

JUNE 26 2026 | BRANTMUSEUMS.CA | 519-752-2483



### **Message from the Board Chair**

Here we are half way through 2026 already and our Board has been busy with the different facets of keeping the Historical Society active and the Museum & Archives open and relevant.

We had our AGM on Wed April 22 at Myrtleville House and after all the reporting was done we elected our current Board of Directors. A few members not be returning and we added Marion McGeein as our newest member who was elected as Vice Chair. For the past two and a half years Marion has been acting as our volunteer Executive Director but was looking for a way to be of more help and becoming a Board member allows her more of a voice. The position of ED has not been filled and the duties of that position are being handled by other members of the Board.

The Board has set a series of Management Goals that will be the focus of our attention over the coming year. We are also busy revising our Collections Policy in preparation for reviewing our current collection.

We just had a visit at Myrtleville House from Patricia Kell, Executive Director of the National Trust during which she walked the property to make sure that any work that needs to be done is noted. The Board of the Trust are all coming for a visit and meeting in October.

As always, our Speakers Series and our Walking Tours are being planned and our Summer Camp at Myrtleville will be getting underway in a few weeks. We have summer staff at both the Brant Museum & Archives and Myrtleville which certainly helps with the workload.

Have a great summer everyone.  
-Murray Angus, Board Chair

### 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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- Events Committee Update
- Photo Spotlight
- Brant Moment

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

On Wednesday June 17th, 50-plus people gathered for the BHS year end barbeque and potluck at Myrtleville House Museum. This year we were unable to celebrate the event out in the garden, due to forecasted inclement weather. Wet though it was, our spirits were not dampened (pun intended), and the event was quickly relocated to the drive shed which provided a warm and cozy atmosphere for the festivities.

The evening began with time for visiting with friends, old and new, as staff and members of the Program and Events Committee put final touches to the evening's events. Committee Chair, Brian Moore, formally welcomed members and guests and announced some of the coming initiatives shaping up for the fall season. Esther Brouwer, staff member at Myrtleville House, offered a tidbit of history reading from the journal entry of one of the Good family children about the historic gardens. We encourage all to visit the historic gardens and see nature's abundance in bloom.

Following a wonderful meal of salads, desserts and barbecued sausages and hamburgers (thanks to volunteer Kevin Verdonk, who manned the grill), guests were treated to the musical talents of The Bell City Strummers, a local group of ukulele enthusiasts under the direction of Catherine Gorecki and Genevieve Rochette. This skillful group offered up a variety of tunes for all to enjoy and the audience was even invited to sing along.

Our thanks to The Bell City Strummers for sharing their music with us that night and thanks to all who attended and offered their support. It was a wonderful kick-off to the summer season and we are grateful to all who came!

Submitted by: Cathy Dilts, member of the BHS Events Committee

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

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

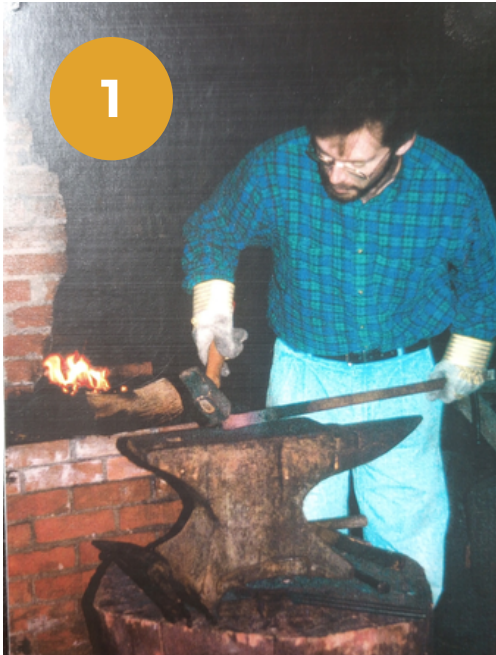
Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm



July 8 marks the start of another year of Summer Camp at Myrtleville House. Looking through pictures of past years, it is interesting seeing what has changed and what remained a constant over time. We've always had a focus on early settler days for at least one themed week; with visiting blacksmiths, animal interactions, and learning kitchen skills of the past like canning. Special guests have also included woodcarvers like Carl Banfil, and local Celebrities like Doug the Great. Our daily crafts have utilized materials that might normally become garbage and turned it into keepsakes much like our predecessors would have done.

