

BITS AND PIECES OF BRANTFORD'S HISTORY
BRANTFORD IN THE 1830'S

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INTRODUCTION BRANTFORD IN THE 1830's

"...Brantford within the last 3 years, has increased in a more rapid state, than any other town in the upper province. It is the natural point of concentration for all the agricultural produce of the inland portion of the western districts, and is situated on the great western road..."

"The average number of carrying wagons passing through Brantford daily, on route to the headwaters of Lake Ontario, exceeds 100 in those seasons when the roads are favourable." (Report of Board of Directors of Grand River Navigation Company, Feb. 1, 1835).

"I have now learned more fully about the wickedness of Brantford. There have come over a few Yankees who have introduced the evil of gambling and who have taught the youth to play cards. The result of this has been very disastrous to the morals of many; out of this has sprung all the immorality of the place, thieving and drunkenness, etc., etc." (Rev. William Proudfoot, 1833).

"As we came in sight of Brantford I was exceedingly struck with the beauty of the prospects, and when I thought on the numbers of the persons in the place who had invited me to settle amongst them, the warmth of the attachment which they manifested toward me, and the prospect of enjoying good society, when with this I contrasted the dullness of London, and the doubtful attachment of some, I felt as if I had made a wrong choice." (Rev. William Proudfoot, 1833).

"Before sunset, I arrived at Brantford and took a walk about the town and its environs. The situation of this place is most beautiful... on a hill above...the Grand River. And I stood and traced this noble stream, winding through richly wooded flats, with green meadows and cultivated fields, I was involuntarily reminded of the Thames near Richmond; the scenery has the same character of tranquil and luxuriant beauty." (Anna Jameson - writer - 1837)

"Next morning I took another walk. There are several good shops and many houses in progress, some of them of brick and stone. I met two or three well-dressed women walking down Colborne street, and the people were bustling about with animated faces - a strong contrast to the melancholy indolent - looking Indians. I understand that there are now about 1200 inhabitants, the population having tripled in three years: and they have a newspaper, an agricultural society, a post-office, a Congregational, a Baptist and Methodist Church, a large chair manufactory, and other mills and manufactories which I had no time to visit." (Anna Jameson - writer - 1837)

"This thriving village (Brantford), is quite a neat and stirring little place....It is situated on the bank of the river, which is here a stream of some importance....There is a handsome bridge erected over it, opposite the town. A grist mill, running four pair of stones, is located within its limits, and several saw-mills are in operation nearby. There are about a dozen mercantile stores....a considerable number of mechanics shops that make a good appearance and two pretty good taverns in the village....The tout ensemble of the country round is handsome.... The settlements on either side of the road, for some distance, are extensive and quite dense." (A visitor to Brantford - 1832).

Each of the preceding descriptions reflects the point of view of the person writing. The promoters and entrepreneurs were interested in impressing possible customers for the navigation with Brantford's prosperity. The minister viewed the town from his point of view, and although he found it lacking in some respects, he could not condemn it completely. The writer viewed Brantford from both a poetic and practical stand point; and the visitor was obviously impressed with the progressive nature of the town, and the beautiful surroundings. Taken together, these descriptions of Brantford in the 1830's leave one with the picture of a forward-looking and beautiful town, but one that was undergoing the usual birth pangs of a pioneer settlement of the times.

HOW THE VILLAGE GREW

In the 1830's, Brantford had a reputation of being "brawling Brantford." The name was perhaps not completely unwarranted, but there was more to the town than just Saturday night brawls and Sunday morning hangovers.

Up until the 1830's Brantford had grown very slowly, and in fact was smaller than some of the surrounding villages such as Burford, Mt. Pleasant, and St. George, which it would surpass during the 1830's. Several factors contributed to its sudden growth. The sudden spurt in population in Brantford coincided with an amazing increase in immigration from the British Isles at this time. More significant for Brantford, however, was the fact that the authorities allowed the white's claims to the land that many of them had been squatting on for some time, and also pressured the Indians into selling the settlers 807 acres for five shillings, as a town plot. A proper survey of the village was ordered, and in June of 1830, Lewis Burwell, deputy surveyor to the Honourable Peter Robinson, Commissioner of Crown Lands, reported:

"I have the honour to submit to you a plan of the village of Brantford, as surveyed by order of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and under the superintendence of John Brant, Esquire, superintendent of the Six Nations of Indians, which I trust will be found substantially correct in every particular."

