



CANADIAN INDUSTRIAL
HERITAGE CENTRE

CANADIAN INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Newsletter

March 2026

This newsletter is published by CIHC, an organization dedicated to preserving Canada's Industrial history.

About 1900, Brantford was Canada's third largest industrial producer of exports to the world. Its industrial history mirrors the evolution of industry across Canada.

Our Address is Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, P.O. Box 23055, Brantford Ontario, Canada N3T 6K4

See our website:

www.canadianindustrialheritage.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanadianIndustrialHistory>

We are responsible for the TICCIH Canada website at www.ticcihcanada.org

Contact: Please send submissions or inquiries to:

info@canadianindustrialheritage.com

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President's Report Christina Han

As I write this, spring seems to be just around the corner. I hope everyone had a wonderful winter.

The board has remained active over the past few months, and I am pleased to share a few updates on our ongoing work.

Since January, Farizah Naeem, a fourth-year User Experience Design student at Laurier Brantford, has been working with us as an intern under my supervision. Farizah has made several improvements to the CIHC website, including creating new articles on two of last year's exhibits—*Memories of Brantford's Black Community* and *Fibres and Fabrics: Weaving Brantford's Textile History*, presented at the Brant Museum and Archives. She has also improved the functionality of the site and developed a new collection archive page for the Cockshutt Letterbook Project. Drawing on research by our student researcher Dale Leonard, she wrote an article on the project and created an archive page that showcases selected pages from the letterbook. She has also prepared a related article for Wikipedia to help bring wider attention to this important historical source.

The research and transcription of the first Cockshutt letterbook are now nearing completion. I would like to thank the students and directors who have supported this work. I am also grateful to David Pease for his personal financial contribution to the project, and to the Stedman Foundation for their generous support. I would also like to thank the Heritage Committee at the Farringdon Independent Church for their partnership and for making the letterbook accessible to us.

This project has also benefited from the use of new artificial intelligence tools, which have made it much easier to transcribe and interpret difficult handwritten documents. These technologies are helping us digitize and study historical materials more efficiently.

Finally thanks to all of our members and directors for their continued support of the Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre. Our work depends greatly on the enthusiasm of our community. We are always looking for volunteers for our various projects, so please do consider getting involved. And please remember to renew your membership ahead of our next Annual General Meeting

Thank you for your continued support.

Christina Han

Meet Your Directors Jean Farquharson

Born in Iroquois Falls, Ontario, with a strong curiosity, Jean and her family moved during the Depression to Woodstock, where she loved attending school and reading books. Graduating from Western in 1954, she served as the Children's Librarian in Woodstock Public Library for two years, and in 1956 Jean became a teacher of French, English and Geography and served as teacher-librarian at Arthur District H.S. She earned a Specialist Certificate in School Librarianship while serving as teacher-librarian in Owen Sound Collegiate. Then she moved to Brant area and taught for 30 more years teaching mostly English and then serving full-time as Head Teacher- Librarian in Paris District High School and Brantford Collegiate. Meanwhile she acquired a Master of Library and Information Studies degree and a Certificate in Computers in Education, and taught School Librarianship summer courses at Althouse College. She retired in 1989 and became involved in volunteering.



She and her first husband, Bob Henderson, farmed corn and pigs in Burford Township until he died suddenly in 1971. In 1980 Jean moved to a small farm on the Grand River near Paris. She married Allan Farquharson in 1982. They travelled and were active in many groups. She lost him in 2015.

Retirement did not end her job as a teacher and librarian: at Brantford General Hospital, she catalogued medical books and newsletter editor for the Auxiliary. At Brant County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society she catalogued and computerized the collection, trained volunteers and served many other roles, including co-chairing meetings, organizing workshops, writing articles and book reviews for the newsletter. She was active in several other historical societies.

Always interested in science and nature, Jean successfully led neighbours to protect their water in three **OMB** hearings—a real learning experience! The group's research located abandoned gypsum mines under a proposed gravel pit and a proposed truck stop.

Curiosity led the group to found the **Grand River Heritage Mines Society** and Jean served in many roles including as archivist and newsletter editor, chairman, speaker, creating shows and talks and editing a book, *Herons and Cobblestones*.

