



CANADIAN INDUSTRIAL
HERITAGE CENTRE

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Newsletter

JUNE 2023

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

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BREAKING NEWS

Our CIHC President, Dr. Christina Han, has received a well-deserved award!

"Brantford Expositor [May 10, 2023] let the rest of the world in on a secret that the rest of us know only too well; that our President is an academic and community wonder! She has been named a recipient of Laurier's 2023 Faculty Award for Service



Excellence and Community Engagement. The content of outlining her outstanding accomplishments can be found in the link below. Spoiler Alert: None of it will come as any surprise!

[Laurier professor with passion for local history to receive faculty award | Brantford Expositor](#)

Congratulations Christina, on this well-deserved recognition!"
Rob Adlam

Congratulations from us all!

SERVICE AWARD The Expositor 8 Jun 2023

BRIAN THOMPSON

Associate professor Dr. Christina Han (left) receives the Faculty Award for Service Excellence and Community Engagement from Wilfrid Laurier University president and vice-chancellor Deborah MacLatchy (centre) and chancellor Eileen Mercier during convocation ceremonies on Tuesday at the Sanderson Centre in Brantford.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members and Friends of the CIHC,

In this newsletter, we remember Michael O'Byrne, our long-term director, the dedicated and beloved leader of the CIHC, who passed away earlier this month. Mike's unparalleled commitment to Brantford's history will forever be remembered. His warm and kind-hearted nature made him an amazing friend and a role model to many, including myself. His legacy as a beacon of passion and integrity in preserving our heritage will continue to inspire us. We are truly grateful for the immeasurable contributions he made to our community.

This month, the CIHC participated in the **TH&B Crossing Bridge Public Art Project**. We painted three metal panels to highlight Brantford's early industry leaders through their logos, our **Memories of Brantford Project**, and the **Roots of Eagle Place Project**, and the **Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre**. I would like to thank Tony Cockshutt, Lauren Holmes, Madeleine Littler, and Sophie Zhang for their contributions to the project. Please visit the bridge and check out our artwork!

Thanks to the Canada Summer Jobs grant, we will hire one summer student who will work for us as an Education Program Developer.

Craig Sitter, who has served on the board of directors, has resigned. We thank him for his service to the CIHC, particularly to the Research and Collections Committee.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting for 2022 will be held on June 27, from 7-8 pm via Zoom. Please use the link below to join us:

<https://wilfrid-laurier.zoom.us/j/91338819085>

I am truly grateful to the CIHC family for coming together to create an amazing community. I wish you a wonderful summer and hope to see you all at the AGM!

Sincerely,



Christina Han

REMEMBERING MICHAEL O'BYRNE



O'BYRNE, Michael Francis "Mike" August 8, 1939 - May 25, 2023

We were saddened to hear that our long-time, retired Director of CIHC, Michael O'Byrne, left this world *"when his kind, generous heart failed from complications of COPD."*

Here is a link to the clever and witty obituary in the June 3rd Brantford Expositor as expressed by his wife of 56 years, Delia O'Byrne. <https://brantfordexpositor.remembering.ca/obituary/michael-o-byrne-1088346335>

As the obituary is long, here are some excerpts:

"Michael attended the Haileybury School of Mines, came to Brantford under duress in his twenties to complete Grade 13 at Brantford Collegiate Institute as a mature student (an interesting experience for all concerned), and obtained his B.A. from McMaster University. In his own self-deprecating words, he 'enjoyed for the most part a varied career, several years working underground in Northern Ontario, and a number of years as a relatively unsuccessful bureaucrat in the Ontario provincial prison service.' With characteristic disregard for real or imagined status, and with his irreverent, rapier-sharp wit, he 'enjoyed and excelled in writing career limiting sarcastic and politically incorrect letters, emails and reports', some which are now legendary.

"From childhood on, Michael pursued his interests in minerals and mining, particularly the Cobalt silver camp... wars, the military and militaria; firearms; sailing ships and warships; knifemaking; trains and railroading; industrial development; Arctic exploration; history and heritage; and to Delia's dismay, collecting numerous artifacts.

