

# Bruce County Historical Notes



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Otto McClevis (on Right)  
ca. 1939

## The Bruce County Historical Society Annual General Meeting

Featuring Pat Kelly speaking about O.P.P. Police Constable Otto McClevis (1901-1971) and his enforcement experiences during prohibition.

**October 29, 2022**

Doors open at 11 a.m., AGM at 12 noon, Dinner and speaker to follow

**Walkerton District Knights Community Hall,  
1658 Highway 9 (between Walkerton and Mildmay)**

Buy your tickets by October 14, 2022 – Cost: \$25.00

**Email for Tickets:** [bchsregister@gmail.com](mailto:bchsregister@gmail.com)



*Otto McClevis: Bruce County's first O.P.P. officer*

Otto McClevis (1901-1971) was the first person appointed to patrol the County of Bruce for the Ontario Provincial Police. He was 23 when he entered police work as Warton's Chief Constable. In 1928 he joined the Ontario Provincial Police. This was quite a challenge, as he was expected to control crime in an area of thousands of square miles, initially with a motorcycle as his means of transportation.

Many bootleggers hid their operations within the Greenock swamp. McClevis set to work clearing up this illegal market. He never hesitated to chase

## Otto at the BCHS 2022 AGM

deep into the dense swamp to catch moonshiners and destroy their stills. In one case he had to swim the Saugeen River to get his man.

Chasing down robbers of brewery warehouses and banks was another responsibility of McClevis. A notable chase occurred following a Warton beer store robbery, extending down through Chesley, with bullets flying from both cars as one point. The chase went into Holland and Glenelg Township swamps and eventually resulted in capture.

McClevis contributed to the safety of his community by participating in rescue efforts, such as those during the 1951 spring flood. McClevis and Bob Yates rescued Irwin Lobsinger and Joe Jagelewski who had become stranded in mid-river above Walkerton's old hydro dam.

After 18 years with the O.P.P., he was the first provincial police constable to be appointed a magistrate, in September 1945. He held that position until his retirement on May 20, 1971.

To hear more fascinating stories, attend the Oct. 29 BCHS AGM Dinner Meeting, with Pat Kelly recounting many of McClevis' policing exploits.

*Adapted from "McClevis was first cop in Bruce", in "The Cordwainer's Scrapbook: Reflections" by Lloyd Cartwright, 1990.*

## Authors Night debuts in-person



Authors Night on August 8 was the first in-person event hosted by the Bruce County Historical Society, in partnership with the Bruce County Genealogical Society, since 2019. It was a great success with about 40 people attending. Authors Dr. John Carter, Robin Hilborn and Kevin McKague shared the insights and inspirations behind their works about the 1838 St. Clair Raids, the Joyce Hilborn family, and Henry Cargill.

## Three generations, one plough

*Laura Leonard, Curatorial Assistant, Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre*

Found in the collection of the BCM&CC is a plough first owned by James “Red Jim” McDonald of Huron Township. Like many ploughs it was passed down through three generations of farmers before coming to the Museum. Unlike other ploughs, this one was also used by three generations at ploughing matches.

It's a swing-style plough and features a curved



*Andrew McDonald, 86, with plough at the Museum, 1994*

mouldboard designed to cut neat and straight furrows. The mouldboard design also allowed soil to be turned over with less force, reducing the effort on the farmer and horses. Swing-style ploughs became popular and were frequently used in ploughing matches, allowing farmers to showcase their talents.

The McDonald plough was made by John Barrowman and his blacksmith company in the small parish town of Saline, in Fife, Scotland. John Barrowman made this style of plough in 1840 and produced small quantities. Shown at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851, the plough design was considered “classy” in appearance but was limited to the quantities produced by the small manufacturer. John Barrowman died in 1860, but left the legacy of designing this popular plough in the Barrowman and Co. Blacksmith shop.

Red Jim, born in Scotland in 1832, came to Bruce County at the age of 19, and received Crown patents for Lots 65 and 66, Concession 1, Huron Township. In the early 1850s he purchased the plough from Barrowman. He farmed both lots, until 1911 when he sold the north halves of the lots (his son Peter was farming the southern halves) to Harry Courtney and moved with his family to Albert St., Kincardine. Red Jim died in 1924 and is buried in Pine River United Cemetery. According to family history, Red Jim used the plough, perfectly designed for competitive ploughing, at local matches.