While the Good family never hosted a summer camp, they had a long history of education. Allen taught the oldest of his ten children himself, first with copying writings, and then on to Shakespeare without delay. When Anne, his oldest, was fifteen, Allen employed a Mr. Wright to teach the five oldest from the library in the house. By 1847, Mr. Wright had given up on teaching at the house and left in a hurry. The three boys were sent off to a school in town, while Anne, now 16, took charge of her own education, and that of her younger sisters. By the time her brother Tom's children were of age, she became their school mistress as well!

Over the coming 9 weeks, this year's group of campers will engage in crafts and activities ranging from themes of Sports, in honour of the World Cup, to Storybook Adventurers. Camp runs from July 8 to September 4, Monday to Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm. In the photos on the next page you can see campers from a few years ago all the way back to 1997, soon after we started hosting camp on the site! Hard to believe it's been 30 years of fun!



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**Photos:**

1: A Blacksmith volunteer shows campers how to forge S hooks at the forge in the Workshop, 1997

2: Campers cook a meal in foil over the fire pit, 1997

3: Campers meet and greet with our summer student's pet goats, 2022

4: The next generation of young blacksmiths with volunteer Keith Cripps, 2022

5: Learning how to put on a show stopping performance with Doug the Great, 2005

6: The Driveshed has been the center of crafts and activities since the beginning! 2005

In collaboration with the Brantford Station Neighbourhood Association (BSNA), the Brant Historical Society has hosted a series of knitting and crocheting workshops to help meet the BSNA's goal of 10,000 knitted/crocheted poppies, which will be stitched together to create a veil to be displayed on a site of remembrance within the Downtown area of the city (site yet to be determined).

We are happy to announce that the goal of 10,000 poppies has been reached! The BSNA is now aiming to double the original goal and have 20,000 poppies by the end of September.

If you are interested in attending future workshops, dates and times are listed below:

Tues. July 14: Myrtleville House Museum, 34 Myrtleville Dr. 5:30 - 8:00pm

Thurs. Aug. 6: Myrtleville House Museum, 34 Myrtleville Dr. 5:30 - 8:00pm

Tues. Sept. 15: Brant Museum and Archives, 57 Charlotte St. 5:30 - 8:00pm

Poppy netting assembly workshops are being planned as well, and will be announced at a later date.

If you have any questions, contact Lillia:  
lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca

Brant Museum and Archives  
Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6

519 - 752 - 2483  
information@brantmuseums.ca

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



This summer, the Brant Museum and Archives has been lucky enough to welcome three summer students to our site! They have provided introductions below, as well as some details as to what they are working on during their time with us. Make sure to say hello the next time you come by the museum!



My name is Abbey Angevine, and this is my second year as a summer student for the Brant Historical Society. Working at the museum is a great opportunity to hone the research and archival skills I'm working towards at university. I am entering my fourth year at Huron College, part of Western University, specializing in history. Afterwards, I hope to go to law school.

This summer, I am conducting preliminary research for Brantford's 150th anniversary of becoming a city (and 180th of being a town), which is coming up in 2027. So far, this has involved poring over histories of Brantford and its institutions and reading every Brantford Expositor clipping you can imagine. The exhibit will focus on lesser-known aspects of the city's history. I try to consider something that the museum has already covered, be it in a book, program, or exhibit, and then investigate primary sources to see which aspects haven't been shared yet.

I have another project I am working on this summer as well. I have a grant to research the Cockshutt Plant News, a monthly newsletter published by the Cockshutt Plow Company during WWII. I'm using the newsletter as a guide to write a history of the factory, and working class Brantford-ians during WWII. This research will culminate in a digital story map that will be made accessible to the public.

