



Buffy's

Corner

Conserve, Educate and Celebrate Brampton's History

The Official Newsletter of the Brampton Historical Society

Spring 2026

From the Editors

In this edition, we have a spotlight on Christ Church in Brampton. This church is celebrating its 175th anniversary in 2026. Yup - it is older than Brampton and continues to be active in the community. Elizabeth Charters, with assistance by Bill Hutton, has written a wonderful article about the history and activities of this beloved institution.

While not normally thought about, the sewage system is a critical element to a city's infrastructure. Kyle Neill, PAMA archivist, writes about an interesting book in the PAMA archives. *The Brampton Sewerage Works, 1924* is a collection of plans for Brampton sewers designed over 100 years ago. The public can access these historical sewer plans by reaching out to the Archives..

The James House, built in 1840, was originally located on Torbram Rd. It was relocated to Black Credit Village in 1973 and fully restored. It is now known as the "Doctor's House". Our article provides the history and updated photos of this building.

BHS has updated its logo and has a new banner. The new logo is now in our newsletter header. Changes have also been made to our website - check it out.

Let us know if there are any historic persons, places, and events that you want featured here. Of course, member stories are welcome.

Buffy's Corners
Editors Elizabeth Charters
& Giulia Geraci

Brampton's Christ Church - 175 years in the making

One of Brampton's oldest parishes, Christ Church, Brampton, is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year. Its present building, located at the corner of Queen Street and Elizabeth Street in the heart of the old downtown, is Brampton's oldest Anglican church. Its silver spire is still highly visible even though multistory



condominiums are springing up around the church. However, the parish itself dates back to 1851. The history of this congregation and the buildings that housed it has been one of constant adaptation to changed circumstances that reflect the growth and development of Brampton as a whole.

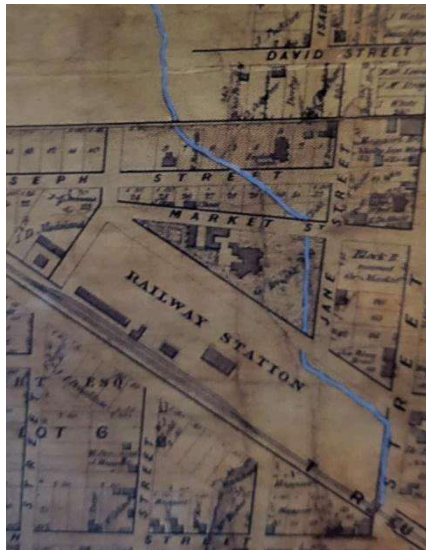
The First 100 Years 1851-1951

The parish known now as Christ Church, Brampton was founded by local farmers and merchants even before Brampton became a village in 1853. However, the congregation was slow to become established during the 33 years between the founding of the local Anglican incumbency under the Rev. William Guise Tucker and the acquisition of the present building at 4 Elizabeth Street North in 1884. During that time there were eight rectors and some temporary missionaries leading the small congregation. The services moved from the old school building at 19 John Street (then called Trinity Church). The John Street address is now the headquarters for CUPE Local 831. The wood frame building used as the first church now stands at the corner of McMurchy and Jessie streets.

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Christ Church
(cont'd from page 1)



The first building named Christ Church was constructed in 1856 on Joseph Street, Lots 2 & 3, north of the railway station, at the corner of present-day Thomas Street (then called Jane: see detail from 1857 map). The Rev. Thomas Leech was Rector and he needed space for a growing congregation. Some of the furnishings were transferred to the present building in 1885, but the triple chancel windows, dated 1871, and a few old pews are all that remain today of this earlier church. The land for both the Joseph Street and Elizabeth Street buildings was provided by George Wright.



The current building at Elizabeth and Queen was built between 1870 and 1875 by the Methodist Episcopal church. It employed typical 19th Century church construction, its exterior much like the current Grace United Church. A Heritage Brampton publication (1978) described "the base of stone...

surmounted by a red brick structure with contrasting... buff-coloured buttresses with free stone caps. Four courses of



white brick separate the red brick structure from the stone base, and the white brick is also used to very good effect in the basement window lintels and the gothic style window arches.