"Michael devoted countless hours to his community with encouragement; support and leadership to various groups and projects including Heritage Mount Pleasant, Mount Pleasant Bicentennial Celebration, Mount Pleasant Optimists, Brant County War of 1812 Commemoration, County of Brant Heritage Committee, Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, Heritage Mines Association,[Grand River Heritage Mines Society] Architectural Conservancy Ontario (Brantford Branch), Ontario Visual Heritage Project, along with memberships in many other historical associations.

"He met people where they were and as he said, 'tolerated the company of squirrels both four and two-legged ones, and perhaps made a difference'. He did, and is now on his way somewhere out there, with his father's battered silver flask filled with bourbon, his compass and prospector's kit, aboard a ghost run of the O.N.R."

He made a big difference to CIHC. Thank you, Mike!

Mike's body was cremated. An announcement of a celebration of his life will be announced later, probably in August.

EAGLE PLACE SERIES: From grants we received in 2022-2023 we intended to create a collection of 10 signs to be used on the fence at CIHC's site at 66 Mohawk St. Peter Muir and his team have completed most of them. One topic is:

Brantford's Canal Legacy

Contributed by Peter Muir

Adapted from research and article by Jack Jackowetz

A proposal for a navigable Grand River to Brantford first gained public attention in December of 1827. The chief promoter of the waterway was William Hamilton Merritt, the promoter and builder of the Welland Canal. The prime motivation to develop a navigable waterway was the significant reduction in transportation costs versus land transportation. In 1832, the Grand River Navigation Company was chartered to make the Grand River navigable from Brantford to Lake Erie, a river distance of 57 miles. Work commenced on the waterway in 1834. The first shipment passed through in 1835 even though work on the locks was not completed until 1836, making navigation between Dunnville and Cainsville possible. The towpaths were completed by 1840. The workmanship and quality of construction was poor; many of the low cost bidders had no experience in building dams and locks.

The canal opened on 7-November-1848. With the opening of the canal, flour became a major commodity to ship via the waterway and Brantford was the flour shipping centre for southwestern Ontario. Scows, which are flat-bottomed, wide-waisted boats, plied the river moving goods and commodities. Toll revenues increased substantially after the waterway was completed through to Brantford but they were not sufficient to cover the costs of operating and maintaining the waterway, and servicing the large debt incurred to build the waterway. In 1851, paddlewheel steamships The Queen and Red Jacket carried passengers to Buffalo twice a week on a journey lasting 24 hours.

The boats boasted two good staterooms and excellent meals. The steamship service was discontinued in 1854 after the opening of the Buffalo, Brantford and Goderich Railway.

Most of the Brantford Cut is still visible. The canal starts at the Grand River just southeast of Beach Road. It follows Beach Road and crosses under the Locks Road bridge, then flows along Mohawk Road, into Mohawk Lake, then along Greenwich Street to just west of Alfred Street. The canal and canal basin from Alfred Street to the South Market Street bridge was covered over in 1951. The Brantford Mosque is built over the canal basin. The downtown parking garage is also built over the canal. Wharf Street and Water Street fronted the canal. *Canoeing on the canal. Looking east. The Brantford and Hamilton Electric Railway line is on the left and Greenwich Street is on the right.*



Canoeing on the canal. Looking east. The Brantford and Hamilton Electric Railway line is on the left and Greenwich Street is on the right.

DID YOU KNOW? There was an Edison Museum in Vienna, Ontario. WHY?

Thomas Alva Edison was born in 1847, in Milan, Ohio, U.S.,

He died in 1931 in West Orange, New Jersey.

What was his Canadian Connection?



Thomas Edison's great-grandparents fled to Canada after the American Revolution because they had sided with the British. They moved to a farm and built a home at Vienna, Ontario, near Tillsonburg.

His father fled to the U.S. during the 1837 Rebellion.

As a boy, Edison enjoyed visiting the farm, where he played in the barn, went swimming, and fished in a nearby river. Early in his career he worked as a telegraph operator, which inspired some of his earliest inventions. In 1876, he established his first laboratory facility in Menlo Park, New Jersey, where many of his early inventions were developed. He later established a botanical laboratory in Fort Myers, Florida, in collaboration with businessmen Henry Ford and Harvey S. Firestone, and a laboratory in West Orange, New Jersey, that featured the world's first film studio, the Black Maria. With 1,093 US patents in his name, as well as patents in other countries, Edison is regarded as the most prolific inventor in American history.