I am very grateful to be working at the museum again this summer, and hope you all enjoy learning from the work that I am doing!



My name is Grace Ratelband, and I am delighted to be one of the summer students working with the Brant Historical Society as a research assistant in 2026!

I am currently pursuing my Bachelor of Arts & Science with History from McMaster University: a program which has allowed me the opportunity to study everything from physics and chemistry to global politics while gaining hands-on experience with historical research in the university archives.

As an avid reader and writer, my passion for local history has evolved directly from my passion for storytelling. Born and raised in Brantford, I have experienced firsthand the amazing feeling that comes with discovering the past behind somewhere you know and love: something often hidden, sometimes bizarre, yet always richer and more interesting than you might think. There has been nothing more rewarding than the chance to share those incredible stories with others, which I am honoured to do this summer in my role creating and conducting walking tours of Brantford and Brant County!

Currently, I am working on developing a walking tour of the wonderful St. George, along with a Brant County tour following the events and key locations of the Rebellion of 1837. I am so happy to be able to help realize the Brant Historical Society's mission this year, both preserving our past and helping people to encounter and connect with it firsthand. Thank you!



My name is Julia Gilman, and I'm a recent graduate of Fleming College's Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management program. The program primarily provided me with knowledge and training on collections care, material degradation, preventive conservation, and conservation practices and techniques.

At the Brant Museum and Archives, I sort, organize, and catalogue a 10-year backlog of artifacts awaiting accession into the PastPerfect database. I provide detailed descriptions based on each artifact's physical attributes and history, assign accession numbers, and accurately record information about each item's location to ensure reliable records. I also make recommendations when I notice any material degradation and suggest treatments that can be done by trained conservation professionals.

I like to say that opening boxes is like opening presents, and it's even better when it contains paperwork. As the end of my contract at the Brant Museum and Archive approaches, so far, I have accessioned about 319 artifacts and organized the shelf that contained all the archival boxes, folders and accessioning tools. I even found a few artifacts and paperwork tucked away in there.

I really appreciate the time and experience working here. I look forward to applying the knowledge and skills I've developed here toward my long-term goal of specializing in book and paper conservation.

## Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Communities

Members of the "Memories" Committee were lucky enough to participate in the first annual "Tulips and Maples: Dutch-Canadian Liberation Celebration" at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026. Although the weather did not cooperate as we hoped - there was snow at times during the day! - around 300 visitors came to the event to talk to vendors, view museum exhibits, listen to live music, and celebrate the Canadian efforts to liberate the Netherlands during the Second World War. Special thanks goes out to the event organizer, Will Prinzen, as well as to 'Cash N' More' - a band that came all the way from the Netherlands to play for us!

The "Memories" Committee is hard at work conducting research and oral history interviews to collect information for our next exhibit, which focuses on the Dutch community in Brantford. If you or someone you know would be interested in sharing their story, please reach out! Anyone interested in being interviewed or loaning objects/photos for the exhibit can contact Lillia at 519-752-2483 or email [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca).

The exhibit opens on Saturday, October 17th - more details will be shared as they become available.

### MEMORIES OF BRANTFORD'S DUTCH COMMUNITY

The Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Communities Committee is looking to interview members of Brantford's Dutch Community!

If you are interested in sharing your story, or loaning objects for our October 2026 exhibit, please contact Lillia at  
[lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca)  
or 519-752-2483

To learn more about previous Memories Projects, visit: <https://memoriesofbrantford.ca/>



### Brant Historical Society's Upcoming Exhibits

September - December 2026: A Tribute to Robert Whale. Main floor gallery room

September - December 2026: Paintings of Alice Pilant. Gift Shop Gallery

October 2026 - August 2027: Memories of Brantford's Dutch Community.  
Second Floor Galleries

January 2027 - August 2027: Brantford's 150th Anniversary. Main Floor Galleries

Staff is looking to conduct oral history interviews for the "Brantford 150" exhibit. If you have stories to share relating to the 1977 Centenary Celebrations or the 1977 Snowstorm, let us know!

