



# NEWSLETTER

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November 2018

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been a season of steady progress for the CIHC. The highlight, in June, was the unveiling of a new acquisition, a model 500 series Cockshutt tractor that was donated to us. The event was held at the Waterford Heritage and Agricultural Museum where much of our collection of farm implements is displayed. Launched 60 years ago, the 500 series marked a new beginning for the Cockshutt Farm Equipment Company and boasted outstanding design and engineering features. A full report on the event is in this newsletter.

Our publications, the Cockshutt Plant Newsletters for the war years 1943 and 1944, continue to sell and to attract interest. They have been purchased by the national Museums of Agriculture and of Science and Technology, the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History. The latter two are offering the publications for sale in their gift shops. The CIHC hopes to publish the newsletters for 1942 and 1945 as well if copies of the originals can be located.

Another publishing project also got underway this year. The CIHC plans to commission an historical study of how the National Policy of Sir John A. Macdonald affected Brantford and turned its industry into a powerful engine for the development of Ontario and the opening of the Canadian West. This story has links not only to our national political history but also to contemporary issues such as the recent renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. There are even links to Canadian literature; novels by Brantford authors such as Sara Jeanette Duncan – *The Imperialist* – and Thomas B. Costain – *Son of a Hundred Kings* – describe the city at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century during its period of industrial expansion. We are currently seeking an academic historian familiar with Ontario history to undertake the study.

Another area of research that touches on national history is the Cockshutt Moulded Aircraft Plant. This plant, still in existence on Mohawk Street, was hastily constructed in 1943 to produce the lightweight (balsa and plywood) components for the Anson and Mosquito bombers during the Second World War. These aircraft proved highly effective against German fighters in the latter stages of the war. Our hope is to piece together the story of this innovative project from existing records.

The CIHC proposal to create an industrial heritage park at 66 Mohawk Street, incorporating the old Time Office and the historic Portico into a two acre park is still on hold as the City considers development options for the area. We have collaborated with other local groups to draft a vision of a heritage area stretching from Mohawk Lake to the Mohawk Chapel and including the Military Heritage Museum, the Moulded Aircraft Plant, and the Residential School. Further public consultations are being planned by the City for the months ahead

Finally, and on a sad note, we lost our Patron, Bill Cockshutt, last February. He had been an inspiration and guiding light to the CIHC, and his books "About Cockshutt" and "Merchants Exchange" are the definitive works on the company and the family. Bill and his sister Janice, who died shortly after him, were our most loyal and steadfast supporters.

Please remember to renew your memberships. A form is included with this newsletter.

John Kneale

## News and Notes from the Newsletter Editor:

We have some interesting contributions from our Directors in this issue, with reports on 2018 activities:



We thank **Rob Adlam** for the hard effort and many hours put forth to arrange with Waterford Museum the June tractor gala event. It began with the presentation to CIHC of the 556 tractor by **George Burgin**, hauling it to the Waterford site, cleaning it up, working with the Waterford team to create the museum exhibit, advertising it, and it culminated in the gala grand opening of the display. Several CIHC members attended the event. We include in our newsletter an article written by Rob. Also, Rob has been invited to speak on Friday, February 15 for **GRCA Annual Heritage kDay** at the Sanderson Centre, about the **Development of Industry in Brantford**, with an emphasis on the farm implement industry and its effects on the downtown and the development of Brantford. It is a free day-long event organized

by the Heritage Working Group of the GRCA and the City of Brantford, and includes lunch. Sign up at [www.2019heritagedayworkshop.eventbrite.com](http://www.2019heritagedayworkshop.eventbrite.com). 2019 is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sanderson Centre.

2018 is an anniversary year for a man who was important in Brant's agricultural history, a person whose presence many local people were unaware of - **The Hon. Geo. Brown** - whose 200<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated at the annual June picnic of the Brant Historical Society. Known not only as a Father of Confederation, but also a wealthy businessman and pioneer scientific farmer in the agricultural industry, Brown established his farm at Bow Park Farm 150 years ago. Included in our newsletter is this story of his contribution to Brant's history.

