Good afternoon. Thanks so much for coming! Welcome to Every Picture Tells a Story! I’m Dan Buchanan, The History Guy. This afternoon, we are going to look at Brighton history through the images we find on the Brighton Digital Archives web site.

In only a few years, the volunteers of the BDA have processed hundreds of images and put them on display on their web site. In fact, it is YOUR web site, because it illustrates the history of your community.

I’m going to key on a few specific images and tell history stories around the people or place or events in the image.

But first, let’s see how the BDA got started.
Back in 2011, Brighton Municipal Council set up a sub-committee to investigate the feasibility of using Hilton Hall as an archive facility. They had spent money on renovations, on the roof, eves and windows, and it was a good meeting place, but the building was sitting there, largely unused. Also, it was obvious that Brighton had no physical archive facility. There were several museums, that no archives. So it was reasonable to consider a new role for this important historical site.

The sub-committee was chaired by Councilor Tom Rittwage and co-chaired by Dan Buchanan. I had moved back to Brighton in the previous year, and was interested in helping out where I could. Over several months, lots of information was collected, trips were made to other archive facilities and much discussion ensured. Then a report was presented to council.
In the end, Hilton Hall was deemed unfit for an archive facility, due mostly to the floor, which we see here in 2011. Archive shelving can be heavy, so the strength of the floor is critical. In this case, the condition of the floor meant that the cost of upgrading it in the area where archive shelving would be located, was simply too high. Hilton Hall would not house Brighton’s archives.
However, some like-minded history-oriented local volunteers got together and asked the municipality to designate Hilton Hall as a heritage center. Here you see the day in early 2014, after I put the sign in the window above the door, and our friend Dot Connolly is reveling in the new status of the hall.

A group called Friends of Hilton Hall Heritage Centre was formed and the old hall came alive again.

Around this same time, an agreement was struck between the Municipality of Brighton and Northumberland County, which allowed Brighton to utilize the archival resources of the Northumberland County Archives. Brighton would have a set of shelves in Cobourg, but even more important, we would be able to call on the expertise of the archivist to assist with archiving projects we initiated in Brighton.
That set the stage of a day of intense archival activity at Hilton Hall. The archivists came from Cobourg and some local volunteers came out to assist. The primary task was to remove the documents from the old vault at Hilton Hall. You can see the vault, there in the background. It was chock full of boxes and folders, with everything from early council meeting minutes to records on amalgamation from the 1990s. All of the documents had to be cleaned and prepared to take to the archives in Cobourg.

Here we see Dot Connolly and Susan Brose working on the documents. Notice the gloves and masks and the small vacuum cleaner at the back. Every page was cleaned and the collections were organized into packages, as you see on the floor here. At the end of the day, we took two car loads of material to the Brighton shelves at the Northumberland County Archives. These documents are now protected, catalogued, and available for research.
Then, in March 2015, at a meeting of Friends of Hilton Hall Heritage Centre, several volunteers made a proposal for a new fund-raising project. They called it “From Your Shoebox to Your Screen”. They proposed to have an event where people from the community could bring their old photographs, those in photo albums or in the proverbial shoebox, and have them scanned. They would get their original photo back as well as a digital copy to take home, and the volunteers would retain a digital copy of the images, with the hope, sometime in the future, posting them to a web site.

These events proved that there was interest in the community as pictures and documents came in. In addition, it was clear that there were numerous existing collections of pictures and documents that could be brought out into the public sphere to a much greater degree. All of this meant that the volunteers needed to organize themselves.
That is what prompted the formation of the Brighton Digital Archives. The original group was made up of Catherine Stutt, Ralph De Jonge, Dorothy Fletcher and her husband, Fletch. These folks are highly skilled and very motivated to contribute to the heritage landscape of the community. They set to work with a lot of energy.

A software product called the Vita Toolkit was selected to allow the members of BDA to create a web site for displaying images – without the need for expensive and complex software development. It came from a government-supported non-profit organization which provided tools for exactly the purpose the BDA had in mind.

The Brighton Digital Archives would work under the auspices of the Brighton Heritage Advisory Committee and a small budget was allocated for software license fees.