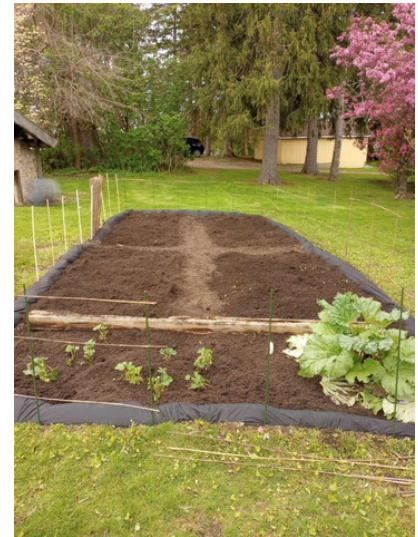
Email Lillia at [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca) for more information.

## **Events Committee Updates**

Provided by: Brian Moore, Committee Chair

This spring we have offered walking tours on Wednesday evenings as well as Saturday mornings. For both time slots we have averaged 6 people per tour. There are still opportunities to attend the “Black Heritage” walk which is supplemental to the “Roots & Routes” exhibit. A new walk: “Historical Strands of West Brantford” will be offered by Garry Burns on Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. One of our summer staff will offer walks throughout the summer, and look for our fall walk schedule soon.

On Saturday, May 9th Myrtleville House Museum was one of the sites of the 2026 Doors Open Along the Grand event. An average of 30 people per hour visited our site over six hours, and visitors lingered longer than the normal 20-30 minutes. Also, there was a great deal of interest in the Brantford Garden Club display presented in the Program Room.



Left: Brian offering tours of the property to Doors Open attendees  
Right: The Heritage Garden - all cleaned up and ready for planting thanks to help from Alex, a member of the Garden Club

At the Speakers Series this spring, Bruce E. Hill presented “Grand River Navigation Company: Winners, Losers & Scoundrels” on Wednesday April 15th offering great insights to the 32 attendees about the various individuals who were affected by the construction, operation, and demise of the Grand River Canal. John Bullen of the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum returned to offer “Barriers & Obstacles: Women Pilots Who Blazed a Trail in Canadian Aviation” on Wednesday, May 18th at the Military Museum to an audience of 40 people. Several attendees remarked that they had never heard of any of the women mentioned – “What a great shame.”

We have recruited a number of speakers for 2026-27. Claudine VanEvery-Albert, Yakowennatoken will start our season on Wednesday, September 23rd, 2026 presenting “Stories of My Life on Six Nations.” This is an ideal opportunity for people to learn about life and traditions on Six Nations. Further presenters will include Sarah Clarke presenting “Brantford: An Underground Railway Terminus” in February, and Lillia Dockree offering “Executions at the Brantford Jail” in May. The complete list of presenters and topics should be available shortly.

Upcoming Events:

- Summer Staff will be offering a few **walking tours** throughout July and August - keep an eye on our Facebook page and email blasts for more information!
- Celebrate **Historic Places Day** with BHS Staff in Downtown Paris on **Sat. July 11<sup>th</sup>** from 10:00am - 4:00pm
- **Black Community Heritage Walk:** Wed. July 29<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm, starting at Alexandra Park. Email [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca) to register
- BHS Staff will be out at the Bell Homestead on **Sat. Aug 8<sup>th</sup>** from 11:00 - 4:00pm celebrating the **150<sup>th</sup> Ann.** of the long distance phone call between Brantford and Paris. Join us!
- **Historical Strands of West Brant Walk:** Wed. Aug. 19<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00pm, starting at the Cordage District. Email [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca) to register
- The BHS **Speakers Series** returns in September! Stay tuned for the final schedule

The Brant Historical Society is out for another adventure! On the evening of Friday, September 25th we have reserved a section of seating at the Whistling Gardens in Townsend, Norfolk to view the spectacular Festival of Fountains. Owner and mastermind behind the performance, Darren Heimbecker, has spent years composing and orchestrating a show of lights and fountains that dazzle and enchant. Bringing this traditional art form into the 20th century with 100 computerized fountain pumps, his own musical composition and coordinated with a laser and fiber optic lights. The show runs just over 90 minutes and has been described as magical, and a 10 out of 10!

