

Mementos of our Citizenry

Museums of Burlington

There are moments within any community's development that are made significant by outstanding individuals, significant assemblies, or an era's general populace. The Joseph Brant Museum and Ireland House at Oakridge Farm endeavour to account these numerous biographies through objects - now artifacts - their rooms of their houses and the grounds they inhabit, understanding that heritage exists in a continuum.

The Joseph Brant Museum, built to commemorate Joseph Brant and his original homestead at the urging of T.B. McQueston and the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, Thayendenegea Chapter; the house began construction in 1937 and opened as a Museum on May 23, 1942.



Since 1942, the Joseph Brant Museum has provided the citizens of Burlington a depot for its heritage; amassing its narrative through the collected object - like whistle stops of this community's growth - from settlement to town to city. From that time and within all its progressive years up to the present day, the Museum has reflected not only Burlington's growth as a place, but

the mementos of its citizenry.

A number of important acquisitions surmise the collection, including various personal artifacts owned and used by Joseph Brant and the Eileen Collard Collection of Historic Costume and Textiles comprising of clothing from the Victorian period onward has grown into the third largest costume collection in Ontario.

Built between 1835 and 1837 Ireland House at Oakridge Farm was the home of Joseph Ireland, one of Burlington's earliest settlers. Emigrating from England in 1819, Ireland petitioned for land at Oakridge Farm and began a legacy that continues today. The property consists of 4 acres of woodland, gardens and in addition to the house, a potting shed, and a cottage/drive shed.





In 1987, the City of Burlington purchased the property from the estate and established a museum. Restoring the homestead to illustrate 3 distinct time periods; 1850s, 1890s and 1920s the house blends the ways and means of a century of living and life styles paying homage to all Pioneer families through one lineage. A further, unique facet of Ireland House, not often found in museums or heritage houses in Canada, is that ninety percent of the furnishings and objects displayed

are original to the Ireland family, reclaiming succinctly the nuances and 'atmospheres' of a period *home*, and significantly a working farm.

Fulfilling its community role to reflect the provenance of not just objects, but the correlated lives lived through them; both Museums animate the City's heritage through a variety of programming means.

Foremost is the mode of the exhibition. Objects, linked together purposely to become ideas - something beyond a mere display - are aimed towards developing an appreciation and understanding within our visitors, the surrounding issues, dilemmas and realizations of the many storylines that form a community's heritage. As exhibiting centres with a mandate to communicate to its City, its region and beyond; the Joseph Brant Museum for example has in the last twenty years alone, presented nearly fifty exhibitions of varying subject matter and content. Ireland House contrastingly, provides a staple experience for the recurring visitor and an expected immersive heritage experience, full of the sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear.

Interpretation is our secondary mode of communication. 'Hands-on heritage' learning is our moniker, exemplified through our relationship with the general visiting public, our school curricula education programs for Halton area students and our adult programming within and beyond the Museums walls.



Finally our Special Events form our tertiary programming component. Celebratory and fun-filled thematic seasonal events blend heritage with the calendar year essentials and offer our chance to become a destination for families to rejoice.

Visit your Museums today!

Craig Wells, Supervisor, Public Programs