In May of 1831, the first sale of the land by public auction was held, and speculators, farmers, and merchants bought up the remaining town lots.

When James Wilkes, one of the early settlers in Brantford, arrived in 1822, he estimated that there were less than a hundred people living in the area; Captain William Gilkinson, writing in 1832 about his new property, estimated that the village contained only "350 souls." But the influx of immigrants mentioned previously, plus the arrival of other settlers from the United States and Canada (in 1832 a large number of families, known as the Kingston settlers began to arrive), quickly increased the population so that the Board of Directors of the Grand River Navigation Company were able to report in 1835:

"Brantford in the last three years has increased in a more rapid state than any other town in the upper province."

In 1837, on one of her "Summer Rambles" through Upper Canada, Anna Jameson commented on the people of Brantford who were "bustling about with animated faces", and she estimated the population to be about 1200, "the population having tripled in three years."

A report by Burwell, the surveyor, in 1833, in reference to lots sold by Captain John Brant, pointed out that many businesses were underway in Brantford. Included were several merchandising stores, a gunsmith, a blacksmith, a saddler, a lumberyard, and two hotels. As well, there were also saw mills, grist mills, and distilleries in the immediate area. As early as 1832, Reverend William Proudfoot commented:

"Brantford is situated on a high bank above the Grand River, where there is a wooden bridge. It is a very thriving place, more than half of the houses are stores, and yet they are all doing well; some are rich...."

It must be remembered that these businesses were concentrated in a very small area, and much of what was later to become part of the City of Brantford, was still in its natural state. An older resident recalled in 1897, that Colborne Street was not only the main street, but the only street, and that Dalhousie Street was only a proposed street at that time.

"The East ward was all bush, with a few scattered log huts, and the North ward was, if anything, little better. West Brantford was cleared and farmed to some extent."

Many of the families who were to play an active part in the development of Brantford arrived here during the 1830's. Ignatius Cockshutt returned to Brantford in 1832 and set up a general store. Captain William Gilkinson bought land here in 1831, and along with the Muirheads, Lovejoys and others, helped the town to prosper and grow. The new arrivals came from diverse backgrounds and areas. There were large numbers from England, Ireland and Scotland; but there were also a large number of "Yankees" who settled in Brantford during this period. Rev. Proudfoot had commented in his diary that Brantford was very similar to St. Thomas because "Americans prevailed in both." The names of several negroes appear in Burwell's 1833 report; they had found their way to Brantford via the "Underground Railway" from the United States, (It's interesting to note that later the local citizens petitioned the government to have the negroes removed, and the authorities complied by sending them to Queen's Bush - an area consisting of 2,000,000 acres near Lake Huron and Georgian Bay). Add to the above elements the native peoples "constantly about upon the street," and one has to conclude that Brantford at this time was a real potpourri of people. By 1838, the population had grown to the extent that the village felt justified in applying to the government for separate county status.

GETTING THERE WAS HALF THE ... FUN?

During the 1830's, Brantford shared, along with other areas in Upper Canada, very poorly kept roads. For the most part, the roads around Brantford were in continual disrepair. There was dust in the summer, and mud in the spring and fall. About the only time a ride was anywhere near comfortable was in the winter, but then there was the cold to contend with.

One English visitor to Brantford in the 1830's described the roads to Brantford as follows:

"I can only say that it is very possible for a horse to be drowned in one of the ruts, and for a pair of them to disappear, wagon and all in the mud hole."

Anna Jameson's description of a trip from Brantford to Paris, is even more graphic.

"From Brantford we came to Paris, a new settlement beautifully situated....The whole drive would have been productive of unmixed enjoyment, but for one almost intolerable drawback. The roads were throughout so execrably bad that no words can give an idea of them. We often sank into mud-holes above the axle trees; then over trunks of trees laid across swamps, called here corduroy roads, where my poor bones dislocated. A wheel here and there, or a broken shaft lying by the wayside, told of former wrecks and disasters. In some places they had, in desperation, flung huge boughs of oak into the mud abyss, and covered them with clay and sod, the rich green foliage projecting on either side. This sort of illusive contrivance would sometimes give way, and we were nearly precipitated in the midst. By the time we arrived at the township of Blanford, my hands were swelled and blistered by continually grasping with all my strength an iron bar in front of my vehicle to keep myself from being flung out, and my limbs ached woefully."