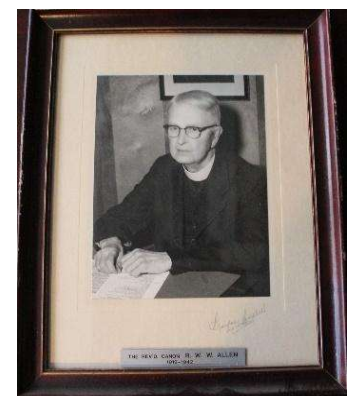


The main entrance to the church is in the west face of the tower. The plain wooden doors are surmounted by a white brick gothic arch housing fine white tracery with leaded lights inset."

The parish of Christ Church purchased the building in 1883 when the Methodist Episcopal denomination merged with the Methodist Church of Canada and its congregation moved to either Grace United (formerly Wesleyan Methodist) or St. Paul's United (Primitive Methodist).

Under Anglican occupancy, the new Christ Church's handsome outer building has been preserved throughout over 100 years of renovations. The first changes to the interior took place between 1884 and 1885. To adapt to the Anglican model of architecture, the parish added a chancel, strengthened the belfry and acquired a bell. The original rope-pull, first installed in 1886, still exists. The updated nave is beautiful, with handsome stained-glass windows and attractive woodwork. Both chancel and sanctuary are walled with wood paneling below and painted plaster above. There is a large, carved wood altar dominating the sanctuary.

As the parish grew, there were further renovations, including the addition of cathedral style windows in 1907, replacing plain glass ones, and the installation of electricity. The longest serving incumbent, Canon Robert Allen, served as Rector from 1920 to 1942 and is commemorated in the church's largest meeting room. He oversaw renovations in 1941 when some of the windows were relocated and built a new rectory on the property of the previous one at the corner of Scott Street and Nelson Street East. After the Second World War, the church building was modernized to include a kitchen, vestry and washrooms. The Soldier's Memorial window installed in 1949 was funded by the Bible Class as a memorial to those who had served.

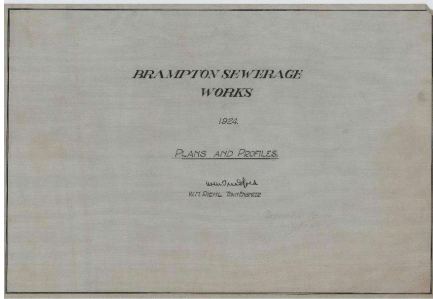


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Fascinating Brampton Sewer Records from 1924

An unexpected arrival!

In 2022, the staff at the Peel's Archives were thrilled to have arrived on our doorstep (with no explanatory note) an amazing ledger containing the plans of the sewer system as it existed in the Town of Brampton as of 1924.



As a road, waterworks, and sewer nerd, I was incredibly excited to add these plans to the Brampton records collection that we maintain. Now, I am not an engineer or expert on sewers, so some of the details in the plans and profiles are lost on me, but these resources are now available here to be consulted by anyone with those sorts of expertise or interests!

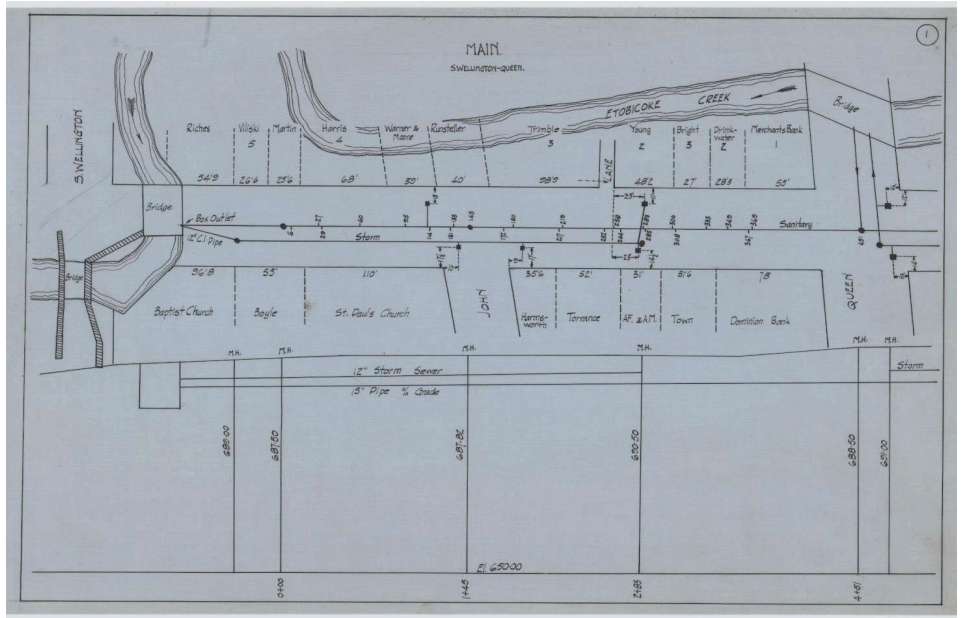
Each page of the volume contains a scale drawing of a Brampton area street (or portion thereof), arranged alphabetically from Alexander Street to Wilson Avenue, with the roadway and adjacent property lots noted, and with the location and profile of storm sewer and sewage sewer infrastructure depicted (these plans only cover the former Town of Brampton, not the modern City).

