



Executive Director's Report

With enthusiasm I announce that Brooklynn Hambly has accepted a full-time position with the Brant Historical Society and will be working with Lillia Dockree at the Brant Museum and Archives. Lillia and Brooklynn have worked this summer to better organize the Program Room, and we are now able to utilize that space once again for temporary exhibits and Speakers Series presentations.

They are also working on developing a new set of exhibits to be presented on the main floor in order to comply with accessibility legislation.

On another note, I wish to advise that Jane Angus has agreed to help me with some of the oversight of the functions of the Brant Historical Society including review of the Society's constitutional by-laws, policies, and related procedures.

It is hoped you have noticed that we have an updated website that we continue to refine as we become more comfortable with the features of the design. We are also developing our media profile by other means - you should see the Brant Historical Society highlighted in the October edition of the BScene newspaper.

With the sale of the downtown museum to the city, we are still getting familiar with all the details in the use agreement which outlines who is responsible for which duties.

(Continued on page 2)

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.

Inside this issue

- Executive Director's Report
- News from Myrtleville
- From the Brant Museum and Archives
- Upcoming Events
- Brant Moment

Contact Us

519-752-2483

information@brantmuseums.ca

It was expected that the city would be responsible for the grounds but rereading of the agreement showed that it was our responsibility, so it was not until early August before the exterior profile of the museum was addressed.

Our apologies for the appearance and we are working to establish a routine that will ensure the grounds always look their best.

The new season has begun and your staff is excited about just how much is planned to be offered this autumn. We are a very busy staff supporting a very busy Historical Society membership and it makes us all proud to be part of this team.

Marion McGeein,
Executive Director,
Brant Historical Society

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

519 – 752 – 3216
esther.brouwer@brantmuseums.ca
Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm



There has been much going on at Myrtleville the past few months! The site was home to Summer Camp during July and August, where local youth aged 4-11 were able to spend seven weeks participating in outdoor play, crafting, baking, and community building while at our day camp.

Week one was our classic theme of Settlers, where the campers learned about the Good family's early years in Brant County and had a chance to try their hand at making jam using our very own stock of raspberries on site! Our Outer Space week was full of both campers and science, with trivia and experiments filling our days. The following week was filled with the artistic side, painting banners and enjoying our special guests from Brant Theatre Workshops.

Week four sent us into book-land, where we studied Medieval, Mythical, and Magical themes and explored the world of fantasy. In week five we took a break from the heat by breaking out the 'slip-and-slide' and various water games.

Our final two weeks covered the themes "Animal Planet" and "Under the Big Top". Campers learned about our local wildlife and put on a final talent show to finish the summer.



Left: Campers Cordelia, Nathan and Charlie having fun during our 'Under the Big Top' Week!

Right: Campers utilizing the puppets that they made during an activity hosted by Brant Theatre Workshops



Once camp had ended, our programming focus shifted to Shirefest, our historical fantasy faire that highlights local vendors. This was our second year offering the event, and with it came more vendors and more to offer visitors. A total of 15 vendors were booked and spread out around our site, including returning vendors Lisa the Lionheart, who offered handmade Tolkien-esque wares, and Dephinium Designs, who had a range of beautiful embroidered décor and book-themed pieces.

Encyclopaedia of Tea, Whitestag Workshop, and West River Soap Co. were also on-site offering teas, books, leathercraft, and bath goods; while Mazy Way Indigenous Designs sold beadwork jewelry and ethically sourced furs. On the expansive front lawn we had Bellhollow and Mystfall Live-action Role Play (LARP) groups giving demonstrations and signing up new members, while on the East lawn the vendors Halcyon Handworks, Lady of the Lathe, and author Thomas A. Knight offered their wares of ceramics, yarn works, lathe turned wood pieces, laser cut wood pieces, and fantasy novels.

Shirefest was held on September 13 and, with the weather mostly cooperating, we welcomed community members of all ages. When next year's event comes around we hope to have even more to offer!





Photo Spotlight

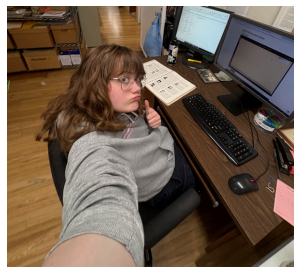
This edition's photo spotlight features a photo of the directional sign that stood at the corner of Mt. Pleasant and Colborne Street West.