He developed many devices in fields such as electric power generation, mass communication, sound recording, and motion pictures. These inventions, which include the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and early versions of the electric light bulb, have had a widespread impact on the modern industrialized world. He was one of the first inventors to apply the principles of organized science and teamwork to the process of invention, working with many researchers and employees. He established the first industrial research laboratory. (Basic facts from Expedia).

Many Edison museums were built all over the US, with the main one in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

The museum in Vienna seems to have vanished.

Do YOU know what happened to its contents?

THE TH&B BRIDGE ART PROJECT

On June 2nd, one of those insufferable hot days, Tony Cockshutt, Lauren Holmes, Christina Han, Christina's daughter Sophie (it was a PA Day), and student volunteer, Madeleine Littler, began to paint colourful messages on three panels on the old **TH&B Railway Bridge**.



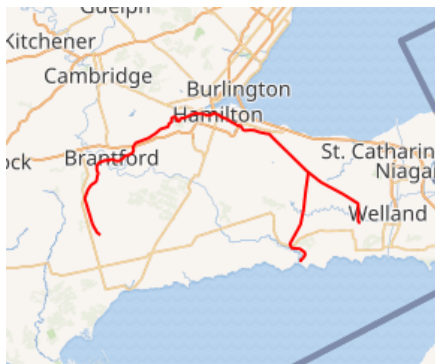
To contribute to the ongoing revitalization of this landmark and to keep graffiti to a limit, individuals, businesses, community groups, and schools were invited by the City of Brantford to submit designs for up to five bridge panels that depict one or more of the following themes: local culture, history, people, events and destinations.

Lauren Holmes designed sketches for three panels for CIHC. Our three themes were Canadian Industrial Heritage Centre, Eagle Place and Memories of Brantford's Immigrant Communities.

The bridge is part of the trail system connecting over the Grand River West Brantford's heavily treed Fordview Park and trails to the east side where SC Johnson Trail and Dike trails connect to the City Centre and Earl Haig. See **YOU ARE HERE** on the map. The TH&B Bridge is called **Plywood Patch Bridge** on Google. It is well worth a visit!

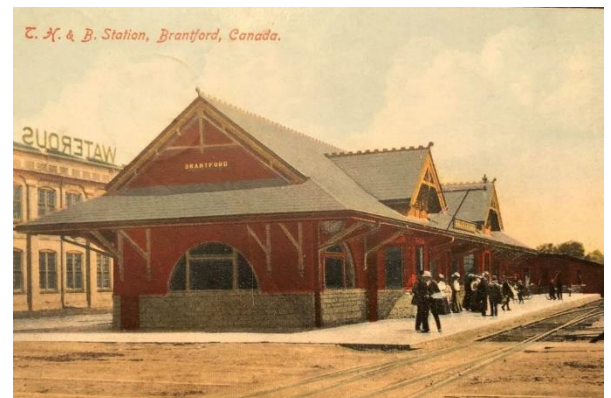


THE HISTORY OF THE TH&B RAILWAY



The **Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway** (TH&B) existed from 1892 through 1987 as a separate railway serving the Hamilton, Ontario area. It joined the lines of its corporate parents, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the New York Central system. It was established largely as an alternate route for the businesses in the Hamilton area to ship their products to Canadian customers in Toronto, Montreal, and the west and to American customers via the New York Central and its subsidiaries. (Internet sources)

The TH&B's Brantford Station at 60 Market Street South, was converted to use as a restaurant in 1970 but is currently vacant and boarded up. In 2019, despite objections by the building's owner, a property developer, City Council approved a historical designation for the oldest portions of the former railway station.



In Hamilton, a society was formed to collect TH&B's history:

[Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway Historical Society](http://www.thbrailway.ca/) www.thbrailway.ca/

See our website for more Railway history.
www.canadianindustrialheritage.com



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Membership Form

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.