

MHS



NEWS

Welcome to the Middleport Heritage Society (MHS) Newsletter! This biannual publication provides a means to keep members connected and up to date on activities and events. We encourage you to get involved - become a member of MHS, send feedback, write an article or share a photo for future editions, share your memories and folklore on the Facebook group, join a committee or indicate your interest in becoming a Board Member.



Congratulations to this year's Conservation Award winners - Alva Brennan and John Douglas

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring wildflowers have faded, the trees are in full leaf and bees are collecting pollen and nectar. We welcome summer!

I'm inspired by the efforts of individuals, local groups and community, County of Brant Library, Brant Museum and forums that MHS has developed to connect the community and organizations. This networking has enhanced the discovery, documentation and preservation of the rich history and heritage in the former Onondaga Township in ways that can be experienced, shared and enjoyed by all.

In 2022, MHS volunteers documented an amazing 1305 hours to MHS endeavours. I know this number is a significant underestimate. I would like to acknowledge and celebrate our outgoing Board members Dorette Allemang, Paul Allemang and Brian Coleman. Thank you for your leadership and contributions in our first term. I know we will continue to call on your expertise and are grateful for your ongoing support and friendship.

At our April 15, 2023 AGM, MHS celebrated the lifetime work and contributions of Alva Brennan and John Douglas by presenting them with the MHS Conservation Award. MHS is forever grateful for their devotion and care of St. Paul's Church and Cemetery and memories they continue to share. A wonderful legacy for the community.

I hope everyone will enjoy some vacation time and have a safe summer. As always, we welcome your memories, stories and photos to share for all to enjoy.

Mary Anne Workman Rose, President
maryannemhs@gmail.ca

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This year, as the Middleport Heritage Society celebrates our first full term as an incorporated Board, I will give a brief recap of our accomplishments over the past 3 years.

On March 7, 2020, we held our Inaugural meeting at the Onondaga Community Hall, where we officially became the Middleport Heritage Society, and were incorporated as a Not-for-Profit organization through the Ontario Historical Society on March 11, 2020. In 2020 we applied for and received (in 2021) our charitable organization status through the CRA. In 2021 and 2022 we applied for and were awarded Capital grants through the County of Brant. We have also developed a Facebook page, a website and also publish a bi-annual Newsletter.

In addition to all the MHS administrative work that goes on behind the scenes, our most exciting achievements to date have been the restoration projects that have been ongoing to the church structure since 2020. First, the entire church structure was rewired by Meidema Electric. Paul Allemang did an amazing job restoring the tower louvered roundels back to their original state. In 2021, the interior and exterior of the building was completely restored and repainted by Northern Painters and Dame Decor refurbished the pews. MHS is grateful that the cost of these renovations were supported by the County of Brant grants. Over the summer and fall of 2021, the stained glass windows were removed by Trillium Glass and storm glazing was installed. Due to COVID related delays, the windows are still in the process of being repaired but are well on their way to being completed. A huge thank you to the families and community members who sponsored all of the windows! It is truly amazing what we can do when we all work together! Our next project - the biggest and most expensive to date - will be the restoration and repair of the building's foundation.

In June of 2021, the Diocese of Huron deconsecrated the church, the first step in the transfer of the church and cemetery from the Diocese to the County of Brant. Recently, a survey of the property was completed by the Diocese at the request of the County. We still have a lot of work ahead of us in making this a reality but we are so blessed to have the support and confidence of the County behind us as we pursue the stewardship of the church building for multi-purpose community use.

In spite of our shaky beginnings during COVID, we were able to hold a number of successful fundraising events over the past 3 years - a 50/50 draw, 2 yard Sales and a Quilt Show.

Our biggest accomplishment this year is the publication of our cookbook - Treasured Family Recipes! It was a labour of love for our Cookbook Committee and we are very proud of the finished product!