These excuses for roads were travelled by foot, horse, ox-cart, and by stage-coach. The stage-coach however, was no guarantee of comfort. The stage was little more than a wooden body slung over strong leather straps. There were no springs, and the rough roads caused the coach to sway from side to side. Inside, it was very crowded as often freight was transported inside the coach. Added to the poor roads and the uncomfortable nature of the stage-coach, was the fact that many stage drivers drove very wrecklessly in order to make better time than a rival stage company. In spite of this, a trip by stage-coach was generally a slow one. The Reverend William Proudfoot complained of a "tedious, wearisome drive over wretched roads," from Hamilton to Brantford - a trip that took seven hours that time. The trip was further prolonged by the number of "tavern stops" between centres. (There were an estimated 20-30 of these between Brantford and Woodstock). Horses were changed at 15 mile intervals, but many drivers stopped at all of the inns along the way, "to moisten his parched throat," a practice which did not help his driving ability.

By 1832, a stage was running daily between Brantford, Niagara and York, and three times a week between Brantford and Detroit. The arrival and departure of these coaches was an occasion for "unusual bustle and excitement" around the hotel where they stopped over. This regular service made Brantford more accessible, helped to put her on the map, and has to be considered a key feature in the population explosion that took place in Brantford in the 30's.

Another form of transportation that was to affect Brantford in the 1840's, was begun in the 1830's. This was the Grand River Navigation Company, which hoped to use the Grand as a transportation route for freight and passengers. A report of the Board of Directors in 1835 held out the following promise to the people of Brantford.

"...when the projected improvements of the St. Lawrence River shall have been completed, 2 routes will be opened to the Atlantic, by the St. Lawrence and by the Erie Canal, and by either of these routes goods must be shipped in Europe and delivered in Brantford ... without having to undergo any land carriage whatever."

Many Brantford citizens were struck with the "canal fever," and bought shares in the Company. However it was not until the "cut" to Brantford was completed in the 1840's that Brantford derived any direct benefits from the enterprise.

One of the main problems of the entrepreneurs connected with the Navigation Company was getting sufficient funds. They applied to the Governor of Upper Canada, Lord Colborne, for permission to use the trust funds of the Six Nations Indians. This money had been accumulated through the sale of Indian land to the whites. Colborne, who encouraged public works whenever possible, and who liked to think he was developing a progressive Indian policy for the province, not only allowed them to use the trust fund to buy shares, but also gave them several sections of Indian land. This was done over the protests of some of the Indian Trustees, and without consulting the Indians. More and more stock was eventually dumped on the Indians until by the time the Company folded in the 1850's, the Indians held three-quarters of the stock - all of it worthless.

As in other areas of the province then, transportation by various means was developing in and around Brantford during the 1830's. In dependability and speed, much was left to be desired, and "shanks mare" was really the only guarantee of getting there at all.

VILLAGE FEATURES

"The erection of a church or chapel generally precedes that of a schoolhouse in Upper Canada, but the mill and tavern invariably precede both."

This generalization by Anna Jameson could well be applied to Brantford during the 1830's. The first buildings in Brantford were in fact mills and taverns, and this trend continued in the early 1830's. In 1830 a distillery was erected by the Wilkes family; in 1831 William Kerby built another distillery, and in 1832 William Spencer erected a brewery - ironically - on the site of the future Y.M.C.A. An old resident of Brantford, in recalling the 1830's for *The Expositor* during Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, pointed out:

"In those days there were two hotels, although nearly every store in the town sold liquor. There was no law to prevent them. What you might call the regular hotels were kept by John Lovejoy and Fred Vanloops."

Drinking was a popular form of entertainment during this period, given the lack of other things to do for relaxation, and the price of whiskey at 12½ cents a gallon did little to discourage it. Four glasses of whiskey a day was not considered excessive.

Unfortunately, excessive drinking usually led to fighting, and in this respect Brantford shared, along with other cities and towns, the Upper Canadian reputation for heavy drinking and brawling. The reason for the fights ranged from politics and religion, to just too much whiskey. Perhaps because of her diverse population, Brantford was more subject to brawls than other areas, but it appears that many fights did take place here between rival groups using axe handles and clubs for weapons. There was enough of it to lead one Anglican missionary to state that "the report of their (Brantford's) wickedness sometimes came to him as a roar of thunder." Mrs. Anna Jameson, during her visit to Brantford in 1837 complained:

"Though tired beyond expression, I was for some time prevented from going to sleep by one of those disgraceful scenes which meet me at every turn. A man in the dress of a gentleman, but in a stage of brutal intoxication, was staggering, swearing, vociferating, beneath my window, while a party of men, also respectably dressed, who were smoking and drinking before the door, regarded him with amusement or indifference: some children and a few Indians were looking on....He continued to disturb the whole neighbourhood for two hours, and I was really surprised by the forbearance with which he was treated."