The Cities Service Station stands in the background (133-135 Colborne Street West), with Pat and Mary Gullen in the foreground. Photo was taken in 1953.

Brant Museum and Archives
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

519 – 752 – 2483
information@brantmuseums.ca

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



My name is Abbey Angevine and I had the opportunity this summer to work as BHS' Walking Tour Coordinator. Currently, I am entering my third year of an Honours Specialization in History at Huron College, part of Western University.

I am an avid Brantford enthusiast, and it pains me to no end when my friends at school don't know our staples such as: Arnold Anderson, Huzul's Deli, and the likes of the Cockshutts and Harrises. Sometimes, they don't even recognize Wayne, let alone Walter. It was so exciting to have a summer job that not only allowed me to learn more about Brantford, but share my research with others who are just as interested in local history. I am always fascinated by the stories that our community has to offer.

When I started, I was eased into making my own scripts for walking tours by writing a series on Neighbourhood Veterans. My research involved existing resources such as the 1946 Album of Honour and the fantastic website created by the Great War Centenary Association. I read thousands of pages of personnel records from Library and Archives Canada and caught glimpses into the lives of hundreds of Brantford's men and their families during the war years.

While the two World Wars, no doubt, brought heartbreak and struggle, there are also endearing moments that live on in the archives. I'd find photographs of Brantford's own Dufferin Rifles (the Duffs) riding bikes or "hanging out". There were letters home about reuniting with English cousins, raving about the Christmas dinner in new billets, or "run-ins" with childhood friends in other Battalions.

Through changes in mailing addresses and listed next of kin, you can reasonably infer the stories of many a local soldier marrying an English girl, and how she sailed across the ocean and made Brantford home as she waited for her man to come home safe. My personal favourite anecdote was a letter from a young man named Arthur Jordan, with the 16th Canadian Machine Gun Company in France during the First World War. He wrote home to the Brantford Expositor in September 1917 that while resting at a YMCA tent not far from the front, he saw pictures left behind of “home sweet home.” Photographs of the Bell Homestead, 125th Battalion, and Brantford Armories touched his spirit and motivated him to continue fighting. Arthur was killed in action two months later, but preservation of our local history means his service history persists.

To write new tours of the Greenwood and Mount Hope Cemeteries, I relied on the help of Brian Moore, the Society’s regular walking tour author and presenter, and Chris Sharpe from Brantford Cemetery Services. I enjoyed writing these tours for the range of biographical content, both in material and in the era. The earliest subject passed in 1836, and the latest in 2019. There are also complex histories of the cemeteries themselves—unmarked graves, legacies of disease outbreaks, or contested burial sites. I learned how Mount Hope used to host a “pest house” (House of Pestilence) for those sick and dying during 19th-century waves of disease. I also learned of the contested “Turkish Burial Plot” and the historiographical disagreements that persist within our local community today. How history is told is just as important and challenging as uncovering the history itself.

Then, I familiarized myself with the regular routine of BHS employees and volunteers when I prepared a reworked tour of the Dufferin neighbourhood. I used the Past Perfect database, land registry books, and history books on hand to find the neighbourhood’s earliest “town fathers” (namely a niece and nephew of Joseph Brant) and the most prominent figures to later occupy the homes. I learned, for instance, that the childhood home of Lawren Harris, of the Group of Seven, on Brant Ave backed onto the home of Pauline Johnson. When they were very young, Lawren and his brother used to play pranks on her. Also, two of the most prominent local politicians at the turn of the century lived just a few doors from each other when the Liberal candidate beat the Conservative sitting member in an election upset.



The Heyd family grave marker at Greenwood Cemetery - one of the few made of metal on the site.

This experience has helped make me a more well-rounded historian. I loved the opportunity to go beyond writing the same essays and reading the same articles as every other history undergrad for the last 150 years, and write about something near to my heart. As much as I like Napoleon Bonaparte and Robert Bourassa, there is something special about researching your own high school, your own street, and the last names you've heard all your life. Working with the Historical Society taught me how to make research accessible to the public, and how to work with other archival material. My eye for cursive was never better than when I pored over giant books for exact names and dates.

Our history is incredible and is more available now than ever. Keep searching for the past of your loved ones, the house you live in or grew up in, and the area around you. I want to thank the Brant Historical Society, those who helped me research, and everyone who came out to these tours—despite the heat waves!