Why these plans have been of great interest, more generally, is because of what else they reveal about the granular history of Brampton in the 1920s. The creators of these records, mostly concerned with the relative position of sewer pipes along with their depths, slopes, sizes, and connections, would likely be amused to know that we can use their work more so to learn about:

- Land ownership – property owner names are often identified in the plans
- Lot frontage sizes – these dimensions are noted in feet (and each plan is drafted to a scale noted on the title page)

- The location of Brampton Housing Commission properties as well as a range of area businesses and organizations
- Location of culverts as well as area bridges over the Etobicoke Creek

One could argue that these collected sewer plans offer a nifty map of the layout of the Town as of 1924, as well as serving as a directory to key public infrastructure and to all landowners, as part of one beautiful package! (and the covers were manufactured by well known Brampton business Copeland-Chattersson, as a cherry on top!)

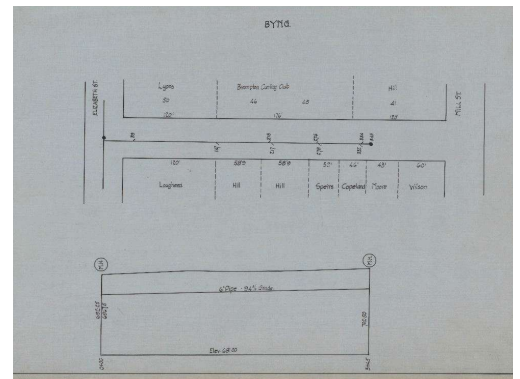


All of this got me thinking about the history, in general, of sewers in Brampton, and it is a fascinating story!

Brampton sewer history, 1830s-1932

Interestingly, the history of Brampton's early sewers is generally known, but some details are contested, likely requiring more research to fully settle.

From the earliest days of the settlement of the Brampton area, the Etobicoke Creek had served as the natural dumping ground for garbage and effluent from local businesses. From 1853 onwards concern with the unsanitary nature of this arrangement appears to have grown, with pressure increasing on the village to create some sort of formal sewage system.



In 1873 plans for a system were abandoned due to cost, and it was not until 1906 or perhaps 1907 that the Town of Brampton constructed its first formal sewage system (with the necessary money raised under Town by-law 307).

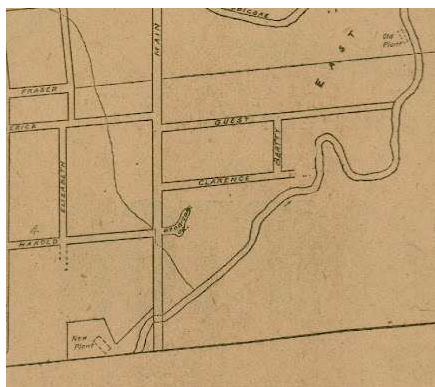
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**Brampton Sewer
(cont'd from page 3)**

By 1916, the system consisted of nine miles of sewers for domestic waste, which was treated in a septic tank before being discharged into the Etobicoke River. In 1919 the town seems to have installed a proper treatment plant on the “southeast side of the town,” but there is disagreement among secondary sources about its specific methods of treatment.

By 1932 the whole system was upgraded, with a new plant constructed that used an activated sludge treatment process that could treat one million gallons per day, with the treated sludge often hauled to local farms to be used as fertilizer.