Earlier this year CIHC members toured the **Cockshutt Moulded Aircraft Plant** on Mohawk St. John has announced plans for a new publication relating to Cockshutt's production of aircraft in the Second World War. In October, I represented CIHC at a talk at Myrtleville, for the **Brant Historical Society**, by retired Veterinarian **Garry Balsdon**, a volunteer at the **Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum**. He is very witty and knowledgeable about many warplanes, and told many stories. Including the role played by Brantford in building parts for several types of planes for assembly in aircraft plants, including moulded bodies. The planes were used for training and combat in the Second World War. Dr. Balsdon has agreed to meet with our Directors to share his information.



The County of Brant Public Library is presenting a series of **Lightning Lectures** in a **Local History Road Show** in Brant. Gary Jermy, the Community Outreach Librarian, has arranged for six short talks by local historians representing local heritage organizations, at St. George Museum, on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. On behalf of CIHC, **Ray Wright** will make a presentation on **The Development of Local Railways**. Our participation is an excellent way to publicize CIHC. Please take advantage of this opportunity to support local history. The series will continue in 2019 at various sites.

Jean Farquharson

## A Day in the Spotlight for Old 556

by Rob Adlam

Saturday, June 16, 2018 was a special day in the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of the Cockshutt 500 Series tractor line. On this day a gathering of over 70 people came together to attend the Gala Opening of "The New Cockshutt: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 500 Series" exhibit, sponsored by the Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, from Brantford, and hosted by the Waterford Heritage & Agricultural Museum, in Waterford, Ontario. The enthusiastic crowd was a mixture of local tractor collectors, ICCI members (including special guests Tony and Jane Cockshutt, and ICCI President Greg Brown), and former Cockshutt employees.



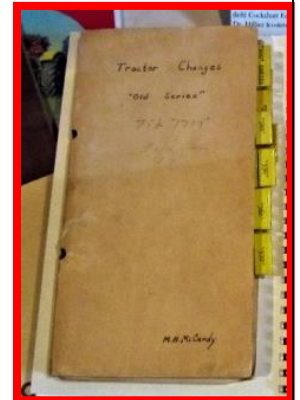
### Showcasing the Power-ific 500 Series

A unique selection of artifacts, all related to the 500 Series, was collected together and put on display, including original sales literature, 500 Series toy tractors, printer's blocks depicting the tractors from farm magazine ads, Chief Engineer Ivan MacRae's business card, Cockshutt Engineer's original Tractor



Changes Log Book, video footage of the "Cockshutt Charivari" and TV commercials by Joel Aldred, and Cockshutt's World Hay Award on loan from the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

All these wonderful pieces aided in providing context for the main attraction - the only known experimental field test prototype 550 tractor still to exist. I have come to refer to the tractor as "Old 556".

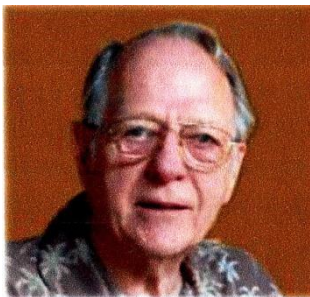


### Custodian of history



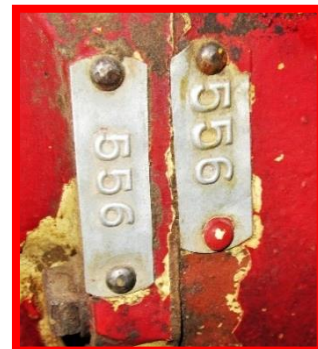
For the past 20 years this tractor has been owned by ICCI member George Burgin. George owns and operates The Heritage Barn Museum, at his home farm in Kirkton, Ontario. He has dedicated many years to collecting, preserving, and telling the story of a slowly disappearing institution – the family farm. George is a wealth of historical and technical information on farm machinery, and as such he has collected many rare pieces of equipment. That is why he recognized, many years ago, the unique value that is embodied in this tractor. As part of his ongoing commitment to public education, he has generously donated this experimental Cockshutt 550 tractor to the Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, so that it will continue to be utilized for public benefit, and we thank him for his foresight and generosity.



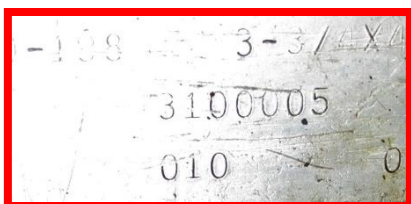


**For Bill:** This exhibit is dedicated in honour of Bill Cockshutt, who passed away in February of this year. Bill would have loved the gathering, it was his kind of event. Bringing people together to honour their collective heritage was a goal he worked on for many years. A great deal of the research and items that make up the display are a direct result of his tireless work. I can think of no better way to honour someone than to carry on with the work that they deemed important. Each of us in the ICCI is doing just that, and we must continue to tell our stories. That is what Bill would want.