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to everyone involved with the MHS - Board members, community members, volunteers and friends. It has been my absolute pleasure to be involved with all of you over the past 3 years and I look forward to what we can and will accomplish in the next 3 years!

Joyce Osinga, Secretary
secretary@middleportheritage.ca

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

We continue to negotiate the red tape of procuring the proper permits needed to repair the church structure's foundation. We are hopeful that things will fall into place this year as the survey of the church property has now been completed. In the meantime, we are grateful for donations that will help us pay for this expensive venture.

Trillium Glass connects regularly regarding the progress of the stained glass window repairs and we have been assured that the windows will be completed this summer. We have made a decision to hold off reinstalling the windows until the foundation work has been completed to ensure that no damage is done to the restored windows. As always, a huge Thank You to our Building Committee and to everyone else involved with preserving and maintaining our church structure!

John Osinga, Building Committee

GRAND OLD TALES

Oil Boom

Excerpt from "Stories Short & Tales Tall" by Bruce Allan McBlain*

In 1910 oil was found on Howell's at 600'. The boom began!

In the next few years, over 30 wells were drilled on Howell's, Allan's and adjacent properties. Speculators had a field day. Land values and options went sky high. Imperial Oil officials were reported to have come down in a special train. Jack Allan is alleged to have sold for \$1,000 an acre when the first well on his farm hit oil. Onondaga was in the news! Mr. Howell had tempting offers but refused to sell, preferring to hold his land and sell the oil produced. Soon teams were kept busy hauling tanks of oil to cars on the siding at Onondaga.

There were no laws governing drilling at that time so you could drill across the line fence from your neighbours well and pump him dry.

Further drilling revealed the main field to be very small. Small amounts were found as far away as Blossom Ave. and Hartley's. The wells had to be tested carefully and pumped regularly. A single engine and jerk rods radiating out across the fields pumped several wells at once.

In 1911 Township Council passed a bi-law giving John Carmody the right to lay an oil line to Onondaga siding. It was never built. The flow soon began to decrease and by 1930 was down to a trickle. Since that time, a few wells have produced a small amount of oil by careful management. By 1950, most of the wells had been pulled and the era was over.

I remember the two wells on Jane Allen's 50 acre farm on the left side of Old Onondaga Road just before the railroad track. They each had a wooden tank about 10'x10' with a series of taps in the side to drain off water. The water/oil mixture was pumped by a jerk rod and powered by an engine over in Howell's.

My father rented his Aunt Jane's farm for several years when I was young. A heifer had calved in the 20 acre field along the creek west of the wells. It took several people some time to find the calf snuggled down beside a couple of tall Canada thistles.

**Bruce McBlain published "Stories Short & Tales Tall" in 2003, a dedication to his grandchildren, so that they may know of his life and times growing up and living in Onondaga Township. We are forever grateful that Bruce also generously shared his memories with his community.*

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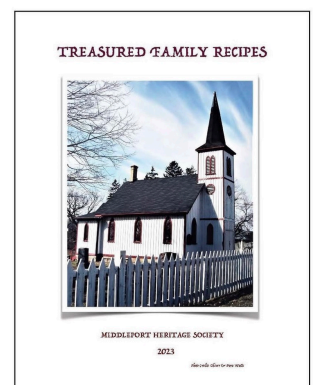


MIDDLEPORT HERITAGE SOCIETY COOKBOOK - TREASURED FAMILY RECIPES

The Middleport Heritage Society is proud to offer our cookbook - Treasured Family Recipes - for sale. This cookbook is a centenary commemoration of the Middleport Women's Institute's 1923 Cookbook - Selected and Tried Recipes. We are very grateful to all of our community members and friends who shared their favourite family recipes with us. We are also indebted to all our sponsors and advertisers for their generous support.