One can see what are likely both treatment plants on this 1949 map of the Town (“Old Plant” and “New Plant”):



Concluding thoughts

Anyone interested in consulting these plans is welcome to do so here in the Archives; please email archives@peelregion.ca to make an appointment, and ask for file 7 in series 22 of the City of Brampton fonds.

—Kyle Neill, Regional Archivist,
Region of Peel Archives

Key secondary sources for Brampton's sewer history:

- The Peel Water Story: A Water Curriculum Resource for Peel Schools* (2006)
- A History of Peel County to Mark Its Centenary as a Separate County, 1867-1967* (1967)
- Brampton's 100th Anniversary as an Incorporated Town 1873 – 1973* (1973)
- Brampton: An Illustrated History* (1987)
- Brampton Centennial Souvenir 1853–1953* (1953)

The James House

In 1978, the City of Brampton Heritage Board published a softcopy booklet called “Heritage Brampton – An illustrated review of some fine old buildings in the City, 1978”. The book contains the history and beautiful illustrations of several iconic buildings in Brampton. One of the homes featured is the James House. This house once resided in Brampton but it was relocated to “The Village at Black Creek” in Toronto. It has been completely restored and is known as the Doctor’s House. Current pictures of the Doctor’s House reflect the splendor of the original home as it may have looked like in the 1840s. This is an excerpt from this book and followed by additional research notes.

“William James emigrated from England to New York State in 1820’s. In 1829, he purchased 100 acres in Chinguacousy Township for about 100 pounds and set about clearing sufficient to build a log home. In 1840, with the help of neighbours and son William Jr., who by then was 22, a new timber frame house was erected. The symmetry of the main facade was typically Georgian, but from there on, the style was unique to Peel County. There may indeed have been others similar at one time, but none seems to have survived.

Apart from the fact that 1840 was particularly early for frame construction, the split roofline and twin front doors were distinctive features of this house. The exterior was finished in rough-cast.

A veranda extended along the front to include the two panelled doors. The overhead canopy was supported on slender columns filled with trelliage of a pattern similar to that of other buildings of the period. This added a touch of grace to a building that was otherwise intended to fulfill the very practical functions of a farmhouse.

It is believed that the house provided accommodation for the owner, his son and large family, and also hired help. It seems most likely that they would all have taken meals together.

The house appears to have stayed in the James family until it was bought by Harvey and Sadie Gardhouse in 1926. In 1938, the Gardhouse family started some re-modelling. The rough-cast and the

verandah were removed from the exterior which was later covered with “insulbrick”. About this time hydro service was brought to the house. In 1948, two of the chimneys and fireplaces were removed and a furnace was installed.



It was more or less in this modified state when the expansion of Bramalea required the James house to be removed. Fortunately, its unique architectural features have been recognized by Russell Cooper, the Curator of Black Creek Pioneer Village.

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**The James House
(cont'd from page 4)**

Following successful negotiations, the house was donated to "The Village" by Bramalea Ltd., and Chinguacousy Township contributed \$5,000 toward re-location.

During the winter of 1973-1974, the old house was dismantled piece by piece and transferred to its new location in a living museum at Black Creek. There it is to be known as the 'Doctor's House' due to the architectural peculiarities which would have allowed a doctor to set up practice in a separate part of the building from his residential quarters.

Reconstruction has been carried out to restore the house to its original form. The green shutters and verandah which disappeared in the earlier re-modelling have been replaced and the exterior is once again rough-cast. Fortunately, an old tintype photograph dating back to about 1875 was discovered behind a fireplace when it was being dismantled. This helped considerably in creating a completely authentic reconstruction. The house opened to the public at its new site in 1978."

Additional Research found the following information about the James House:

-The house was most likely located on 5th Line East (now named Torbram Rd). It was donated to Black Creek Village by Bramalea Consolidated Developments in 1973.

-William James acquired the land in June 1829 for 102 pounds and 10 shillings from the Dependence Coldbath who acquired the Crown deed only 10 days earlier.

-the house was built in 3 sections: one for William James & his wife, the second for William James Jr and his family, and the third for the hired hand. Subsequently, the house was reconfigured to accommodate the growing James Jr family. William James Jr married twice and had 18 children (or 21 children, depending on the information source) in total.

-William James Jr's son, John, took over the management of the farm from his father until his death in 1918. However,

John's son, Elgin, after World War I, did not want to farm and sold the land to his neighbour, George Grasby, in 1918.