It was then passed down to Red Jim's son Alexander who, beginning in 1892, farmed on the north half of Lot 57, Concession 1 with his wife Catherine Ann McKay, and their family of two sons and seven daughters. According to his obituary, found in the Kincardine News, Jan. 26, 1955, Alex served as a school trustee for several years, was a successful farmer, and was one of the first in the area to breed Holstein cattle. According to family knowledge, the plough was also used by Alex in local ploughing matches.

Alexander's son, George, was the next to inherit the plough. George, his wife Erma Shiells, along with his brother Murray, stayed on the north half of Lot 57, Concession 1 and continued to operate the farm, known as “Spruce Nook Farm.” At Spruce Nook they raised registered Shorthorn cattle and Yorkshire pigs. They sold the farm in 1962. In 1959, just before selling the farm, George moved to Ripley and was the shipper at U.C.O. for 16 years before retiring and opening McDonald Antiques which he operated until his death in 1982.

George also used the plough during matches and used it at the first Bruce County Plowing Match, which took place north of Paisley on Watson McKinnon's farm, Oct. 21, 1924. George won first prize in Class 3 (18-25 years of age), at the age of 19, and



*George McDonald's 1924 silver cup. (BCM&CC, 2004.010.004)*

best finish. He was also awarded a silver cup, valued at \$25, donated by the Royal Bank, for best ridge in Classes 2 (open to all who have never won a men's prize), and 3. This trophy, engraved "best single furrow, plain plow", is also part of the Museum's collection, and was donated 17 years after the plough. It is interesting to note that George won with the plough the year his grandfather died. At the time of winning, the plough, thought to have

been purchased about 1852, was over 70 years old, nearly four times the age of the operator.

Red Jim's plough was donated to the Museum in 1987 and, until recently, was always displayed outdoors—first in front of the Museum near the log buildings and then just outside the log cabin in the back yard after the 2005 renovation. After its long tenure outside, the plough has been brought indoors and cleaned, and will continue to find a home indoors for future preservation. Visitors may admire the plough on display during the "Farm Fresh Bruce County" exhibit from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022.

Found within the plough's donation file are letters from the donor and other family members express-

ing their pleasure at being able to see the plough on display. Also found in the file is a letter and a photograph from 1994. The photograph shows Andrew, a son of Red Jim (born when Red Jim was 75), at age 86.

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*The McDonald plough. (BCM&CC, 987.008.001)*



## Bervie Women's Institute celebrates 115th anniversary

*Dorne Fitzsimmons, BCHS President*

On June 1, 2022 the members of the Bervie Women's Institute celebrated their 115th anniversary at Bervie United Church. This branch started in 1907, just 10 years after the founding of the Women's Institute organization. Part of the celebration also included a \$20,000 donation to each of the Kincardine and Community Health Care Foundation and the Huron Shores Hospice using the proceeds from the sale of the Women's Institute hall in Bervie.

During the cheque presentations, the Huron Shores Hospice was represented by Co-Chair Cheryl Cottrill and Executive Director Cathy Herbert; for the Kincardine and Community Health Care Foundation, Directors Dianne MacArthur, Carol Collins, Mary Hall and Dorne Fitzsimmons were present. The W.I. had previously made a donation to the Kincardine Township-Tiverton Public School as well.

The meeting was led by Bervie Branch President Janice Hewitt. Greetings were received from Ellen Waye, President of the Bruce County District of the WI, and from Michelle Phillippi, President of the



*L to R: Ellen Waye (Bruce County WI District President), Michelle Phillippi (FWIO President), Mildred Griffith (with 75 Year Appreciation certificate) and Janice Hewitt (Bervie WI President). Michelle holds the Bervie WI 115th anniversary certificate.*



*Bervie WI President Janice Hewitt presents a \$20,000 donation to the Huron Shores Hospice. Accepting the cheque is Co-chair Cheryl Cottrill (left of cheque) and Executive Director Cathy Herbert (far left).*

Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO).