Meet Your Directors: Brian Moore

Brian Moore has always had an interest in history and architecture. In 2003 he volunteered to be part of the inaugural year of Doors Open Brant. This led to him becoming a member of the event's organizing team for the next ten years, serving as its chairperson for the final four years. It was during this time that Brian came to better appreciate the importance of Brantford/Brant's history and architecture, and its influence not just locally or provincially but nationally and internationally.



Brian became a member of the Brant Historical Society in Nov. 2006, elected to the Board of Directors the following month, serving for 3 ½ years (Dec. 2006 to Apr. 2010) first as Treasurer (1½ years) and later President (2 years). This experience made him more aware of the factors that currently influence our entire cultural community.

Since 2010, Brian has sought opportunities to be a program volunteer which has included: being a docent/guide at Myrtleville House Museum, and occasionally at the Brant Museum & Archives; researching and offering walking tours for the last twelve years; and, serving on the Society's Program Events Committee since 2015, and chairperson for the past seven years.

Brian has chosen to return to serve as a Board Director, providing the link between the Program Events Committee and the Board since April 2024. This linkage helps to inform the Directors' decisions as well as guiding the committee members as they strive to understand what program events are needed to satisfy the needs/desires of the Board and Society membership.

“Common Threads” exhibit is now open!

Staff and community members gathered at the Brant Museum and Archives on Wednesday, September 24th for the opening of our latest pop-up display “Common Threads: The Textile Industry in Brantford and Brant County”.

Visitors to this exhibit can learn about the different manufacturers like Kitchen Overalls, Slingsby’s Wool Mill, Mary Maxim, and more! This exhibit was put together in a partnership between the Brant Historical Society, Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, and the Paris Museum & Historical Society – with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and will be hosted at the Brant Museum and Archives until the end of February 2026.

Speakers Series

The Brant Historical Society’s Events Committee is excited to announce the return of our Speakers Series presentations for the 2025/26 season! Earlier this month, we partnered with the Canadian Military Heritage Museum of Brant to host Tim Speed from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Mount Hope. Tim spoke to a crowd of 60 attendees about the history of the Avro Arrow, and its importance to Canada.

On October 15th, we return to the Brant Museum and Archives for Brian Moore’s presentation on “Characters of the Brantford Jail”. The presentation begins at 7:00pm, and is free to attend. Please call 519-752-2483 or email information@brantmuseums.ca to register.

Fall Fundraiser Walking Tours

We have two fundraiser walking tours coming up in October: our annual “Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem” walk, as well as a tour of Greenwood Cemetery - on Halloween! More details below:

Murder, Mystery & Mayhem Walks

A historical walking tour that explores some seasonal stories of Brantford's past.

Friday Oct. 24 2025 | 7:00PM

Wednesday Oct. 29 2025 | 7:00 PM

Thursday Oct. 30 2025 | 7:00 PM

Walks begin at the Brant Museum and Archives (57 Charlotte Street)

Greenwood Cemetery Walk

Explore the heritage and history of Brantford's oldest cemetery, the prominent individuals buried here, and their accomplishments.

Friday October 31 | 7:00pm

Starting at the George St. parking lot across from Buffalo Street

Both walking tours are \$15.00 per person for BHS members and non-members. Call 519-752-2483 or email information@brantmuseums.ca to reserve your spot.

The Curious Case of John Anderson

The Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Community project is taking shape. This eagerly anticipated event comes together to celebrate Brantford's Black heritage on October 18th and 19th. Taking place at the Brant Museum and Archives and at the Laurier Academic Centre, the weekend features an exhibit curated by Christina Han, speakers from the community, a play created for the occasion by Brant Theatre Workshops, a walking tour led by Brian Moore, music and food from the community.


In the lead-up to the exhibit opening in October, we partnered with the Brantford Public Library on a series of Authors Talks relating to books about Black history. Patrick Brode, the final author scheduled for this series, wrote *The Odyssey of John Anderson*.

Anderson was a fugitive slave accused of murdering one of his pursuers. He had escaped from his Missouri master in 1853. While on the run, he had an encounter with a neighbouring slave owner that resulted in the man being killed. After escaping he travelled east to the small community of Caledonia where he learned the trade of mason and plasterer. In 1858, he was able to buy a house in Caledonia, become a respected member of the community, and fade into relative obscurity. In 1860, Brantford authorities arrested him on charges of murder. Anderson never attempted to deny the accusation that he had stabbed the Missouri slave owner but insisted that he did so to save his own life and to secure the freedom to which he was entitled.