-George Grasby, unable to keep up 2 farms, sold the farm to Martin Davis, his wife's uncle, in 1922. Martin Davis had a new barn constructed.

-the farm was sold to Harvey and Sadie Gardhouse in 1926. The house was in poor shape and repairs/renovations were done in the 1930 and later. Three generations of the Gardhouse family farmed the land and lived in the house.

The last son, John, lived on the farm with his wife, Shirley and 2 children until it was sold to the Bramalea Corp.

-Giulia Geraci

**Christ Church - 175th anniversary
(cont'd from page 2)**

Christ Church has always been involved in Brampton's military history. The parish was large enough to see 138 of its young men fight in the First World War (1914-1918), and their names are listed in a plaque at the back of the nave. Smaller plaques commemorate those who served in World War II and Korea. Every November, we remember those who died in wars. The church also houses the colours of the 36th Peel Militia, founded in 1866, and the colours of the Dufferin Peel Regiment, listing actions at Ypres (1915/17), Arras



(1917/18), Somme (1916), Hill 70 and the Hindenburg Line. This unit later amalgamated with the Halton Regiment to become the Lorne Scots. Christ Church clergy have taken their turns serving as Chaplains for Legion Branch 15, most recently Rev. Victor Reigel, who officiated at many Remembrance Day services, Legion Annual Dinners and funerals during the first two decades of this century.

The Next 50 Years 1951-2001

As Brampton has changed from a small town of 8,389 people in 1951 to Canada's 9th largest city in 2021 with 656,480 people, Christ Church has grown along with it. The next long time Rector was C. Allan Johnson, from 1942 to 1961.



During his incumbency the expansion of Brampton beyond the old downtown area led to the creation of another parish (St. James the Apostle, on Cathedral Drive in Peel Village). A new Parish Hall was added between 1954 and 1956. This included what is now known as the C. Allan Johnson Auditorium (which can be also used as a gymnasium) as well as rooms for church school, choir, meetings and other activities. With this higher level of activity, the Rectors now required a series of assistants. Many have been women priests, the first, Rev. Elizabeth Hardy, starting in 1986, working with Canon Fred Hall.

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Christ Church -175th anniversary (cont'd from page 5)

The church was busy, with much volunteer activity including youth groups such as the Girls' Auxiliary. Other organizations, such as Cubs and Scouts, met in the Auditorium, and a day nursery (now Rowntree Montessori School) rented the lower rooms during the week. Several leading Brampton politicians have been parishioners including Former Mayor Ken Whillans, and Former Councillors Malcolm Moore and John Hutton.

In 1970, the Men's group held a fundraising dinner which was attended by former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, Premier Bill Davis and Mayor James Archdekin.

The most recent major renovation project was funded by the Faith for the Future campaign (1988-1992) which made it possible to provide an elevator and accessible entrance to the church and expand the area for offices and meeting rooms. The handsome David Jones Cloister runs between the church and the former parish hall and allows sunlight to reach the historic stained-glass windows on the north side of the church through its skylights.



The Last 25 Years

Brampton's population has more than doubled since the opening of the 21st century, and this growth has helped the parish increase in diversity and maintain its strength even when many other parishes throughout Ontario were in steep decline. Canon Byron Gilmore (Rector 2007 to 2024) with his assistant priests lead the congregation through much of this period. The changing demographics of the community have brought in both church members and worship leaders from around the world. The people in the pews come from many backgrounds.



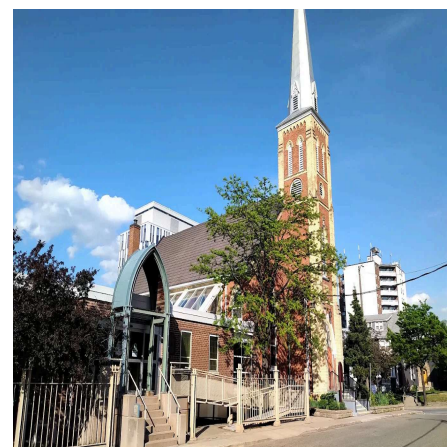
In addition to long-time Brampton families, the parish membership now includes Black Canadians from the Caribbean and African diasporas and a large, committed group of Pakistani Christians fleeing persecution in their homeland. Two of the most recent leaders have been assistant priest Rev. Nelson George, a Pakistani, and the newest Rector, Archdeacon Theadore Hunt, a native of the Bahamas. Friendships across ethnic lines have led to a Christ Church term for the congregation: "non-DNA family."