If you would like to place an order for your cookbook, please contact Joyce Osinga - 905-317-0091, or email - secretary@middleportheritage.ca. Cookbooks are \$15.00 each. Alternatively, you can purchase your cookbook at Carluke Orchards, Fenwood Farms, Grand River Boat Farm Marketplace & Cafe, Jones Bakery, Caledonia, or Quick Feeds, Copetown. Thank you for your support!

Cookbook Committee - Joyce Osinga, Mary Anne Rose, Tammy Trotman, Patricia VanSickle



Meet Your 2023-2026 Middleport Heritage Society Board Members

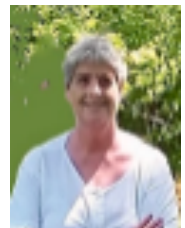
Mary Anne Workman Rose - President

Mary Anne is a lifetime resident of Brant County. Growing up on Baptist Church Rd, she is the 5th generation of the Workman family that settled the farm about 1860. Those early settlers celebrated their faith and now rest in St. Paul's Cemetery, Middleport. Mary Anne has recently retired from a wonderful 33 year career as a registered nurse at Hamilton Health Sciences. She looks forward to spending more time with her family and enjoying her hobbies and interests in beekeeping, bluebird conservation, birding, growing native flora, genealogy and volunteering to support and research the legacy of heritage and folklore in the former Onondaga Township.



Tammy Trotman- Vice President

Tammy was born and raised in the Village of Middleport, and St. Paul's Church, Middleport has been a significant part of her life right up to this day. She has lived in Hamilton since her late teens, but still considers Middleport and the Church there her rightful home. She has worked in the health care industry for the bulk of her life, as well as a law clerk. The greatest passion and accomplishment in her life, has been her lifelong labour of love, to strive to ensure the survival and obtain a viable future for the ill-fated St. Paul's Church. Her interests and hobbies are reading, writing, walking, music, being a member of a book club, rug hooking, and coming to the defence of animals in distress. Tammy is also now a proud member of the Mennonite family and religion in Hamilton. She presently resides in Hamilton with her 2 cats. She takes the opportunity to return to Middleport and St. Paul's Church, as often as she can manage to do so.



Joyce Osinga - Secretary

Joyce is a life long resident of Brant County, growing up in the east end of Onondaga Township, on the family farm that had been in the Deagle family for 4 generations, many of whom were parishioners at the Middleport Church. She now enjoys life on the hobby farm she shares with her husband, John. Joyce is semi-retired from Hamilton Health Sciences after a 40 year career as an Administrative Assistant, and works part time for the Department of Critical Care. Her spare time is spent travelling, reading, crocheting and riding her horse, Willow.



Grace Workman-Porecki - Treasurer & Membership Coordinator

Grace has roots in the former Onondaga Tsp that go back more than a century. Having ancestors that settled in the Township and other community connections to Middleport Church, Grace is passionate about preserving the church building and its history. Currently, she works part-time in consulting, childcare, and project management. She enjoys volunteering within her community. You can find Grace spending time with family and friends (including her two dogs), hosting her self-inquiry Meetup group, listening to audiobooks, and spending time in nature.



Gary Jermy - Board Member

Gary Jermy was born and raised in the former Onondaga Township and has many fond memories of ice cream cones from the Middleport General Store. After moving away when he was a teenager, he returned to the area in 2013 working for the County of Brant Public Library. During his time at the Library, he's worked in a number of positions and is currently the Coordinator of Outreach and Community Impact for all the libraries in the County. One of his proudest accomplishments to date has been spearheading the offering of library services in Onondaga. History is a passion of his and he manages the community Digital Historical Collection, an online database featuring digitized copies of local history photographs, documents, and artifacts.



John W. Lane - Board Member

Born and raised in Hamilton, Ontario, John W. Lane, M.A.A.T.O., C.B.C.O., C.P.S.O, received his architectural training at Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology. John is an accredited Architectural Technologist in the province of Ontario and has been a Building Official since 1988 when he began his career as a municipal Building Inspector and By-law Enforcement Officer. After 12 years of field experience he took on the position as Manager of Building Inspections in the City of Hamilton Building Division, a position he held until 2021. John now serves as the Chief Building Official for the City of St. Catharines.