The group researched gypsum mines and mills in Brant and Haldimand Counties collaborating with **York Grand River Historical Society**. They set up displays at many shows. She edited their newsletter and a book, *Stories Along the Grand*.

She is still a member of several historical societies. She has been an active Director of CIHC for several years, including editing the newsletter. She still loves to do research and is learning to use AI in her research. Although slowing down, she is not yet ready to retire from retirement.

Did You Know: What Has History Taught Us About War Industries?

Ingenuity, inspiration and dedication on the home front helped Canadians and our allies win the World War and again today innovation and new technology is helping the Ukrainians hold back the Russians. At a price!

We are observing how the Russians are fighting differently today, using missiles and drones remotely to do severe damage within the Ukraine, while the Ukrainians are bravely using innovative technology to defend their lands and to destroy enemy factories and weaponry stockpiled within Russia. Every day inventive minds are working to overcome the enemy's latest technology with amazing applications and new technology on its bomber planes, drones, missiles, cluster missiles, anti-missile interceptors.

Today, keeping ahead of the enemy in technology and production is the determinant for successful warfare. It is costing trillions of dollars to governments and creating an economic boom to war industries. On the Canadian government website is a report that "Major countries are working on new deadly devices controlled from satellites using energy sources - lasers and microwaves. Directed energy weapons (DEWs) use concentrated energy from electromagnetic or particle technology, rather than kinetic energy, to degrade or destroy targets. DEWs have the capability to damage physical targets over several kilometers with high precision and accuracy. As the technology advances, weaponized directed energy (DE) systems are becoming more powerful, prevalent, and increasingly integrated into air, land and sea platforms."

During World War II, it was a similar situation: countries developed and mass-produced new and better bomber planes, bombs and supplies in greater numbers faster than the enemy could produce theirs, and shipped them to the War Front -to keep one step ahead of the enemy. How did they do this?

On the Home Front in Canada, government agencies coordinated the building of new factories or the conversion of existing ones to wartime production. This involved inventive minds tooling or re-tooling machinery to mass produce war equipment parts. Most of the parts would be delivered to other factories for assembly into planes, tanks, etc. Peacetime products were changed from binder twine for farmers to strong ropes for ships, from tractors to army tanks. Manufacturers were operating 24 hours per day. Workers were scarce and many, mostly women, came from across Canada coast to coast and boarded with local families.

What happened in Brantford? According to an article by Jack Jackowitz, **Massey-Harris** produced approximately 1,400 separate parts for the wings of the de Havilland Mosquito fighter-bomber. They also manufactured wings for other aircraft and various war supplies alongside reduced lines of agricultural equipment. **Waterous Ltd** transitioned a significant portion of its output (reportedly 80% by 1940) to producing artillery shells, boilers and gun mounts. **Brantford Cordage** reported record output during the war, providing essential rope and cordage for military use. **Sternson and Sonoco** both companies significantly enlarged their facilities to meet wartime demand. **Harding Carpet**: achieved record profits while contributing to the industrial effort.

Cockshutt Plow Company, Brantford's largest employer, with a workforce comprised largely of women, transitioned from farm machinery to manufacturing aircraft components, including landing gear for the Lancaster Bomber and targeting systems for the B-29 Superfortress. They also produced hand grenades, submachine guns, artillery shells, and army truck bodies.

Cockshutt Moulded Aircraft Ltd opened in December 1942 and used moulded plywood to create fuselages for the Avro-Anson trainer aircraft.

Last year, at **Doors Open**, CIHC had over 500 persons visit the former Cockshutt Moulded Aircraft Plant to see the wonderful display, watch an old documentary, excerpts from a play and reminisce about themselves or relatives working there or at the plant when it converted back to farm equipment after the War.



[For more information](#)

See Rob Adlam's article on our website
<https://canadianindustrialheritage.com/resources/articles/cockshutt-and-wooden-wonder>

You are invited to attend Rob Adlam's talk. Rob will examine how the agricultural implement manufacturer, Cockshutt, helped win a war and, while doing so, made Canadian aviation history.