Over time, communications have become computer based. Congregations follow services through Power Point projections and can learn about parish activities through social media. The pandemic of 2020 to 2022 closed in-person services for a long period but recorded and later live-streamed services continue to engage

a significant part of the congregation, some of them beyond the city limits of Brampton itself. The website <https://www.christchurchbrampton.ca/> is constantly updated and worth checking.

The church will be marking its 175th anniversary with a number of projects and celebrations. We will be participating in Brampton's Doors Open, and you are very welcome to take a tour.

– Elizabeth Charters with Bill Hutton



Member Winter Meetings

Members' Show 'n Tell, January 15

Unfortunately, this meeting was cancelled due to a big snowstorm that closed the library as well.

Due to the popularity of the Members' Show n Tell, we will now have a member artifact feature as part of the Members' section of our newsletter.

Hmm? What is this?

The picture of a mantel clock was sent by Geoff Acheson. The history surrounding this beautiful clock is below. Thanks Geoff!



This is the "Berlin" model mantel clock made by the Arthur Pequegnat Clock Co. of Berlin Ontario. Arthur Pequegnat immigrated from Switzerland to Berlin, Ontario around 1874, eventually building a bicycle factory. In 1904 he converted part of his factory to make clock movements and by the 1920s was producing his own wooden cases in nearby Breslau.

During WWI, in September 1916, Berlin Ontario, understandably, changed their name to Kitchener. The fact that the dial is signed "Berlin", along with several other manufacturing details, helps date the clock to around 1910.

Arthur Pequegnat died in 1927 but relatives continued manufacturing till 1941 when, because of the WWII brass shortage, the factory had to close and was finally demolished in 1964.

Please send in photos and a brief history of your artifacts to be featured in future newsletter editions.

Tom Tran, Heritage Planner - "Modernist Architecture in Brampton", February 19

Tom Tran, a Heritage Planner with the City of Brampton, has a keen interest in modernist architecture. Tom provided a great visual tour of modern Brampton buildings - commercial & residential - with his insight on what makes these structures unique. International Modernism (1960s-1990s) examples are found throughout Bramalea such as the Rogers HQ building, Bacardi Building and the Canadian Airline Pilot Ass'n building found at the corner of West Drive & Steeles Ave E. The Bramalea Civic Centre & City Centre are examples of Brutalism (1970s-1980s). The Railroad & Shoe Factory buildings found in downtown Brampton are examples of Early Modernism (1900s-1930s). Many attendees recognized most of the buildings and provided personal observations. Thanks Tom for an enjoyable evening.



Annual General Meeting, March 19

The BHS held its Annual General Meeting on March 19th. The meeting was chaired by Carolyn Zinck. The President's Report and Treasurer's Report were formally presented. The Executive Board for 2026 was introduced: Steve Collie - President, Geoff Acheson - Vice President, Gloria Berger - Membership Director, Giulia Geraci - Treasurer, Jack Drew - Director, & Paul Hamilton - Director. Two positions remain vacant: Secretary & Social Director. If you

would like to participate on the Board, please reach out to Gloria Berger at bramhis1850@gmail.com.

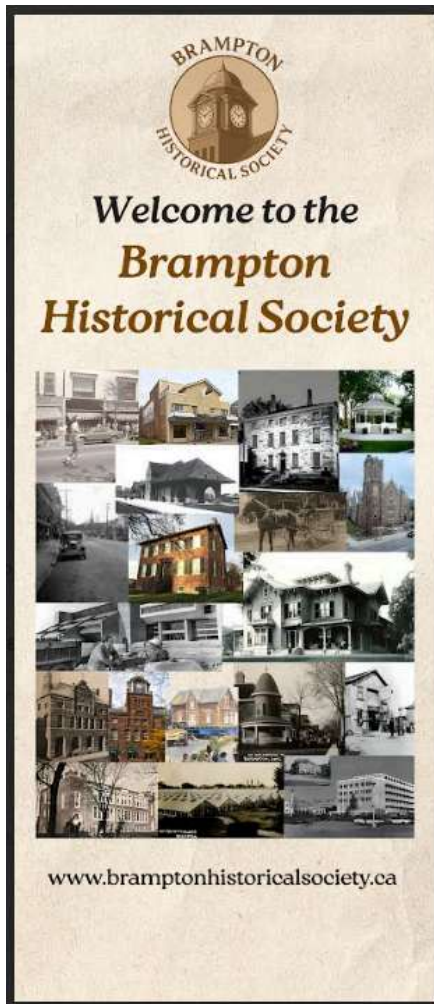
Rawan Osman, Heritage Planner - "City of Brampton Heritage Program Overview", March 19