John has taught/facilitated various OBOA courses over the past 20 years. A longstanding member of the Ontario Association of Property Standards Officers John served as Executive Director, (Treasurer), for 20 years and volunteered as an Instructor in the OAPSO certification program for 25 years.

For over 32 years John has remained active at Mohawk College by teaching a wide variety of building construction related courses as part of the Residential Design Certificate Program (in the Continuing Education Department) as well as

Architectural Technology courses (in the day school program). John also serves as Chair of the Mohawk College Architectural Advisory Committee.

John is married to his wonderful wife, Joanne Douglas, (a longtime resident of Brant County), and has lived in Brant County since 2009. John and Joanne have several hobbies and interests. Attending many of the local fall fairs to show the family's Clydesdale horses is their favourite.

Amanda Skelton Lowe - Board Member

Amanda was born and grew up in Brantford. Her mother, Shari (Corner) Brennan, as a kid, lived at the Middleport Store and her father, Rick Skelton, grew up on a farm in Brant County. Amanda would come to Middleport when she was a kid to visit her Great-grandparents, Howard and Marie Corner, Great Aunt Alva Brennan and her Grandparents, Reeford and Peggy Corner, a little further up the road on Hwy 54. She remembers picking raspberries beside her Great-grandparents' barn and playing with toy farms at her Aunt Alva's house. She would have sleepovers at her grandparents' house and go to the Middleport Church on Sunday mornings with her Grandma. She would go with her Grandma to deliver mail and read magazine articles to her as they drove around.

In 2005, Amanda got a job with Canada Post in Caledonia and in 2006 moved to Middleport. She was then fortunate enough to buy her Great Aunt Alva's house in 2011 which is on Hager St. In Middleport. Amanda currently works for Canada Post and is married to Dan Lowe, has 2 sons, Rayden and Kallum, 2 dogs, 3 cats and 2 bunnies.



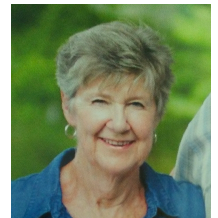
John Osinga - Board Member

John has lived in Brant County most of his life, emigrating from the Netherlands with his family as a small boy. He has been retired from Stelco for a number of years and spent most of his retirement years raising Standardbred horses on the hobby farm he shares with his wife, Joyce. In his spare time, John enjoys collecting antiques, buying and restoring horse buggies and cutters and being involved with the restoration of the Middleport Church structure.



Patricia VanSickle - Board Member

Pat has spent all of her married life on the family farm in the former Onondaga Township. Her son and grandsons are now the 5th and 6th generations to farm this beautiful land along the Grand River. Pat is a member of the Grand River Women's PROBUS and is the recording secretary for the Management Team. Now retired she enjoys gardening, crafting and spending time with her Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren.



MIDDLEPORT HERITAGE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

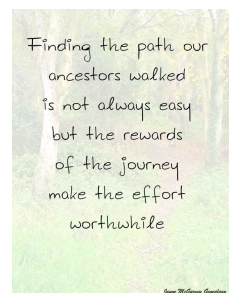
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March 4, 2023 - MHS Board Meeting

April 15, 2023 - 3rd Annual General Meeting - Onondaga Community Centre

April 15, 2023 - Official launch of our Cookbook - Treasured Family Recipes

May 25, 2023 - MHS board Meeting



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 1, 2023 - MHS will have a display at the official Grand Opening of the the TF Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre - 11:30 am - 2:00 pm.
- Middleport Church will be open for tours and cookbook sales -1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Summer 2023 - Cemetery Decoration Service - Date to be announced

Fall 2023 - Arts, Culture and Heritage Days - Date to be Announced
- Chiefswood Tour - Date to be Announced

Find us on Facebook - Middleport Heritage Society - Group. This is a private group, with a growing number of members, near and far, who enjoy sharing photos and stories of our past heritage in Middleport and former Onondaga Township. Please send a request to join and we will gladly add you to our Facebook community.