**A very special tractor:** Old 556 belongs to a very elite group of Cockshutt tractors. There were ten experimental 550's assembled for field testing by the engineering group. Since these tractors were pre-production units, they did not bear a stamped serial number on the tub frame. The only identification was in the form of two aluminum tags riveted side by side where the engine tub casting and transmission casting meet at the clutch pedal. This tractor, being #556, was the sixth unit of the ten produced.



There is also very good evidence to indicate that these test models pre-date Cockshutt's 1957 Golden Arrow tractors, that were released as promotional units before the 500 Series went into production. A photograph published in the Cockshutt Quarterly of July, 1994 was part of an article entitled "Cockshutt 30 Deluxe: Fact or Fiction?". The photograph shows the prototype Cockshutt 30 Deluxe tractor, which is quite a story itself, but what is clearly shown in the background of the shot is a partial view of one of the experimental 500 Series tractors. The photograph is dated September, 1955 and it is very possible that the tractor shown is one from the group Old 556 belongs to. Other than mounted nose weights, this tractor carries all the options offered by Cockshutt for the line, including: power steering, Wheatland fenders, front and rear wheel weights, belt pulley, LPTO, 3-point hitch, depth and draft control hydraulics, hydraulic pump disengage lever (found only on diesel models), and adjustable wide front axle. Originally the tractor was painted entirely in Harvest Gold but was later converted to the "Red Belly" paint scheme.



**It's all about the numbers:** As previously mentioned, the tractor has no stamped serial number on the tub frame and is identified only by two aluminum test unit tags, both bearing the number 556. To further establish the age of Old 556, the engine identification plate is stamped with the number 3100005, making it the fifth engine of this model produced by the Hercules Co. of Canton, Ohio.

**People and Places:** At the Gala Opening, one former employee introduced himself to me and explained that it was his father who made the dies to form the hoods of the 500 Series tractors. A mistake was made and too heavy of a gauge of steel was ordered, and instead of transforming the steel sheet into Raymond Loewy's famous design, it ruined the dies. Months of his father's work had been destroyed! Every success story is often built upon several setbacks. These are the type of personal stories that such a rich flavour to the people behind the creation of the machine.

It isn't known for sure where all the places the tractor has been, but it did pass through at least four different owners before George Burgin. At one point, a previous owner used it to pull a boat dock out of the water at his cottage.

Old 556 is displayed, not as a restored tractor, but as an original classic, or in the terms of some – "in its working clothes". You will find peeling paint, some corrosion, grease and wear – all the signs of a productive working life. What you will also find is a rare example of the skill and innovation that went into the early testing and development that preceded all general production tractors that came off the assembly line in Brantford. The testing conditions these experimental tractors were subjected to were severe and Old 556 is a survivor. As such we honour the heritage it represents and those who brought it into reality.

# GEORGE BROWN AND BOW PARK FARM: THE PRIDE OF BRANT AND CANADA

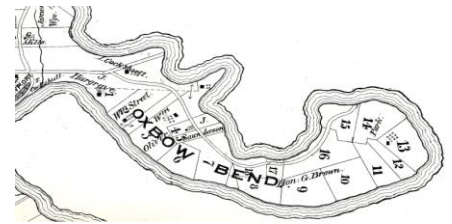
By Jean Farquharson



This year is the 200<sup>th</sup> celebration of the birth of one of Brant County's most famous residents – the Honourable George Brown, who was a very active and vocal Reformist politician; Premier of the Province of Canada for four days in a “double shuffle”; a Father of Confederation; founder of The Globe newspaper; a successful businessman; and, unknown to many Canadians, a **scientific farmer** in Brant County.

2018 is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brant County's **Bow Park Farm**, owned by Brown between 1866 and 1880. To celebrate the anniversary, the Brant Historical Society's Annual June 2018 Picnic was held at Bow Park Farm. Councillor Dan McCreary represented the City of Brantford, and Mayor Eddy spoke for the County of Brant in a special ceremony and presentation to honour the occasion and share a birthday cake. Owners Willie Hilgendag, and his wife Petra, proud Canadians, have created a small museum showing the life of Brown and the history of the farm. Willie provided a tour and talk to all who attended. Ruth Lefler wrote an article in the Expositor. BHS is holding a birthday party to honour him on Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>.