Victory From Above: Cockshutt Aircraft Construction during WWII

Rob has been invited by the Brant Historical Society to participate in their 2026 Speakers Series on Wednesday, March 18th.

This event will be held at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum, located at 347 Greenwich St., Brantford at 7:00 pm.

WE DID OUR BIT!

The Role of Children in the War Effort, by Jean Farquharson

As a kid growing up in Woodstock during the War (1939-1945), I remember a lot. We were very aware of circumstances, we worried immensely, and tried to do what we could for the effort.

One Sunday afternoon in 1941, I came home from playing at the neighbours to find out we had received a telegram. We mourned my favorite uncle lost in a 1941 RCAF plane crash.

We did everything we could to help in the War effort. We participated in the Jr. Red Cross, knitted squares for quilts while we sang patriotic songs: *There'll Be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover*, *Tomorrow, Just You Wait and See*. We competed at school to collect grease, string, paper, milkweed pods (used for life preservers).

We stood in grocery store lineups to acquire scarce commodities such as soap, candies and other products, for the family, and we shopped with coupons for rationed foods (butter, sugar, meat, etc.).

We tended backyard Victory Gardens, used our weekly allowances to invest regularly in 25 cent War Savings Stamps for certificates to help pay for the War. We listened every day to news on the radio and attended the Royal Theatre to watch weekly newsreels about the War on the Front as well as cartoons and movies.

We attended a realistic rehearsal with Roman candle fireworks of a bombing in case we were invaded. Our parents trained in the Ontario Volunteer Constabulary with uniforms and war helmets.

On the day peace was announced, we were sent home from school to celebrate the day. We celebrated out on the streets throwing up rolls of toilet paper as we had no streamers. Those were the days!

The Verity Plow Company

By Jean Farquharson

CATALOGUE OF THE

VERITY PLOW CO., LTD.

BRANTFORD, CANADA.

Walking Plows, Riding Plows & Garden Horse Hoes & Scufflers
suited to all Territories, and sold all over the World.

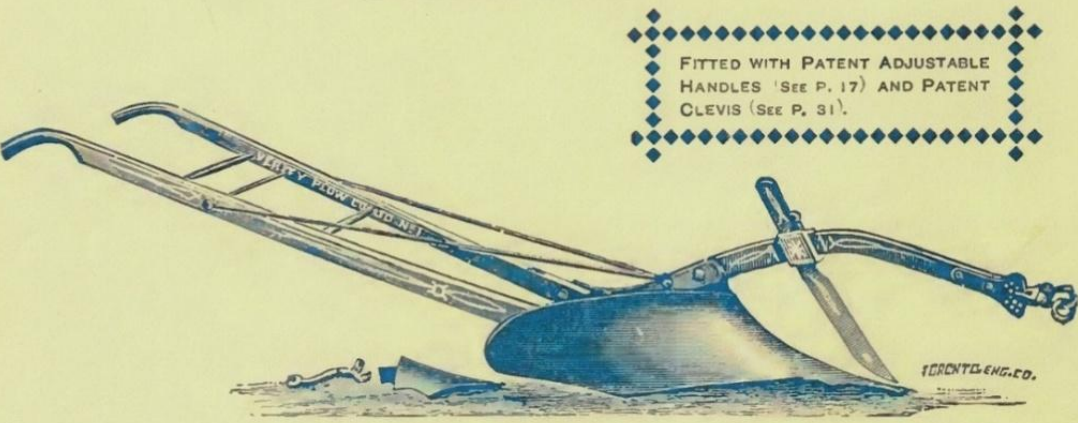
HIGH GRADE STEEL and no other, enters into the construction
of Verity Plows. The Verity Soft Centre
Steel Mouldboards, Steel Beams and
Chilled Points are positively unexcelled.

LARGEST MAKERS IN THE DOMINION. BEST EQUIPPED PLANT IN THE DOMINION.

SOLE REPRESENTATIVES
AND
DISTRIBUTING AGENTS: **MASSEY-HARRIS Co., Ltd.**

The Verity name is an important part of Brantford's and Canada's industrial and agricultural history. According to Dick Verity, the **Verity Plow Company** became the largest plow producer in the British Commonwealth. Descended from an English family of ironmongers, William H. Verity founded the Verity Plow Company in Exeter, Ontario in 1857. He and his five sons manufactured plows, straw cutters, pulpers, wood sawing machines, mowers, reapers, and stoves.