Visit our Website - middleportheritage.ca. Through our website, you are able to view upcoming events, fill in a membership form if you're not already a member, and make a donation! We also welcome any feedback on our website as we go forward.

Affiliated Associations

The Middleport Heritage Society is proud to be members of and associated with the following organizations:

- Architectural Conservancy Ontario
- National Trust for Canada
- Salt Springs Heritage Society
- The Ontario Historical Society

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MIDDLEPORT HERITAGE SOCIETY

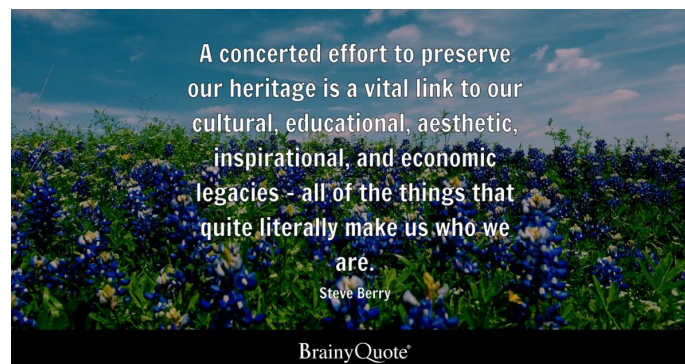
The mission of the MHS is to preserve and enhance awareness of the natural, cultural and built heritage of Middleport and adjacent communities in the former Township of Onondaga, County of Brant.

Your membership dues of \$10.00/year (January-December) are greatly appreciated. The proceeds will help cover administrative costs, fees and maintenance. We also steward and maintain the Middleport Church structure as a venue for cultural events and public use such as wedding/religious ceremonies, speakers, musicals and gatherings. The MHS Board and supporting committees are volunteers, and as such, no remuneration is given for their time and effort.

MHS members enjoy:

- An invitation to the MHS Annual General Meeting with voting privileges
- The MHS newsletter issued twice a year - Spring and Fall
- Opportunities to inquire and share genealogical knowledge/documents, community folklore and history
- Camaraderie, advocacy, stewardship and volunteer opportunities involving our natural, cultural and built heritage
- OHS Bulletin - The Newsletter of the Ontario Historical Society
- Architectural Conservancy Ontario Newsletter

You can easily renew your membership online at www.middleportheritage.ca/membership or by completing the attached form. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if you need assistance with your membership. Once again, thank you for your past and continued support. (Membership Form attached)





MEMBERSHIP FORM

Becoming a member of the Middleport Heritage Society helps preserve and enhance awareness of the natural, cultural and built heritage of Middleport and communities in the former Onondaga Township and to restore and maintain Middleport Church structure as a multipurpose venue for future generations.

DATE: _____

Name (Please Print)

Address (Please Print)

City

Postal Code

E-Mail (to receive MHS Updates & Newsletter by e-mail). Please Print

Phone #: _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Membership: Please Indicate:

1 Year: \$10.00 _____ / 2 Year \$20.00 _____ / 3 Year \$30.00 _____ (Cheque _____ / E-transfer _____)

*Donation : \$ _____ (Cheque _____ / E-transfer _____)

Total: \$ _____

Please send your cheque for a 1 to 3 year membership (January-December) and/or donation to:

Middleport Heritage Society
c/o Grace Workman-Porecki
2281 Prospect St., Burlington, ON. L7R 2A1
treasurer@middleportheritage.ca

OR E-TRANSFER TO: treasurer@middleportheritage.ca.

*Donation Tax Receipts issued for \$20.00 or more
Thank you!