After that, it was up to the BDA volunteers. Over the last few years, this group has been extremely productive, both in processing documents and building the web site, and in raising awareness in the community of the need to preserve our pictures and stories. They were demonstrating that this could be done in a very inexpensive public forum, on the internet. In fact, the efforts of the BDA have been recognized by the community. In 2018, the BDA won a Brighton Civic Award and, in 2019, they received a grant from
the Brian Todd Community Fund. In addition, BDA has recently been elevated to a full committee of Brighton Municipal Council, which is a terrific step.

Now, let's look at some of the content you can see on the BDA web site.
The Latimer Photos. This is a very unique collection, which we are lucky to have. Hugh Latimer took these pictures in the late 1920s and early 1930s, at or near his father’s general store in Orland. Even better, he kept the information about the person in the picture, together with the pictures. Before he passed away in the 1980s, he created two photo albums containing all the photos, along with index pages, showing us who the people were. These are available at the Codrington Public Library. The original photos were scanned and the images were merged with details from www.treesbydan.com, my genealogy web site. The BDA has presented the images and the information in a simple and ease-to-use format.

I am so happy to see the Latimer Photos available to the public in this way.
The Heritage Homes of Brighton and area are on the BDA web site as well. The Brighton Heritage Advisory Committee create and maintain this list, and they provided the material to the BDA for posted on the web site.

Take a look at our heritage homes.
One of the most ambitious projects undertaken by BDA is “Barns of Brighton”. The objective of this project was to record images of barns throughout the municipality. These buildings represent our agricultural heritage and are fast disappearing due to fire, weather and developments in modern farming.

In collaboration with the Brighton Photography Club, almost 200 barns were identified and close to 125 were photographed. Many of the pictures are presented in the Barns of Brighton section of the BDA web site, along with supporting information.

Also, BDA produced gorgeous calendars for 2018 and 2019, featuring “Barns of Brighton”.

This project has been an important addition to the heritage landscape of the community.
The BDA web site also has a collection of pictures from Susan Brose, one of Brighton’s very active historians. Many of the images that we see in Susan’s book “The History of Brighton Businesses 1816 to 2009” are displayed on the site, along with information about the churches, cemeteries and schools, which Susan has also collected and put into book form.
Then, there are the videos. In 2016, BDA decided to produce their own videos, to be displayed on the BDA web site. The first project was about Memory Junction Museum. They recorded Ralph and Eugenia Bangay, who talked about how they stopped the wrecking ball from destroying the original Grand Trunks railway station in the 1990s, and went on to build a destination for tourists and history buff – and a great place for kids to play. There would be five separate videos, which are all available for viewing on the BDA web site. They cover the history of the museum as well as many of the artifacts that are found there – always accompanied by interesting stories. Only the first two are shown here.
Have you seen Presqu’ile videos? These are original videos which were recorded in 1927. They were funded by the government for the purpose of promoting Presqu’ile Park as a holiday destination. Hotel Presqu’ile and the Pleasure Palace were in full swing at this time and, today, it’s hard for us to imagine the crowds that gathered at Presqu’ile.

Here are two snips from the videos. At top we see the Presqu’ile sign in the grass in front of the cottage that Ben Kerr, the notorious rum-runner, rented in the winter. Below is the front porch of the Hotel Presqu’ile. This was a favorite place to relax, watch the activity out on the bay and at the government dock. We are very lucky to have these original videos to show, now in digital form. They are precious!
Under the video section, there is a ground of videos called “Brighton I Remember”. These are recordings of local folks, recounting their memories of living and working in the Brighton area.

There are videos of Florence Chatten, Marjorie Morgan, John Stephens, Art Heeney, Melba Pound, Marc Scanlon, Rose Ellery and Kay Craig – and there are more to come.

Please check back at this site from time to time, as new videos are added as they are completed.
Another series of videos features Dan The History Guy. The first is Rural Roots, a video version of the presentation done at Brighton History Week 2018, which presents the history of farming in the Brighton area. I must commend Ralph De Jonge, of BDA, for his patience and perseverance in working with a history geek and in the making of these videos. I was annoyed because I could not remember my lines. However, Ralph knew exactly the right piece of technology that would solve the problem. Thank you, Ralph! I also want to thank the folks at Proctor House Museum for welcoming us into the parlor to record these videos. It was a perfect venue for recording history stories.