2 Verity Plow Co., Limited, Brantford, Canada.



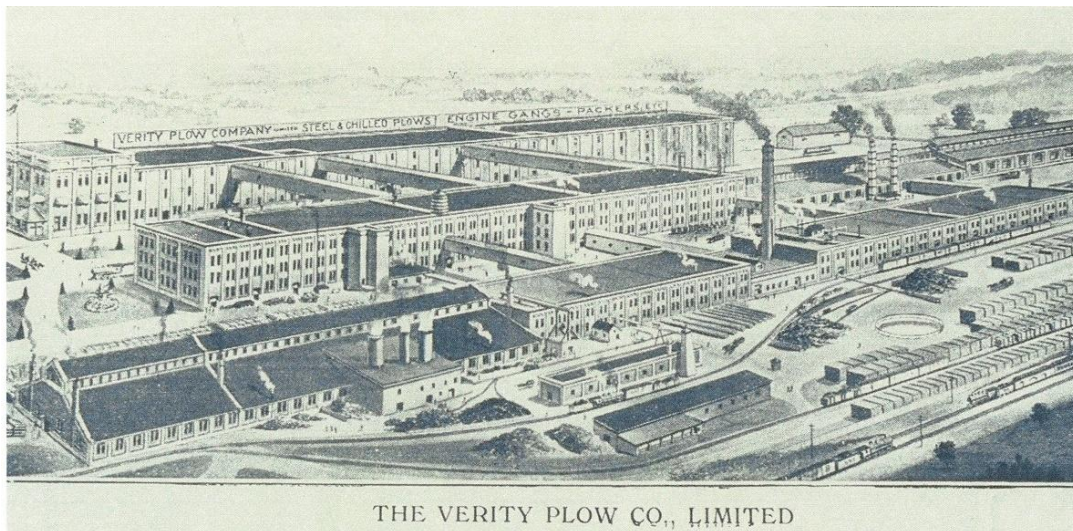
FITTED WITH PATENT ADJUSTABLE
HANDLES (SEE P. 17) AND PATENT
CLEVIS (SEE P. 31).

No. 1 PLOW.

An excellent Sod Plow, having long handles and long mould-board, with a very easy turn. Built after the Grey Pattern, and in plowing matches has carried off many valuable prizes in the Sod class. We supply this Plow with false cut Share and Coulter for plowing matches when so ordered.

After 1875 the company concentrated on making plows under the name W. H. Verity and Sons. There was a dire need and a big market for special plows that could break open the rough prairie sod when immigrant homesteaders were piling in as the Canadian West expanded. The company developed special alloys and a plow with curved blades that could perform the job.

The company filed letters patent in 1892 to found the Verity Plow Company and they chose to relocate in Brantford because it was well-situated to connect to markets by rail, roads and canal and they also had the Grand River as a source of water power. They used the building at Clarence and Wellington Streets, formerly occupied by J. O. Wisner & Son. After their foundry was destroyed by fire on October 26, 1897, the company moved to a larger facility at the foot of Murray Street, south of the canal.



Alanson Harris and his talented son John were running a flourishing foundry business in Beamsville, making good quality harrows and cultivators, reapers and mowers. Offered a 5 year tax exemption by Brantford Council to move there, where the town had improved its skilled workforce and transportation and marketing facilities, he took them up on the offer and moved there in 1871.

Hart Massey, an agriculture industrialist in Toronto, was competing in binder wars with Harris in the development and production of farm implements, especially grain binders. It was reported that competing salesmen had fist fights over their customers. Established in 1847 by Daniel Massey as the Newcastle Foundry and Machine Manufactory, the company became a sole proprietorship under his son, Hart Massey, in 1855, and in 1870 it became the Massey Manufacturing Company. The firm moved to Toronto in 1879. It merged with its chief competitor, A. Harris, Son & Co Ltd in 1891 called the Massey-Harris Company Ltd, becoming the largest company of its kind in the British Empire.