A hearing was held in Brantford to determine if there was sufficient evidence to charge John Anderson with murder under the laws of the province. Pending the results of the hearing, Anderson could be extradited to Missouri under the conditions of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Anderson's case became a flashpoint for the community. Abolitionists spoke passionately on public platforms about the evils of slavery and meetings were organized to demand Anderson's freedom and raise a defense fund.

The trial began in November 1860 at Osgoode Hall. On the day of the judgement, Osgoode Hall - for the first time since the Rebellion of 1837 - had police positioned on the front lawns, and with bayonets fixed, troops were held ready on Simcoe Street. In its judgement, the Court of the Queen's Bench decided that under the law, extradition would be allowed. On the announcement of the decision action was swiftly taken. The British Court of the Queen's Bench issued a writ of habeas corpus and a new trial was prepared to be held in London, England. After a successful verdict, Anderson became a key figure for the abolitionists in Britain. Ultimately, Anderson settled in Liberia with no further information available on his later life.

Although high profile in nature, Anderson's case was not that much different than other black people arriving through the Underground Railroad. From its earliest history to today, Black business owners and migrant workers in Brantford, the stories are varied and impactful. More information can be found at: memoriesofbrantford.ca.

2025, Edition #3	Upcoming Events
<p><u>Upcoming Events:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Tours have returned! Check out the full fall schedule on our website. • The Woodland Cultural Centre is hosting an official opening of the former Mohawk Institute as a public museum on Sat. Sept. 30th. Keep an eye on their social media for more details. • The October Speakers Series presentation is being held on Wed. Oct. 15th at 7:00pm at the BM&A. Brian Moore will be presenting on "Characters of the Brantford Jail". • The Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Community Committee is opening their next exhibit at the BM&A on Sat. Oct. 18th! Join us to celebrate Brantford's Black Heritage. 	<div> <p>Join the Brant Historical Society on Saturday October 25th from 5:30 - 9:00pm for our 5th Annual Halloween Haunt at Myrtleville House Museum!</p> <p>This family-friendly event is held in partnership with the Myrtleville/Mayfair Neighbourhood Association, and will feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chance for you to test your bravery in the haunted historic house • A pumpkin patch to wander through (and take photos!) • A junior zone - with games, activities, and a movie or two! <p>Admission to the event is free, though donations are welcome. There will be NO PARKING on site during the event. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer, please contact Esther at 519-752-3216 or email esther.brouwer@brantmuseums.ca</p>  </div>

Brant Moment:

Submitted by: Roger Sharpe, Local Historian

In the early communities of the 1830s and 40s, the roads and bridges that linked out of the way places like Paris to the larger towns like Hamilton and London were vital to settlers. New immigrants to the area needed ways to bring in the necessities of life and established farmers needed roads and bridges to take their produce to the larger local markets.

On a highway like the Governor’s Road, that wound slowly through the heart of Upper Canada, there were broader reasons to maintain adequate communication with developing areas. In the event of war, good roads were an essential part of military strategy. The loss of a bridge on a principal road like Dundas Street could compromise vital troop movements.

The early bridges were made of wood and during the spring thaws were subject to the danger of being swept away by the swollen river and large chunks of ice. This was the case when in the spring of 1833 the Dundas Street bridge in Paris was swept away by the spring freshets. It had been built from donations collected from the local inhabitants and they were unable to again raise the money needed to rebuild.

The first notice of an intention to replace the bridge was found in the Upper Canada Gazette, October 3, 1833 which read as follows: "Notice is hereby given, that application will be made, at the next Session of the Legislature for money to build a bridge over the Grand River on Dundas Street, in the Gore District, Paris 27th April, 1833."

Manuel Overfield and others followed up this notice with a formal request to the Commons House of Assembly for a loan. It was envisioned that the next bridge would be a more permanent structure of the type with stone columns and abutments. To build on such a grand scale would require a loan which would be repaid by means of a small toll to be collected from those using it.

The chairman of the committee reviewing the petition was the Hon. Charles Duncombe, Member for the County of Oxford, who in a few years would cause such a commotion during the Mackenzie Rebellion. His committee in January 1834 recommended 1,500 pounds be lent by the government for the purpose of erecting a more permanent bridge and 2,000 pounds was eventually lent. The bridge was to be built by Mr. John Hammill who had built the Brantford covered bridge in 1833. Hiram Capron's account books show him paying Hammill \$169.11 from an account called the Bridge Account on November 9th, 1835. It was to be 230 ft. long and of a new improved plan called the diamond bridge. There were two arches and it was 24 feet wide.