The second video of the series, Dance Hall Daze, is now available on the BDA site. This is a video version of the presentation we did at Brighton History Week 2015, featuring the Presqu’ile Pavilion and the Opera House in the old Brighton Town Hall.

And, if Ralph and I we can find the time, there may be more of this sort of video to come.

That is a brief overview of the origins of BDA and what you will find on the BDA web site. Now let’s look at some specific images and stories.
The Codrington General Store is an iconic historical building in the middle of the village of Codrington. These pictures of the Codrington store are from another great product of the Brighton Digital Archives, the Calendar for 2020, which is called “Brighton – Then and Now. The calendar features fascinating before and after pictures of places we recognize around the community.

In this case, the inset picture shows the Codrington store today, looking north. The larger picture is from 1910 and the contrast is obvious. In 1910, there was a jog in the road. We can see the fences that protected the ditch beside the road on both sides. Yikes! It looks so different, doesn’t it?

Oh, yes, in the spirit of full disclosure, as a kid, I consumed many a bottle of pop sitting on the bench in front of the Codrington General Store. I would sit and watching the traffic go by. It was a short bike ride from the farm at the north end of the village. I have distinct memories of the tinkle of the bell on the door as you entered, and the creaking of the old floor as I headed for the pop cooler at the back. And there was often a piece of red licorice involved as well.

Today, the east-west road is Allison Street and Aranda Way, but back then, it was a
concession line and, back into the early 1800s, it was a major road in this area.
This aerial photo was taken by Charles Buchanan in 1955 and shows the view down Allison Street, looking west from Codrington. We can see the roof of the store at the bottom.

My grandfather, Lloyd Ames, says that he remembered, as a youngster, when this road was still open, all the way onto Cramahe Hill and connecting with the Percy Road. The advent of automobiles helped to close this section of the road, since the hill presented such an obstacle. Passengers had to get out and push.
This picture of the store, in 1910, shows the current owner, Aaron Clark, behind the horses. His wife, Fannie, is here, with a niece. At our far left is Lorne Riley Clark, son of Aaron and Fannie, who would die of typhoid fever within the next year.

This store began as a log cabin in the 1840s, then, as settlement grew, it was expanded and then bricked up in the 1860s, to become the familiar structure we see today. It changed hands many times.

The most unusual thing about the early pictures of the store is the almost total absence of signs. What a delightful impression it leaves.
When did the intersection at Codrington changed? It was in 1930, same time as the intersection at Hilton. It was the Depression, very tough times! The government created make-work projects that would provide much-needed employment for locals, as well as produce useful improvements. Number 30 Highway underwent a major overhaul. It was not only resurfaced, but straightened in several places.

By 1930, there were lots of cars on the roads, always wanting to go faster. All of those historical jogs in the road, especially in villages, needed to be removed. In this area, the road was straightened in two major places, at Codrington and at Hilton, as you can see here.

So, there’s some local history, out of a then and now look at the Codrington General Store.
One of the videos under the section called “Brighton, I Remember” features Marjorie Morgan, a well-known member of the community who passed away in August 2018, not long after sitting for this video.

Another full disclosure, Marjorie was a school chum of my mother, Mary Ames, of Codrington, when they were teenagers. There was no Twitter or texting in those days, so they wrote letters back and forth, about parties, school work, dresses and, of course, boys! We are lucky to have some of these letters in our family collections.
Marjorie was born in 1925, as Marjorie Mae Goodrich, and she grew up on her parents’ farm in Cramahe Township, near Morganston. Her parents were Frank Goodrich and Alice Walker. Frank was born near Dundonald where his grandfather, Robert Goodrich, had been one of the first millers in the area. Frank tried ranching in Saskatchewan, but then came back home and went to farming.

Around 1946, Frank Goodrich moved his family to Brighton where they lived at 14 Dundas Street. He would be Reeve of Brighton Village in 1957, 1958 and 1959.

In the summer of 1959, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip made their extensive royal tour through Canada.
They spent time in the west, with lots smiles and waves, and much meeting and greeting. This was a major tour. “All ten provinces, four of the Great Lakes, both Territories, and a visit to the United States were covered in an exhausting fifteen thousand mile, forty-five day tour.”