A special presentation was given to Mildred Griffith for her 75 years of active membership with the Bervie WI. Secretary Betty Jean White spoke of Mildred's years with the Bervie WI. Ellen Way and Michelle Phillippi presented certificates and Janice Hewitt presented a bouquet of flowers to Mildred to mark the occasion. Mildred continues to be the Tweedsmuir Community History Curator. Those present enjoyed a skit of current events from Betty Anne Thompson and members, and the music of Rose Weir.

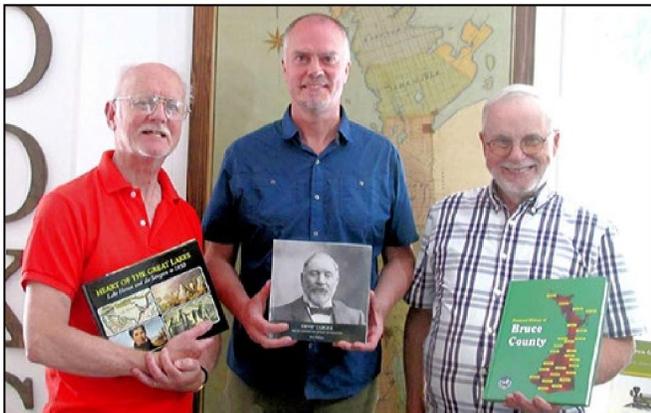
The Bruce County Historical Society congratulates the Bervie WI for 115 years of service to the community and wish them well, now and into the future.



*Bervie WI memorabilia.*

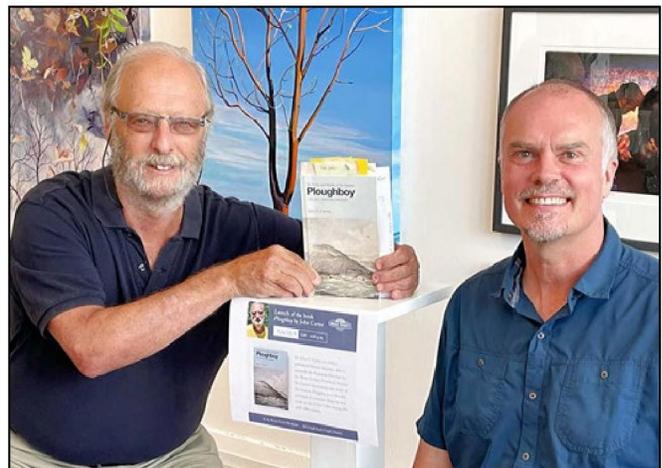
## Bruce County Bookstore features BCHS publications

On July 3 Kevin McKague, proprietor of the Bruce County Bookstore in Cargill, held a "BCHS Book Day" featuring BCHS books. Authors and BCHS Directors Robin Hilborn and Bill Stewart attended, signed books and answered questions.



*Three authors and their books: Robin Hilborn, Kevin McKague and Bill Stewart.*

On July 29 the Bruce County Bookstore launched the book of author and BCHS Director John Carter, *The Perils and Pitfalls of the Steamer Ploughboy*.



*Dr. John Carter and bookstore owner Kevin McKague, July 29. (Sue McKague)*

## Walker House, Kincardine, re-opens with restored exterior



*The bar in the Walker House, Kincardine, about 1894. (BCM&CC, A994.064.025)*

The Walker House was built in 1850 by Francis “Paddy” Walker, who immigrated to Canada from Ireland with his wife Jane and their seven sons. Originally run as an inn and tavern, it remains the oldest building in Kincardine and the oldest standing wooden hotel in Bruce and Grey counties. This year it was open as a museum from June 15 to Sept. 3, 2022, every day except Tuesday from 9 to 3.

Additionally, the Walker House hosts an exciting, year-round, Prohibition-themed cocktail bar known as the Industry Room. Running Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 3 to 11, the Industry Room serves enticing cocktails, delicious charcuterie boards, and historic charm with every visit.

Starting in 2020, amid all the COVID restrictions, the Walker House began an ambitious capital campaign to finance the building’s exterior refurbishment. Many generous donors helped

reach the goal, and with outstanding help from Bird Construction, a beautiful, restored exterior was completed in 2022.