From a letter written by John Smith, Paris' 1st Postmaster and village councillor, to Civil Secretary John Joseph we know that by January 1836 the structure was not quite completed. Both tracks and approaches were finished and the bridge was expected to be complete in early spring. A contract with Charles Gurney, one of Paris' early merchants and schoolteachers, had been made to operate the Toll Bridge for the first six months for the sum of 57 pounds. Any money earned over that amount would be Gurney's profit. The Provincial Legislature authorized the collection of tolls at the Paris Bridge through the Act 4 Will. IV, Ch. 44.

Many of the people of the area were unwilling to pay the toll and when the river was low. Instead, they would cut across the flats by various routes and ford the river at about where the present William Street bridge is.

Around the end of February 1838, Isaac Arnold had contracted to run the Toll Bridge for one year for 100 pounds. Arnold was well placed to operate the bridge. He had bought property in 1836 from Robert Roseburgh in the triangle of land opposite the bridge on Arnold Street. Arnold had been a gunsmith in England and was listed as a general blacksmith in the 1860s. He was the father of Charles and John Arnold who are remembered as horticulturists and long-time Paris municipal counsellors.

Isaac operated the Toll Bridge during the troublesome times of the Mackenzie Rebellion and by February 1839 he was experiencing a problem about which he wrote in a letter to the 73rd Regiment's Col. Frederick Love who commanded the area. He said that troops were passing over the bridge so frequently without paying that he was in financial trouble. In his own words, "His Majesty's forces having to pass over it so frequently as they do and for which I cannot collect any toll - In addition to this the express riders, Dragoons and teams in the service of the army are daily passing over frequently in numbers - so that I am deprived of the means to realize sufficient from the tolls..." It would appear that Arnold did not give up trying to make the operation of the Toll Bridge a success as the 1841 bridge report noted the balance of his contract due in August 1840 was not paid until November 1841.

The subsequent Tollkeeper, Mr. Robert Kirkwood, was also late paying the balance of his contract due in March 1841. He was eventually able to pay in November 1841. The Tollkeeper after Kirkwood, Mr. Darby Quigley, was able to make his first quarter payment but fell behind and had to wait until December to make his September payment. In 1843 the Bridge Committee was still trying to collect money owed by Quigley through legal means. From a careful check of the accounting report it does not look like the Tollkeeping business was a money-making venture at that time.

By 1841 the bridge was in a dilapidated condition and 21 pounds was spent for new planking on the east side approach. The report also noted that the local Justice of the Peace William Granville Curtis had fined a user \$2.00 for going over the bridge at “faster than a walk.” There were also several other expenses noted such as 1 pound to Levi Boughton, the local builder of Paris’ beautiful cobblestone houses, for repairing stonework on a bridge pier. In 1842/43 the government spent a further 313 pounds on improvements to the bridge.

The author of the 1843 report noted that the Tollkeeper or his employee would have to be more diligent in watching the bridge as he had crossed with a wagon and had met two others who had crossed without being asked to pay tolls.

The contract to operate the bridge in 1843 and 1844 was for 140 Pounds. The 1843 report also mentions that Duncombe had kept about 175 pounds of the Bridge Commissions assets when he made his escape in 1837.

Local history reveals that in March 1852 a great flood carried the bridge away, isolating the village. To replace it, an engineer who was building the Great Western Railway bridge, was contracted to replace it and completed the new bridge within 30 days. Yet from government sources it was reported that the bridge was burned down in 1847. After this report no further mention of the bridge is found in government reports. Clearly further research is needed to reconcile the two accounts.

No picture of Paris’ early Toll Bridge has yet been found but it must have been a quaint addition to, “The Prettiest Town in Canada.”

Tolls for the Paris Bridge in 1844

Wagon with 4 horses	9 ½ Pence
Wagon with 2 horses	7 ½ Pence
Wagon with 1 horse	5 Pence
Saddle horse and rider	1 ½ Pence
2 oxen and cart or wagon	3 ½ Pence
Each extra yoke of oxen	2 Pence
2 horse cart or caleche	3 ½ Pence
Horse, each	1 Pence
Cow, ox, or colt without shoes, or other quadrupeds	1 Pence
Every foot passenger	0 Pence

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: _____