Rev. Proudfoot also had a complaint about drinking in Brantford.

"I preached in the evening to about 120 people the house being quite full....I got on very well.The Sabbath is very ill-kept in Canada. A most offensive noise was kept up in the bar-room of the Inn the whole day."

But, drinking was not the only vice that flourished in Brantford at this time. Rev. Proudfoot managed to find another one.

"I have now learned more fully about the wickedness of Brantford. There have come over, a few Yankees who have introduced the evil of gambling, and who have taught the youth to play cards. The result of this has been very disastrous to the morals of many: out of this has sprung all the immorality of this place, thieving and drunkenness etc. etc."

Opposing this immorality, were a number of church congregations that were being established in town during this period. Burwell's 1830 survey indicates six church properties: these were, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, and African; but it was not until a few years later that actual churches were constructed and permanent ministers were secured. The congregations at first had to be satisfied with "saddle-bag" ministers (itinerant preachers who had to cover a number of charges), and with meeting either in the open air, or in the schoolhouse that had been erected on the market square, and which served as a school-house, a church, and a place for public gatherings. As late as 1833, Rev. Proudfoot reported:

"Brantford has no place of worship - except a schoolhouse. The Episcopal Missionary to the Mohawk Indians officiates gratuitously every afternoon and is occasionally visited by a Methodist."

Ironically, the market square which acted as a place of worship, was also the place where most brawls took place between rival groups.

The market square, as well as being used for all of the previously mentioned functions, also housed Brantford's fire-fighting equipment at this time. Because of the wooden nature of most buildings and also because of the lack of proper fire-fighting equipment, one of the greatest dangers at this time for men of business was fire. In 1836, a large number of Brantford citizens formed a fire brigade, and because of the apparatus they used to fight fires, the brigade was dubbed the "Goose Neck Company." This piece of equipment consisted of a water-tight box from which water was pumped by pushing on brakes: one member of the brigade stood on top and directed the flow of water through a branch-like hose. The apparatus was very cumbersome in that the box had to be filled by hand, and to change the direction of the flow of water, the entire machine had to be moved. But apparently the machine served its purpose as it was not until 1847 that another means of fighting fires was purchased.

The hotel vied with the market place for the centre of attention in Brantford during the 1830's. There were two main hotels in Brantford during this period - the British-American being the one where the stage stopped. The hotels acted as watering holes for both horses and people, and were seen by many as the instruments of the devil. If they offered much in the way of refreshments they did not have too much to offer in the way of comfort. The rooms were very scantily furnished and as one traveller complained regarding a hotel in Burford:

"On entering one of these taverns and asking for a single bed, you are told that your chance of getting one depends entirely on the number of travellers who may want accommodation for the night; and if you obtain possession of a bed by promising to receive a companion when required, it is impossible to say what sort of companion might come."

The manners of the landlords also left something to be desired for some travellers. Anna Jameson relates the following in relation to her stay at a Brantford hotel in 1837.

"...instead I was brought to the Commercial hotel, newly undertaken by an American. I sent to the landlord to say I wished to speak to him about proceeding on my journey next day. The next moment the man walked into my bedroom without hesitation or apology. I was too much accustomed to foreign manners to be greatly discomfited: but when he proceeded to fling his hat down on my bed, and throw himself into the only armchair in the room, while I was standing, I must own I did look at him with some surprise....but the manners of the country innkeepers in Canada are worse than anything you can meet with in the United States...

...finding, after a few questions, that the man was really a most stupid, ignorant fellow, I turned to the window and took up a book as a hint for him to be gone. He continued, however, to lounge in the chair, rocking himself in silence to and fro, till at last he did condescend to take my hint, and to take his departure."

Outside of spending time at the local tavern, entertainment for people in this period were somewhat limited. The very strict attitude of the church in many cases ruled out a number of possibilities. Swimming and fishing in the summer, and sleighing in the winter offered some form of diversion, but they offered limited social participation. The most popular form of entertainment was the "bee" - when neighbours got together to help one another to do anything from raising a barn to shucking corn. These bees provided an opportunity to catch up on gossip and to see one's neighbours, but they unfortunately also offered the men folk a chance to get drunk, as one of the obligations of the host was to supply enough liquor for the day.