Beautiful Bow Park Farm composes the “tongue” of the large oxbow surrounded by the Grand River near the Cockshutt Bridge. The rich oxbow land contains over 900 acres of ideal farmland, now used for growing seed.



Earlier in his career, Brown represented Bothwell area in Parliament, and propitiously invested in land there. ~~Later came the oil rush at Oil Springs and land prices exploded.~~ Selling off, Brown used some of the money to invest in the Oxbow Bend of the Grand River in Brant County, obtaining a large acreage from various owners. He named it Bow Park Farm, and developed it into a model farm for the rest of the world. Often his name would be mentioned in ads in the **Farmer's Advocate** endorsing a product. He experimented with gypsum or “land plaster” as a fertilizer, when fertilizers were being newly developed. The 1881 Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture mentions his name. He used newly-invented implements to work his land and sow, reap and improve the crops. invested in large buildings which housed a superior herd of 330 purebred Shorthorn cattle, one of the largest in the world.

He also bred Clydesdale horses, Berkshire pigs and Cotswald sheep, and won many awards at local fairs. At one of the regular cattle auctions he held, he arranged for the Grand Trunk Railway to put on special trains to his station siding for the occasion. The reputation of his stock-raising farm spread far and wide. In fact, because he was far ahead of his time, eventually this investment led to financial problems.

might have retained his wealth if he had followed through with his agreement to help file for the patent to the telephone, and taken advantage of investing in a half interest in **Alexander Graham Bell's** new company.

Brown loved to watch things grow and enjoyed the peace and quiet of this haven with his wife, young children, and pet dog when he had time to get away from his political life as a senator and running the Globe newspaper, a responsibility he shared with his brother Gordon. Also his wife Anne pressured him constantly to return on trips to their beloved homeland, Scotland. He also led a busy social life to keep within the circle of influential people. In fact, he and his wife Anne, used Bow Park Farm to entertain their new friends, the Earl of Dufferin, Canada's new Governor-General, and his wife, the Countess, who were on a vice-regal tour. They held an elegant formal dinner party in a tent, serving champagne and four other wines. Brown was a devoted Presbyterian, and when at the farm, the family regularly attended Zion Church in Brantford, often with many of his employees surrounding them.

By 1876, the farm, with its extensive buildings, implements, livestock and intensively cultivated fields, was worth an estimated \$450,000, and had as many as 35 employees in the busy season. He made a proposal to the public of a joint-stock company with the boards of directors from Canada and England, the Company's permanent agent in England, and

himself, continuing to run the estate. His confidence and salesmanship convinced enough investors, mostly in Scotland, to allow Brown to arrange to charter the **Canada West Farm-Stock Association**. His neighbour and political associate, Brant politician David Christie, who was by then Speaker of the Senate, became the Vice-President.

This was to be a large scale agricultural company on a size never before attempted in Canada. It would depend mainly on cattle sales. With the extra money from investors, more cattle were purchased and upgrades made.

By January of 1879, Bow Park was in obvious financial difficulties. Because of low market demand of cattle, border restrictions, and Brown's optimistic decision to keep increasing production and at the same time not reducing costs in spite of increasing debts and interest rates, the situation brought an extended visit from cattle breeder John Clay, the Company agent in Britain, to examine the books and report to shareholders. British shareholders refused to invest any more money and sent Clay back to manage the farm.

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, tragedy hit the farm. A rosy light lit Brantford skies. The farm was on fire! Seven of the ten main buildings were burned to ashes, and many animals were lost. Brown and Clay struggled to maintain the farm, and Brown used his own resources to cover emergency costs and begin rebuilding.

Then, on the early on Christmas Day, the stable being refitted burned to the ground, with horses and equipment lost, obviously the work of an incendiary. Broken-hearted, after returning to see the devastation, Brown never returned to the farm again, but remained in his Toronto mansion, Lambton Lodge.

Then another tragedy happened. One day, in the office of the Globe, Brown refused to give a disgruntled ex-employee, an alcoholic, a statement of his 5 years of service. An argument broke out. The unstable man, angry at his refusal, pulled out a pistol, and Brown tried to subdue him and grab the weapon. In the struggle Brown was shot in the leg. He continued on with his busy life, but contracted blood poisoning. Unable to overcome it, he lapsed into a coma. A week later, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1880, at the age of 61, Brown died of blood poisoning.