The Walker House remains a vital part of Kincardine’s community, as a museum, event rental venue and hospitality centre. It operates entirely through grants and donations from local citizens and businesses and with a large volunteer base. For more, see [thewalkerhousekincardine.com](http://thewalkerhousekincardine.com).

### BCHS accepts donations

Donated funds help support the activities of the Society and the preservation of history through a variety of means. Tax receipts will be issued.

— Send a cheque to:

Treasurer, Bruce County Historical Society  
33A Victoria St. N., Southampton, ON N0H 2L0

— Donations may also be made by e-transfer to  
[bchs1957@gmail.com](mailto:bchs1957@gmail.com)

## Do I have a book for you!

John C. Carter

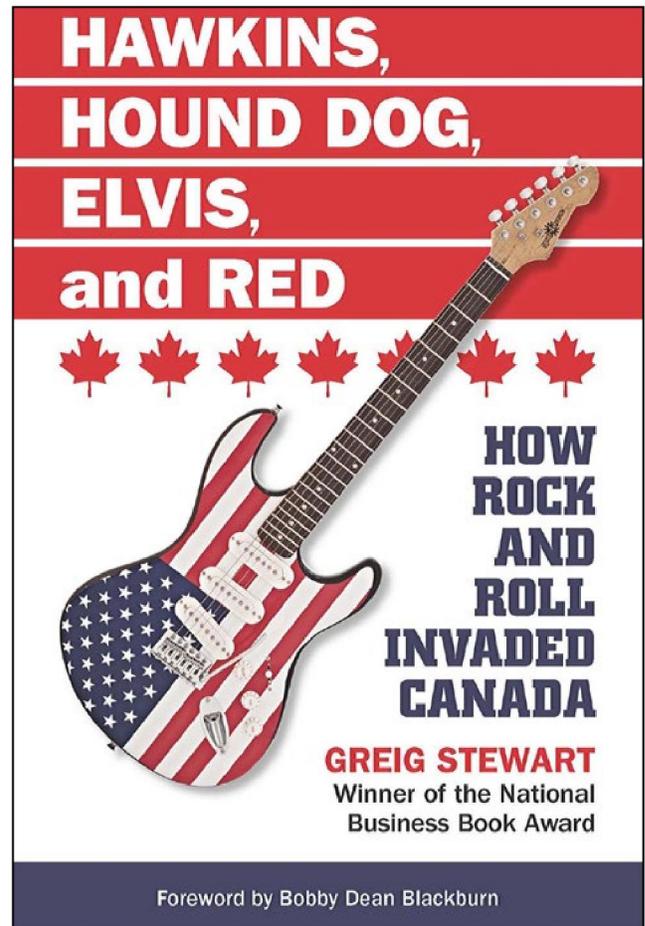
A few questions for you to answer: from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, did you do any of the following?

- Listen to CKLW–The Big 8, The Motor City (Windsor/Detroit) on your transistor radio while at the beach, or secretly at night, when you were supposed to be asleep, on your rocket radio?
- Enjoy tunes on the jukebox at Sauble’s Beachcomber and other beachside hangouts in Bruce County, or while skating at the Starlight Roller Rink in Sauble Beach?
- Go to dances and rock concerts at the Sauble Beach Pavilion and other popular Bruce County venues in Kincardine, Port Elgin and Oliphant?

If you did all or any of these things, then I have a book for you! I highly recommend Greig Stewart’s recently released *Hawkins, Hound Dog, Elvis, and Red: How Rock and Roll Invaded Canada*. It focusses on what the author believes to be a critical window in the evolution of pop music in Canada: a 12-year period from 1951, when the term “rock and roll” was coined, to 1963 when the Toronto band Richie Knight and the Mid-Knights’ song “Charlena” became a #1 hit on the CHUM Chart.

Stewart believes that this event constitutes a seminal time in the development and progression of rock and roll in Canada. He moves chronologically from the 1950s up to 1963 to document a fascinating, yet not well-known, story. His time-travel provides a glimpse of how rock and roll invaded Canada from the United States, developed a home-grown component, and set the stage for the British Invasion of the 1960s. The author conducted over 100 interviews, which add a personal touch to the story that he tells, and incorporates first-hand recollections of people who were directly involved in this evolution.