Horse racing was a favourite sport. Surveyor Burwell notes:

"May 20. The men being determined to witness the races in Brantford to-morrow, I deposited our baggage in a farm house, and went to Brantford too.

May 22. I intended to go out to-day, but the men determined upon witnessing the races again to-day, so I witnessed them myself till 1 o'clock."

Opportunities for large scale celebrations were not abundant during this period, but on occasion the people were given an excuse to celebrate an event of some note. One of these during the 1830's was the coronation of Queen Victoria. Part of what occurred in Brantford was related by William Buck to an *Expositor* reporter.

"The announcement of a celebration caused great excitement, and when the auspicious night arrived, everyone in the district was on hand. The principle feature was an immense

bonfire in front of Lovejoy's hotel. I urged my mother to allow me to go and see the coronation, for at that time the coronation began and ended with the demonstration in our little villageHowever, she refused to permit me to go, and I was forced to look on from our backyard. The bonfire was a huge success, and is so indelibly impressed on my memory, that by shutting my eyes I can see the reflection of the burning pile as clearly and distinctly as when I stood and looked at it. Another relaxation indulged in was the use of fireballs. These were balls of pitch and other combustibles which were lighted and tossed about by the men while blazing them. The art of catching them in the bare hands and throwing them back was one which was highly esteemed. Doubtless other exercises took place, but I am not in a position to speak of them accurately. The "coronation" was a great success, however, and was long remembered by the youth of the old days."

Life in the village of Brantford during the 1830's then, while not absolutely monotonous, did seem to offer very little in the way of diversity to its inhabitants; and with this lack of variety, it is little wonder that the line between the forces of good - the Church, and the forces of evil - the Tavern, was so obvious to the people.

THE REBELLION OF 1837

By 1837, the discontent among people of Upper Canada with the ruling body - the Family Compact - had reached its height, and led to an attempt to overthrow the existing government by force. Brantford and the surrounding area was very much aware of, and involved in, the issues that were at stake in the Rebellion of 1837. As an agricultural area, people in Brantford and environs felt they were being abused by those in power in Toronto, and mistrusted the actions of those who governed. The election of 1836, won by the Tories under questionable circumstances, further alienated the people in this area.

Locally, the anti-Compact feeling was fanned by the only newspaper in the village - *The Sentinel*. Begun in 1832 by David Keeler, a Yankee, this paper followed the example of the rebel leader Mackenzie's paper *The Colonial Advocate*, by continually hitting out at the abuses of the Family Compact. Among these abuses was the fact that only Anglican clergy had the sole right to marry people. The extent of the abuse depended on the individual concerned. In this area, a Reverend Luggard, an Anglican clergyman, took full advantage of this privileged position. He charged only \$1.00 if the ceremony was carried out at his home a few miles outside of Brantford. However, he much preferred to conduct marriages elsewhere as he received \$5.00 for these marriages. He gave out that he considered marriages held at his home to be immoral, and to discourage the ceremony taking place there, he would conduct the ceremony in his woodshed, with all the attendant equipment and smells. As a result, many couples preferred going to the United States to get married.

The leader of the dissidents in Brantford itself, was William Matthews, a boot maker. In the Scotland area, Eliakim Malcolm was the recognized rebel leader. But the man who was the key leader in this area was Dr. Charles Duncombe of Burford. Duncombe was a Yankee who had settled in the St. Thomas area, but who later moved to Burford. He had been elected to the Upper Canada Legislature in 1830 and 1834, as the representative for Oxford County, and was considered by many to be one of William Lyon Mackenzie's chief lieutenants. A well read man, and a natural leader, Duncombe took definite stands on many questions of the day. In 1835 he had written a Report on Prisons, where he recommended that as far as the penal code was concerned, revenge should be replaced as the principle motive of justice. The idea was clearly ahead of its time, and was not really acted on until the next decade. He was also greatly concerned with the land system and the educational system, as they were run by the Family Compact. Essentially a rational man, he could also become emotional on certain issues. A letter written on October 24, 1837, states in part:

"...I heartily concur with you, that it is high time for the reformers to be up and doing ... the only interest our oppressors have in the Province being the plunder they can amass and carry away with them. I think anyone not willfully blind, not interested in the continuance of the abuses, must see that while this baneful denomination continues, we have not the slightest chance for prosperity, and that if we will be governed we must govern ourselves. Our oppressors have shown us more clearly than ever before that their great object is to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, for if the people should

become wealthy they would become intelligent and unwilling slaves... 'A Nation never can rebel', those only are rebels who resist the will of the people."

