrison, PhD Candidate "*British Home Children in Canada: WWI and WWII*". Hosted at the Brant Museum and Archives
- Wednesday, May 28th @ 7:00pm: John Bullen, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum "*Training of Aircrews during World War Two*". **Hosted at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum (347 Greenwich St)**

Upcoming Events:

- **A tour of the interior of W. Ross MacDonald school** has been scheduled for Friday, March 28th 2024, beginning at 1:00pm. Registration is limited to 16 people, so be sure to contact the museum to secure your spot.
- **Annual General Meeting:** Wednesday, April 16th at 6:30pm. Hosted at Myrtleville House Museum
- **Easter Egg Hunt:** Saturday, April 19th from 10:00am - 1:00pm at Myrtleville House Museum. The hunt begins at 10:00am SHARP!
- **May is Museum Month!** Keep an eye on our website for event details
- **Speakers Series 2024/25:**
 - April 30th @ 7:00pm- Brant Museum and Archives
 - May 28th @ 7:00pm- Canadian Military Heritage Museum

Join the Brant Historical Society on **Saturday June 7th at 11:00 am** for a **tour of the Whistling Gardens!** A garden expert will provide a private tour of the vast grounds with a focus on the heritage blooms and tree varieties. Come explore the history behind the thoughtfully selected 20 acres of gardens with over 4,500 different types of plants.

An early June date has been selected in hopes we will arrive in time with the blooming of the famous peony garden which boasts to have the largest variety in North America. The property also holds North America's largest conifer collection. The tour is one hour (flat gravel path) and will conclude with a fountain show. Over 100 jets are expertly choreographed to music in a show inspired by inspired by Andre Le Notre's 1634 design at the Palace of Versailles.

We encourage you to pack your own picnic lunch and join us in the rest area afterwards for a casual social. Cold drinks and limited snacks are available for purchase at the gift shop. After the tour/lunch guests are free to peruse the garden some more or shop at the the garden centre. The cost for this event is \$20.00, spaces are limited. Tour is rain or shine. A carpool from the Brant Museum and Archives is available for those interested. The Whistling Gardens is located at 698 Concession 3 Townsend, Wilsonville, ON.

For further details or to reserve a place please call the Brant Historical Society at (519) 752-2483 or email Lillia at lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca.

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.
- The Program Events Committee is always looking for new members to provide inspiration, with new ideas and new energy.

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 Dayton Family - Founders of Burford

Submitted by: Lillia Dockree, Brant Historical Society Staff

A deeply religious man, Abraham Dayton married Abigail Cogswell in 1770 in Litchfield, Connecticut, and in 1782 the couple became enthusiastic followers of Jemima Wilkinson, a religious zealot and prophetess in the area. By 1786, this sect was facing criticism in Connecticut. Dayton was chosen as part of a committee to scout out a new location for the group, and eventually settled on a section of land near Seneca Lake, New York in 1788. After the lease for this property was declared null and void by the New York Legislature, Dayton sold his interest in the property in 1791, and made his way to Upper Canada.

In the fall of 1791, Dayton, accompanied by a small party, came across the area of the Burford Plains. The remoteness, open area and access to water made this the ideal spot for their new settlement, and Dayton petitioned Governor John Graves Simcoe for a section of land "on the path leading from the Mohawk Village on the Grand River and on a creek that empties into the Grand River about 12 miles above the said village" (Whiteman's Creek). In 1795, Dayton fell ill with consumption, and was bedridden until his death on March 1, 1797.

In early 1798, Abigail received a letter from Colonel Joel Stone, founder of Gananoque, Ontario, and an acquaintance from her youth. He was also recently widowed and was inquiring for Abigail's hand in marriage. Eventually the two were married in 1799, and Abigail moved from Burford to Gananoque. She was shot in the hip while defending her home during the War of 1812, and walked with a limp for the rest of her life. Abigail passed away on September 4, 1843, at the age of 93.

Abigail and Abraham had one daughter, Abiah, who married Benjah Mallory. Benjah became a man of considerable influence and by 1805 was elected member of the legislative assembly of Upper Canada representing Norfolk, Oxford, and Middlesex. In June 1812, war was declared against Upper Canada by the United States. During the course of the war, Mallory accepted a commission in the U.S. Forces and was considered a traitor back home in Burford. He was convicted of treason at Ancaster in 1814 and his lands were later vested in the crown. He had sacrificed, as he put it, "both family & property." Mallory left Abiah and their five children in Canada, and eventually settled in Lockport, NY.

On 1 Jan. 1829 a notice in the Canadian Freeman newspaper reported that he "*has since figured in the [American newspapers] as...adept in the art of converting the property of others to his own use, for which accomplishment he has been honoured with lodgings in a State Prison.*" Abiah remained with him throughout, struggling to support their family, "until she found that her said husband . . . was. . . if possible more criminally traitorous to herself than he had been . . . capable of being to both Governments." She renounced him and returned to Upper Canada with her two youngest daughters to live with her mother in Gananoque. Mallory remarried and was baptized in Lockport in July 1853. He died there a month later.

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: _____