Doors open at 7pm and guests are welcome to tour the extensive 22 acre gardens before the show begins shortly after sunset. In fact the ticket grants you all day access to the gardens if you would like to come earlier, although the garden is closed 5-7 for set up. The guitar and saxophone duet Wind and Wire will perform in the temple garden before the show. Drinks and light snacks will be available for purchase at the Rosebud cafe on the grounds (cash only).

Tickets are \$30.00 (tax included) for this event. To purchase please contact Lillia Dockree at the Brant Museum and Archives at (519) 752-2483 or by email at [lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca](mailto:lillia.dockree@brantmuseums.ca). If you would like more information about the Whistling Gardens or the Festival of Fountains, (including video sneak peaks) visit the Whistling Gardens website at [www.whistlinggardens.ca](http://www.whistlinggardens.ca).



## Photo Spotlight

This edition's photo spotlight features an image taken in 1976 from the Brantford General Hospital, showing the Brantford Carriage Company building and the White Farm Equipment storage area on Pearl Street.

Also visible in the background are the towers of St. Basil's and Grace Anglican churches, and the bell tower of the Federal Building, now Brantford City Hall.

## **INFLUENTIAL SLAVE NARRATIVE LAST PUBLISHED IN BRANTFORD**

Submitted by: Abbey Angevine, BHS Summer Staff

In 1837, an African American man who had escaped enslavement first published his memoir, titled *Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery*. This work was published for the last time here in Brantford in 1849.

Moses Roper escaped slavery in Florida in 1834 when he was about 19 years old and fled to the northern United States. He moved to England a year later and began a career of remarkable activism. After Roper learned to read and write, he published his memoir.

While there were active abolitionist circles in Great Britain at the time, Roper was one of the first fugitive slaves able to share his own story. Print materials and lectures were dominated by white abolitionists, and it was difficult for Black activists to advocate for themselves without heavy control and editing. A minister named Thomas Price wrote a preface to the first edition of Moses Roper's slave narrative. The historian John Sekora describes this white authority over Black narratives as a "black message sealed within a white envelope."

Men in religious groups, such as Price, the Reverend John Morison, and the Reverend Francis Cox paid for Roper's education and helped him establish himself in England, but expected Roper to turn to missionary work in return. When Roper did not do what they wanted and continued his campaigning for the U.S. abolition of slavery, these men turned on him and denounced him publicly.

Part of why white abolitionists exerted such control over Black activists is because they worried that others would believe, or believed themselves, that Black people were untrustworthy. Roper was accused of lying about the severity of punishments towards enslaved people in the United States. People trusted white "experts" over formerly enslaved people with lived experience. When he lost the support of white abolitionists, it became very difficult for Roper to work on his own.

Roper lived in Canada roughly between 1844 and 1861. All four of his children grew up in Canada. One was born crossing the Atlantic, two in Quebec, and one in Nova Scotia. Roper later moved back to the United States and died in Boston in 1891.

The 1849 edition of Roper's *Narrative* was published in the Brantford Courier office by the Courier's editor, Thomas Lemmon. The Courier was the oldest newspaper in Brantford, originally run by Lemmon's son-in-law and called the Brantford Sentinel. The Courier ceased publication in 1918. This edition is distinct because it does not feature any illustrations. Earlier editions of Roper's *Narrative* included drawings that depicted the experiences of enslaved African Americans in the United States.

I learned about Moses Roper at university this year, in a class on book history. My professor singled me out after class to ask why I figured Roper's narrative might have been published for the last time in Brantford. To be honest, I'm not sure. While I know that printer Thomas Lemmon was an outspoken man and likely on the side of William Lyon Mackenzie during the Upper Canada Rebellion, I haven't come across any other evidence that he was an anti-slavery activist. Hopefully, one day we can encounter something that uncovers the mystery of why Moses Roper printed in Brantford, and why Thomas Lemmon said yes.

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

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