Indecision among the Brant County rebels was evident after Mackenzie made his move in Toronto. A letter from Elisha Hall in Oxford to Dr. Duncombe stated:

"I saw a letter of yours which stated that the Reformers had taken Toronto, but can gain no particulars....I feel no inclination to lift a finger, and hope you will not."

Meanwhile in South Dumfries, a different approach was taken by Stockton, a rebel leader there, when he spoke to a meeting of the Reform party at his home.

"Of what avail is further hesitation. We are face to face with the tyranny of a Government which no constitutional means at our command can reach. We have tried such means long and patiently, and in vain. Now the time has arrived when it is no longer possible to sit on the fence. Decided steps must be taken by all who are resolved for action. I move, therefore, that this meeting resolves to meet in arms the volunteer force now about to gather under Dr. Duncombe's command at Scotland, and that prompt measures be taken to disarm Tories, and all those who are known to be disaffected to the cause of Canadian Independence."

Although many citizens in the Brant County area were sympathetic to the Reform cause, many were not willing to go so far as armed rebellion. As well, the Tories had their supporters in the area. In Burford, Col. Charles Perley was an ardent Loyalist who opposed the rebellion, and in South Dumfries, Absalom Shade, who had voted against the re-seating of Mackenzie when the latter had been expelled from the legislature, gave his support to the government.

When rumour reached this area that Mackenzie had in fact taken Toronto, Duncombe hesitantly called a gathering of armed dissidents which met at Oakland Plains with the purpose of marching on Brantford. However, word soon reached the rebels that Mackenzie was in flight, and that Allan MacNab was almost to Brantford with a force of regulars and volunteers. Duncombe and his followers dispersed, and many fled for the United States.

MacNab and his men scoured the countryside looking for rebels and incriminating evidence. In Mt. Pleasant they approached the Hardy house, little realizing that a future premier of the province of Ontario was being born at the time they were calling. Buried in a field on Eliakim Malcom's farm, they discovered a chest that contained correspondence and lists of the rebel leaders and many adherents to the rebel cause.

In some cases, the soldiers shot animals, destroyed winter provisions, and even fired some houses. The worst offenders were the local Indians who had remained loyal to the Crown, and assumed that as a reward for this loyalty they had license to plunder the homes and belongings of suspected rebels. In Brantford itself, a battalion of the 73rd Regiment was quartered there until 1839, and in the days immediately following the

rebellion, the flooring on one side of the bridge crossing the Grand River was removed as a precaution against possible attack.

Many men from the area were arrested, and some, like Peter Malcolm, were sentenced to death, although he was later freed. William Matthews fled, and Eliakim Malcolm found himself with a £250 price on his head, while Dr. Duncombe made good his escape to the United States dressed as a woman. The reward for his capture was £500.

The rebellion had failed in that the government had not been overthrown. However, it did make the British Government realize that something was seriously wrong in British North America, and prompted them to send over Lord Durham to investigate the problem. In Brantford and district, much bitterness was left for a time after the uprising. The rebels were particularly angry at those Reformers who had supported the need for change in word, but not by their deeds. In time though, this bitterness disappeared. No better example can be given of this than to point out that Eliakim Malcolm became the first Warden of the County of Brant in 1853 after separation from Wentworth and Halton; and William Matthews returned to Brantford and was elected Mayor of the town seven times between 1855 and 1874.

CONCLUSION

The 1830's mark the real beginnings of the development of what was to become the City of Brantford. Between 1830 and 1840 Brantford grew from virtually nothing to a village which felt strong enough to ask that it be considered a county seat in the creations of a new County.

Brantford in 1830 was described as:

"It wasn't much of a place: in fact simply a through road with a few houses where Colborne St. now is...There was scrub oak out towards Terrace Hill and cedar trees down in the swamp."

And

"It consisted of a thin scattering of frame and log houses along Colborne street....All around, with the exception of a few acres, there was nothing but scrub oak and to the east...there was a swamp filled with thick cedar trees."

The auctioning of the land to the public, and the recognition of land purchases of whites from the Indians changed all of that. The sudden influx of settlers, the arrival of improved transportation routes, and the forward-looking aggressive nature of the early settlers all combined to push Brantford ahead at a dramatic rate during the 1830's. The growth was not without problems, but these were solved to some degree as they occurred, and the roots of a flourishing community were laid.