The families of these farm equipment companies intermarried. Eventually in 1914, the companies came together completely, including Verity, as Massey-Harris. They became a world leader in farm equipment

The Verity family had leadership roles in Massey-Harris and supported the community in many ways. By the time the company moved to Brantford, the founder's son, William J. Verity, had taken over as superintendent and later became president and general manager of the company. He also became a director of Massey-Harris Co. and Vice-President of Dominion Foundry and Steel Co. in Hamilton. His son, Morley, served as head of the Verity works and the Massey plant in Brantford. William's three brothers served with the company - Robert as Manager, Charles as foreman of the Molding Room, and Percy as Chief Pattern Maker.,

The story of Massey-Harris with its ups and downs in Brantford's history, will be continued in other issues of CIHC's newsletter.

When the company abandoned Brantford for U.S., **Verity** (spelling changed) was created in 1986 to continue what remained of Massey-Harris to manufacture farm equipment. In 1994, the farm equipment divisions of Verity were sold to the US-based AGCO Corporation who continue to use the Massey-Ferguson label to sell their products.

The Verity family has continued to perform in Brantford's industry and served in many other roles, one being in running **Crown Electric**, which is another story for the newsletter.

Today Bill Verity is the founder and CEO of **Crown Verity**, manufacturers of luxury BBQs and outdoor kitchen products.

For a related article on our website, written by a Laurier student, go to

<https://canadianindustrialheritage.com/resources/articles/humble-beginnings-industrial-powerhouse-brantford>

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
or 519-752-2483

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



Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Communities

By Lillia Dockree

The "Memories" Committee would like to extend their appreciation to everyone who attended the opening of "Roots & Routes: Brantford's Black History" in October 2025!

We were lucky enough to participate in a flag raising event on February 1st, 2026 at the County of Brant office in Paris which marked the start of Black History Month. Banners from the Roots & Routes exhibit were brought to the event space at The Rivers Edge (Arlington) for a celebration program following the flag raising, which showcased various Black businesses, musicians, and restaurants in Brant County.

We also celebrated Black History month on February 24th with an after-hours tour of the "Roots & Routes" exhibit for a group of local social workers. Dr. Christina Han provided a guided tour, and those that attended were highly impressed with the exhibit and the stories shared!

With the Black History exhibit remaining on display until the end of August 2026, the committee's focus has shifted to our next project: the Dutch community in Brantford. Dr. Christina Han is on sabbatical and has taken a step back from the Memories Committee, so the Dutch exhibit will be curated by Lillia Dockree, CIHC Director and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Brant Historical Society. Lillia's grandparents immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands, so she is interested in learning more about the role of Dutch immigrants in Canadian history.

The Dutch exhibit will open in October 2026 – details for the opening weekend are still being worked out. The Memories Committee will be a part of the **Dutch-Canadian Liberation Celebration** taking place at the Canadian Military Heritage Museum (347 Greenwich Street, Brantford) on **May 2nd 2026** starting at 10:00am.

We are looking to interview members of the Dutch community in Brantford/Brant County, so 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.

Naming Brantford By Jack Jackowetz



The Niagara Gleaner, 18 January 1823, reported that in November 1822, a bridge over the Grand River was finished. Robert Biggar led efforts to raise funds for it, resulting in the bridge being named Biggar's Bridge.



The completion of the Hamilton and London Road in 1823, along with the opening of the bridge over the Grand River, fueled local growth. This crossing attracted businesses and tradespeople, eager to take advantage of trading with the Haudenosaunee. The population increased to around 100 residents.

The Story of How the Village was Named: The naming of Brantford has been the same oft-repeated story since it first appeared in the *Old Boys and 60th Anniversary Number* edition of the *Brantford Courier* on 23 December 1899. James Wilkes related the story to the *Courier*. Wilkes was 91 at the time. He came to Brantford in 1823 when he was fifteen years old. Wilkes opened a trading store at what is now the corner of King and Colborne Streets.