Near the end of June, they came back to Ontario and were scheduled to fly from Trenton Air Force Base to open the St. Lawrence Seaway along with the Prime Minister and the President of the United States.
These pictures are from the Trentonian, showing the scene on the tarmac at the base. This officious gentleman with the white gloves was having no delay. “Here Now! Not too close, you chaps!”

The reeves of the local communities were to be presented to the Queen and Prince Phillip and we can see Marjorie Morgan, in her best outfit, waiting her turn.

Her father, Frank Goodrich, was the Reeve of Brighton, so would be presented to the Queen. Originally, it had been planned that Marjorie’s mother would accompany her husband. However, Mrs. Goodrich passed away just a few weeks before the event. Some very intense official machinations then resulted in approval for Marjorie to take the place of her mother. Marjorie was very excited to meet the Queen.
This photo shows Queen Elizabeth II shaking hands with Frank Goodrich, while daughter Marjorie waits patiently behind and to the side. They had been given very specific instructions given about where and how to stand, when to step forward and how to curtsy and greet the Queen.

But let’s look a little closer …… Marjorie seems calm, but is really coiled like a spring, ready to release. And see her right foot?

She is cocked and loaded! Ready to begin her curtsy and shake hands with the Queen.

Marjorie loved to tell this story because she was so thrilled to meet the Queen. She spoke about how intently the Queen looked into her eyes while they spoke for a few seconds. That few seconds remained with her the rest of her life.
Frank Goodrich was one of those people our community needs in every generation. A tribute to him in the paper read “A public spirited citizen during his lifetime, Mr. Goodrich served many years in the civic arena as commissioner, councillor, Reeve of the Village of Brighton, County councilor and chairman of the United Counties Finance Committee. An active member of Branch 100 of the Royal Canadian Legion he was tendered a testimonial dinner and presented with a life membership in Branch 100. A rare honor reserved for only a few. An indication of the high esteem in which he was held was the presence of all living former reeves, the Hon. George Hees and MLA Russell Rowe. 


An important legacy from Marjorie Morgan and, her father, Frank Goodrich, is the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area, to the west of Orland.

Frank Goodrich owned some land in this area and Marjorie inherited it when her father died in 1969. She preferred the land be used for conservation rather than development so was delighted to donate it.
Here is the dedication ceremony in 1975, with Marjorie on the right, with her husband, Harold Morgan.
Combined with land from the Loomis family, The Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area was created. It is a lovely natural area, with hiking trails and nature walks. And, it is only a few minutes drive of Brighton.

Check it out! It’s just up the road.

That bit of local history came out of a video in Brighton I Remember.
One of the most charming stories that we find in the videos on the BDA web site comes from long-time resident Melba Pound. Under the section called “Brighton, I Remember”, there are three videos featuring Melba. The first two are chock full of fascinating details about her life in Brighton, and the third is called The Plate.

Melba Rorabeck was born in Hillier Township, but she came to Brighton to live with her grandparents in order to go to School.
Melba attended the school on Elizabeth Street. Yes, the one that was torn down to make way for the new Public School a few years ago. In fact, Melba became a teacher at this school as well.

Before 1955, when ENSS was built, this building accommodated the high school in the east side, and the public school in the west side.
Melba tells how she met handsome young Wilf Pound, in the soda fountain at Sloan’s Rexall Drug Store, on Prince Edward Street, where Mrs. B’s is today. He was just back from the War and the two hit it off right away.

Here we see the Rexall Drug Store and the Clarendon Hotel. This would be in the late 1940s as the hotel closed in 1950. We can also see the bank on the corner.

In those days, a soda fountain was an important part of most drug stores, and a popular hangout for teenagers.
Here is Wilf Pound at that time. Melba recounts the story of how young Wilf, in training with the Midland Regiment in New Brunswick, was on the train headed for Hamilton for more training. However, security restrictions had prevented him from communicating with this family, and he was concerned that they would worry about him. But there was a solution. He took a small plate from the kitchen on the train and wrote a message on it.
Then, when the train was passing by Brighton, he tossed the plate out at the train station. Luckily, the plate survived and nobody was hurt. It was a small town, so the plate quickly found its way to Wilf’s parents.
The message on the plate read “From Saint John to Niagara Camp. All the boys are well. Will see you soon we hope. Finder please give our best regards to our folks. Cherrio for now Brighton. Wilfred Pound, Midland Regiment, (C.A.) Active, September 25, 1941, 21:40 hrs,”

And, as we can see, Melba still has The Plate!
During the War, Wilf Pound transferred to the Cameron Highlanders and participated in the D-Day Landing as well as the liberation of Holland. Wilf and Melba were married in 1950 and raised a family in Brighton.