The foreword, written by Bobby Dean Blackburn (now a Bruce Peninsula resident and still playing after all these years!), presents to readers a brief reflection of his experiences as a pioneer in the Canadian rock and roll scene.



Quick Red Fox Press, Toronto

The author’s introduction provides a helpful and succinct overview of the 15 chapters and 338 pages of text which follow. Initially, American radio stations and disc jockeys facilitated change that helped to bring rock and roll to the eager ears of Canadian teens. By the mid 1950s, teenage boys owned or had the use of cars with radios, and local hangouts with juke boxes played more than 50 million 45 RPM records by then. By 1960, transistor radios became accessible and popular, with more than nine million kids in North America owning one.

Another important influence in the late 1950s and into the 1960s were live rock and roll shows. U.S. promoters Alan Freed and George Lorenz worked with Canadian booking agents to set up these travelling concerts. They were wildly popular and featured up and coming as well as bona fide rock artists who were packaged into giant shows.

Canadian agents also booked single rock acts into clubs and dance halls in circuits throughout

southern Ontario. One of these was Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. Hawkins never returned to the United States, performed in many venues across Canada, and only recently passed away near Peterborough.

In other chapters which follow, additional interesting and informative details are provided about the music scene of the period in Vancouver and Toronto. Details are also given about the evolution of Bobby Dean and the Gems, the important role played by Little Caesar and the Consuls, the Great Radio Wars in Toronto, and the 1963 story of the recording and the release of "Charlena" by Richie Knight and the Mid-Knights. All contributed to the evolution and growth of rock and roll in Canada. A brief epilogue of this fascinating history follows, and the book ends with an impressive bibliography of over 125 relevant titles.

Some final thoughts—what Greig Stewart presents is a well-researched and finely-crafted book. While in part the story that he tells is a microcosm of events and influences coming from the United



*Bobby Dean & the Gems, Toronto's first rock and roll band. Lead singer Bobby Dean Blackburn (left) now resides on the Bruce Peninsula. (mississauga.com)*

States, it is also a record of the history which has separate and unique Canadian components. It is a title which is not only timely in its release and availability, but is also a pleasure to read.

If you are interested in varied aspects and chapters of the history of Canadian popular music, then you should add this book to your personal library. Priced at \$39.95 (plus shipping and handling), it is a real bargain.



*Richie Knight and the Mid-Knights at a circa 1963 show. (garagehanger.com)*

Now, to top this all off, it's time to dig deeply through your own 45s collection, or Google "Charlena" by Richie Knight and the Mid-Knights, and listen to the tune and the band which inspired Greig Stewart to write his wonderful book. Enjoy the record, and then the book! For more information, contact the publisher at [glenellis@quickredfoxpress.com](mailto:glenellis@quickredfoxpress.com).

*Dr. John C. Carter is the Peninsula Director for the Bruce County Historical Society and a former 1960s Kitchener/Waterloo-based rock musician. He can be reached at [drjohncarter@bell.net](mailto:drjohncarter@bell.net).*

## Peninsula museum honours veterans



*The Veteran's Wall at St. Edmunds Bruce Peninsula Museum.*

Having been open daily in July and August, the St. Edmunds Bruce Peninsula Museum is open on weekends now until Thanksgiving weekend. Special displays over the summer included a quilting display and events hosted by the wood carvers, weavers and spinners.

This Museum, housed in the former St. Edmunds Settlement School, first opened in 1967. It tells the story of the people of the peninsula, and how they lived and survived in a subsistence economy.

It includes the experiences of the Chippewas of Nawash, early settlement by Europeans, as depicted in several beautifully crafted dioramas and artefacts, a restoration of part of the original schoolroom, and a chapel.

Also outside the main building is one of the first houses built in Tobermory containing some of

its original furnishings.

Two new displays include “1982 Official Twinning: Tobermory, Ontario – Tobermory, Scotland” and “Honouring our Veterans.” Veterans are celebrated for their central role in the community’s life. Some, such as Bert Hopkins, who served in the U.S./Canadian Devil’s Brigade during the Second World War, and later with the United Nations, in the Congo, had extraordinary military careers.