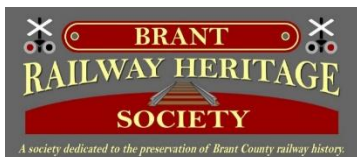
It must have been in 1826 or 1827, when there were two or three hundred people, that the question of naming the place arose. There was a grist mill then, run by a man named Lewis, and a carpenter and building shop had been started by another man named Crandon. A Mr. Biggar, of Mount Pleasant, owned a lot of land around the ferry, and when a bridge at the ferry was carried away he was instrumental in getting another structure erected, which was called Biggar's bridge. He was anxious to have the place called after himself.

A meeting was called, when Mr. Biggar proposed that the name should be Biggar's Town. Mr. Lewis, the mill owner, suggested Lewisville, and my father, (who came from that city in the Old Land), stood out for Birmingham. It looked as if there might be a dead-lock when some one suggested that as the place was at Brant's ford this title would prove the most suitable and the suggestion took unanimously. In the natural order of things the "s" speedily became dropped, and thus we have the Brantford of to-day.

Biggarstown: In 1823, Robert Biggar asked Joseph Reade to prepare a village plan. He called the settlement Biggarstown. It had a bridge, a grist mill, five merchant shops, two taverns, tailors, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and fifteen houses. From the (Niagara-on-the-Lake) Gleaner, Saturday 29 May 1824. Biggar placed newspaper advertisements to attract people to Biggarstown.

Post office: The York Advocate of 5 August 1824 carried a report from the Kingston Chronicle noting a post office had been established at the new village of Brantford, named after the late Captain Brant, but also known as Biggarstown. Edmund Barton was appointed the Postmaster. It is reasonable to conclude that the settlement meeting to name the place Wilkes refers to actually took place in 1824, possibly because of Robert Biggar's aggressiveness in naming the place after himself.

Connecting With Like-Minded Organizations



CIHC Members are very interested in the infrastructure that made Brantford such a successful industrial town and city. Many people have a keen interest in railroads, trains, engines, and model railroads. Brantford has stories about constructing railway cars, a resident railway baron and Brantford's ten railways.

See the article on our CIHC website written by our Director Ray Wright about the 10 railways that connected Brantford with the world at the height of its industrial past.

<https://canadianindustrialheritage.com/resources/articles/railways-brantford>

An organization in Mount Pleasant, the **Brant Railway Heritage Society**, is like-minded about Brant's railways. <https://brantrailwayheritagesociety.ca>

The **Brant Railway Heritage Society** has been organized and very active for several years. Members have held many fund-raising activities and events. On its Facebook site the organization is described as "A developing museum dedicated to the preservation of Brant County railway history." The Society has undertaken the restoration of the **Mount Pleasant Lake Erie and Northern Station in Mount Pleasant**. For several years, members have been volunteering time and materials to restore the old railway station and move it to its original site in the park. We hope to collaborate with BRHS in the near future.



CANADIAN INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Membership Form

CANADIAN INDUSTRIAL
HERITAGE CENTRE

Benefits of Membership in the CIHC...

- Participation in the Annual General meeting, and the election of directors.
- Regular updates on our activities through the CIHC Newsletter
- 10% Discount on most Purchases
- Special invitation to all CIHC events

Your Membership Helps us All...

- Expand and conserve the CIHC collection
- Advocate for the preservation of our extensive industrial heritage
- Promote awareness of the industrial and innovation heritage and its importance to our future and quality of life
- Liase with other national and regional heritage groups

MEMBERSHIP STATUS - **RENEWAL** **NEW** **DATE:** ___ / ___ /202__

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Fees category: Student \$10 Individual \$20 Family \$25

Family Member(s) at Same Address _____

I hereby consent to receive information by electronic-transmission from CIHC

Yes ! I would like to make a donation to the CIHC of \$ _____

Donations of \$20 or more above membership fees are tax deductible.

Charitable number #861470623RR0001

Method of payment: - **Cheque** **Cash** **OnLine**

Please Make cheques payable to the Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre.

Our mailing address is - P.O. Box 23055, Brantford, ON N3T 6K4

Membership Fees are for the Calendar Year. Those joining after October 1st will be entitled to membership through to the end of the following calendar year.

visit - www.canadianindustrialheritage.com/membership - To Pay on-line

Are you interested in volunteering with us ?

Areas of interest/comments/suggestions: _____

Information collected on this form is for CIHC membership records only.