Following the Annual Meeting, we had the annual "State of the Nation" presentation. Rawan Osman is a Heritage Planner with the City of Brampton. She presented the status of the Heritage Program for the city. Currently, there are 288 designated Heritage properties in Brampton; another 33 are recommended for designation. There are also over 200 properties listed for future designation. Rawan presented several Brampton properties that are currently being designated "Heritage": 115 Mill Street South; 18 Rosedale Ave West; 32 Scott Street; 84 Main Street South; and 6 Isabella Street. As well, the department is looking at heritage buildings in Churchville and Huttonville. It was evident that there are many projects on the go for the Heritage Planning Department. Thank you Rawan for a great presentation.



BHS - New Banner

Big shoutout to Paul Hamilton for all of his work on our fantastic new BHS banner. The new banner below now welcomes members to our meetings and events. The banner contains a number of historical images of Brampton and beckons the onlooker to find out more about Brampton's past - a curiosity shared amongst all BHS members. As well, Paul has created an updated look to our logo which is featured on our website and our newsletter header. Kudos to Paul for a job well done!



BHS Website - UPDATE

Take a look at our updated website, www.bramptonhistoricalsociety.ca. Paul Hamilton & Marc Tomei have done a great job with the website. The site has a fresh new look and a reel of historical photos has been added. More will be added in the following months. Thanks so much Marc & Paul!



<p>Brampton Historical Society New members are most welcome!</p>
<p>Join us monthly!</p> <p>Our meetings feature fascinating local history presented by knowledgeable guest speakers.</p> <p>Meet many other individuals concerned about heritage preservation within our community and region.</p>
<p>All BHS meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month (except July, August & December)</p>
<p>2026 Brampton Historical Society Executive</p> <p>President - Steve Collie Vice-President - Geoff Acheson Treasurer - Giulia Geraci Secretary - <i>vacant</i> Membership - Gloria Berger Director - Jack Drew Director - Paul Hamilton</p>
<p>www.bramptonhistoricalsociety.ca</p> <p>Our email address is: bramhis1850@gmail.com</p>

Upcoming Events

2026 Membership Dues

Your support is greatly appreciated!!
 If not already done so, please ensure that you complete and print the on-line membership form and pay the 2026 membership dues as soon as possible.

Thursday, April 16, 6:30 pm - Cyril Clark Library- **Rapinder Singh**, Sikh National Archives **“History of Sikh Diaspora in Brampton”**

Thursday, May 21, 6:30 pm - Cyril Clark Library- **Gregory Klages**, Author & Professor, **“Brampton Centennial School Shooting”**

Thursday, June 16, 6:30 pm - Cyril Clark Library- **Pamella Houston**, Ontario Black History Society, **“Estelle Blackburn”**

Member Event - June 7

Day at Great War Flying Museum
1 pm to 3 pm.

Join us for a special tour of the Great War Flying Museum located at the Brampton Airport, 13691 McLaughlin Rd. Its website is: greatwarflyingmuseum.org. This museum is dedicated to the young pilots of WWI. There is a great display of WWI memorabilia and precision models. Museum volunteers have also created life size replicas of WWI warplanes including the Fokker Dr.I - the plane flown by the Red Baron! It is a Friends and Family Event. Members attend for free! Courtesy of the Museum for the BHS event - Non-members fee is \$5 each. Children under 14 are free. **All attendees** must sign up/register; send us a note at our email.

Farmers' Market

BHS will be at the Brampton Farmers' Market this year. Talking all about Brampton history, Steve Collie will man the booth. He is looking for another pair of hands to help out. Please send an email to BHS if you can help. BHS booth will be at the Market on:

- June 13th
- July 25th
- September 26th

Check it out this summer!