In 2022, another of the original settler cabins will be moved to the site to enhance our knowledge of life 150 years ago. The Museum Committee has also decided to build a pavilion as a venue to display the many modern arts and cultural activities in the community. For more, visit [www.facebook.com/StEdmundsMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/StEdmundsMuseum).



# BRUCE COUNTY museum & cultural centre

## Farm Fresh Bruce County Exhibit

Oct. 1 – Dec. 31

Exploring the history of agriculture in Bruce County, this exhibit focuses on the importance of farming by examining its contributions to early and modern economies, community growth, and fostering strong community bonds. Complemented by items from the Museum’s permanent collection, Farm Fresh examines farming technologies, life on the farm, off-shoot industries, community groups, changing trends in the business of agriculture, and Indigenous farming practices.



## Grey Roots Museum & Archives and Simcoe County Museum Bus Trip

Nov. 17, 8:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Part two in our “Break Out of the Bruce” Bus Trip Series will take us to Grey Roots Museum & Archives, Owen Sound, followed by an afternoon at the Simcoe County Museum outside of Barrie. Attendees will view rarely-seen artifacts and other

behind-the-scenes features at both museums while on guided tours.

Adults, 55+; free; pre-registration required — *Proudly presented by New Horizons for Seniors*

## “Stories & Artefacts” Online

Visit BCM&CC’s “Stories & Artefacts” page, [www.brucemuseum.ca/artefacts](http://www.brucemuseum.ca/artefacts), for fascinating stories about artefacts housed at the Museum. There are almost 70 articles covering a wide range of topics, such as hair art and jewelry; log cabin quilts; early furniture makers; early potteries, Junior Farmers, early hospitals, foundries, roller skating, trench art, wedding dresses, and much more.

### Application for BCHS Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: Annual - \$20 Life - \$500

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ I would also like to make a donation of: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Complete form, select type of membership and make cheque payable to “Bruce County Historical Society”  
Mail to: Joyce Osborne, Membership Director, Box 298, Ripley, ON N0G 2R0

*As a member, you contribute to the preservation of Bruce County heritage. See [brucecountyhistory.on.ca](http://brucecountyhistory.on.ca) for more information on the Society’s goals and mandate, and the benefits of membership.*



## Bruce County Genealogical Society

### Pat Kelly returns to Bruce County Museum

Pat Kelly—one of the Genealogical Society’s most-loved speakers—returns to the Bruce County Museum, Southampton, on Sept. 12 at 7 p.m. to discuss the remarkable life of Henry Cargill. During this free talk, Pat will enthrall with stories he heard as a boy about the lumber camps in the Greenock Swamp.

*In-person at BCM&CC:* Space is limited. Pre-registration with the Museum is required; call 519-797-2080 or register online at [www.brucemuseum.ca/event/henry-cargill](http://www.brucemuseum.ca/event/henry-cargill).

*Virtual:* For Zoom link, email the Bruce County Genealogical Society: [BCGSwebinars@gmail.com](mailto:BCGSwebinars@gmail.com).

### 2023 membership renewal

A friendly reminder to check your membership status on the address label on this newsletter. If you see (2022) on the label, it’s time to renew.

- Annual Memberships: \$20 each
- Life Memberships: \$500 each

Please join or renew by submitting your membership fees or questions to:

• Joyce Osborne, Membership Secretary, Box 298, Ripley ON N0G 2R0

• Email: [janlea@hurontel.on.ca](mailto:janlea@hurontel.on.ca)

• Payment can also be made by e-transfer to [bchs1957@gmail.com](mailto:bchs1957@gmail.com)

For memberships mailed to the U.S., please pay in U.S. funds.

**If possible, please submit your renewal by the AGM (Oct. 29, 2022) so that your Yearbook can be mailed early in November.**

**Newsletters available by e-mail** — To receive a PDF copy of BCHS newsletters, and enjoy colour images, contact President Dorne Fitzsimmons at [dcf@bmts.com](mailto:dcf@bmts.com)



### Bruce County Historical Society

33A Victoria St. N.  
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[www.brucecountyhistory.on.ca](http://www.brucecountyhistory.on.ca)



*Annual membership in the Bruce County Historical Society is \$20*