Thus ended the life of the man who was probably more responsible than any other politician in the formation and birth of Canada, but who was lesser known as a businessman and scientific farmer and a resident of Brantford Township in Brant County.

Memorial plaques and statues have been set up in Toronto, Brant County and Ottawa, and George Brown College in Toronto has been named after him. And the Globe and Mail and Bow Park Farm live on!

#### Sources:

Careless, J.M.S. *Brown of the Globe: Volume two: Statesman of Confederation 1860-1880*. Dundurn Pr., 1989.

Ontario Agricultural Commission. *Report of the Commissioners*. Toronto, Queens Printer, 1881

### **THE WORLD REMEMBERS**, by Bill Darfler

On November 11, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa presented a concert of memorial music, a co-commission by the NAC and "The World Remembers" a project led by R.H. Thomson. Sarah Jennings, journalist, author and member of NAC Board gave financial support for this performance. The concert was dedicated to the memory of Col. J. Ewart Osborne, D.S.O. and Col. Henry Campbell Osborne, C.M.G., C.B. E.

Ewart and Henry were the sons of James Kerr Osborne who was Vice President of **A. Harris and Son Co., Ltd.**, early farm equipment manufacturers who moved their plant from Beamsville, Ontario to Brantford in 1872. J.K. fathered four sons in Brantford, Ewart and Henry plus a son who died in infancy and John Woodburn Osborne who died in the Boer War and whose name is on the monument in front of the Armoury in Brantford. Henry Osborne was the Honourary Secretary of the Canadian Battlefields Memorial Commission and was very important in the story of the erection of the Vimy Memorial. His brother Ewart was captured by the Germans during the War and suffered greatly as a result. His daughter was the mother of Sarah Jennings and her brother, the broadcaster, Peter Jennings.

**BOOKS FOR SALE:** Among the assortment of books we have for sale are **Mike Hand's** industrial histories.

Here is an excerpt from the Prologue to: ***A City's Industrial Heritage:***

*My first encounter with Brantford's built farm machinery was as a boy growing up on a farm in England. At the start of harvest each year, the rusty old grain binder, covered with dust would be pulled out of the lean-to shed where it had rested since the previous year's harvest. The big open link chains underneath would be lathered with cart grease, the sectioned knife would be sharpened with a file, and the three grain transfer canvasses would be put on with the straps pulled tight. Then two new bales of binder twine would be put into the twine holder, after tying the top end of the lower one to the lower twine then threaded through guides to the knotter. To a ten year old boy, that knotter seemed like a marvellous invention. With a couple of clicks, and the swish up and down of the knotter arm, it could tie the twine securely, around the sheaf before the ejection forks turned over and threw it out the back.*

*Looking back at that binder from the viewpoint of an adult, it is somewhat amazing that the flimsy rattling assembly of parts held together for so many years of use, cutting and tying into sheaves many thousands of acres of grain over its lifetime, as the pair of straining horses hauled it around the field on its huge drive wheel.*

*That binder was almost devoid of paint, probably almost as old as my father, but on the twine box, which still had some paint left, one could see the letters "M-H". On the metal-tipped wooden grain separator at the outward end of the cutting table, the words "Massey Harris" were still readable.*

*In 1943, the year after we got our new Fordson tractor, a new green two furrow trailing plow was delivered. I can still see my father checking it over. The name painted on the plow was "Cockshutt".*

*I was not to know that forty years later I would be living in a city called Brantford in Canada, a place I had never heard of as a boy. The city where two pieces of farm equipment originated, single products among the uncounted thousands that were built and exported by these two companies from their huge factories in Brantford. A boy's imagination could not have conceived that both manufacturers would completely disappear before fifty more years had passed.*

This title, plus several of Mike's other books, may be purchased on our website, including

*Iron, Steam and Wood: 150 years with the Waterous Engine |Works Company,*

*From Wagon to Trailer: a history of Trailmobile Canada and its Forerunners*

*Lorimer Brothers: Brant County's Other Telephone Inventors*



CIHC publications including *Merchants Exchange: Ignatius Cockshutt, 1812-1901*, may be ordered online.

See our website: [www.canadianindustrialheritage.com](http://www.canadianindustrialheritage.com)

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This newsletter is published by Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, P.O. Box 23055, Brantford Ontario, Canada N3T 6K4

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