In 2012, Wilf received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and, in 2014, he became Sir Wilfred Pound, when he was awarded the Knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honour. He was a member of Branch 100 of the Canadian Legion for 77 years.

Wilf Pound was also well known around Brighton because he was the postmaster from 1958 to 1979. Oh, yes, speaking of the Post Office. Here is the February page of the 2020 BDA Calendar, showing Then and Now pictures of the post office. This picture is from 1950, but the building was built in 1938. The post master at that time was Keith Roblin, and Wilf Pound would take over that position from him in 1958. You may recall that Keith Roblin was a veteran of the Great War, so it seems appropriate that a veteran of the Second War would follow in his footsteps.

As you can see, the BDA has it covered every which way!
Here is one of the most interesting merchants and businessmen in Brighton’s history. This is Burton Cartier Henry Becker, most commonly known as Burton Becker, although you will see the initials as well.

This photo is from the Latimer Collection, on the BDA web site. It was probably taken in the late 1920s when Mr. Becker was working as a fire insurance agent. This was a relatively new type of insurance but it was critical, since fire was a constant threat. People needed a person they could trust to provide this important financial security product.

However, Burton Becker is best known around Brighton for .......
Becker’s Bazaar! From 1905 to 1916, Becker’s Bazaar was the go-to general merchandizer’s establishment in Brighton.

Here we have the Then and Now image on the July page of the 2020 calendar from the Brighton Digital Archives. We can see Mr. Becker and his wife, Annie Valleau, standing in front of the store in 1910. This was 57 Main Street, and, inset, we see the 2019 version of this same location, the Sunflower Health and Services store, with Peggy, Maryanne, Cathie and Deidre standing out front.

Thankfully, there are a number of pictures of Becker’s Bazaar, and many of them appear in Susan Brose’s book, The History of Brighton Business. They include some fascinating interior shots.
Becker’s Bazaar was truly a general merchandise store. Mr. Becker is in his apron, ready to serve a customer. In this picture of the interior of the store, my eye is drawn to the lower right, where we see a supply of hockey sticks sitting on a new cook stove, and there are several stoves in a row, with Mr. Becker leaning on one.

This place was loaded! On the right we see lots of bottles and cans, the sign up at the right advertises paint, over on the left is a large selection of oven mitts. Way back at the back, we can see the familiar paper dispenser, used to wrap merchandize.
Quit a selection! I expect this, down here, is wall paper. There is the cash register, and, of course, more wrapping paper rolls. Oh, see here, the sign for Brownie Cameras, which had been introduced in 1900, and was very popular. You could also get cigars, as the sign says over here.
Farther back in the store are the kitchen goods, with lots of lovely tableware. My first thought on seeing this picture is that children must have been much better behaved back then, with all the glass merchandise on low tables, with no glass cases.

In any case, wouldn’t it be fun, just to browse?
Burton Becker was a major player in the business community on Main Street in Brighton at this time. So, it would not be a surprise to see him in the Standard Bank, there at the corner of Main and Young. This building stood at the corner of Sobey’s parking lot today, but we can see that a small part of the entrance to the bank was preserved and is there at the corner today – with the date 1904 on it, indicating when the bank was built.
If we go on inside, we come upon a scene of local folks. There on the right, is Burton Becker, proprietor of Becker’s Bazaar. The fellow on the far left, was Charles Proctor, the bank manager. He had been manager of the Standard Bank for some time, and now, around 1910, things were about to change. Charles Proctor was planning to be married within the year. His father, John Edward Proctor, who had built the family fortune, was close to death and Charles had become responsible for family finances. One of the tasks he had completed in the past decade was to sell the large herd of purebred Hereford cattle that his father had raised. Three trains of cattle arrived in Calgary to anxious buyers, many looking for breeding stock to start their own ranches. The proceeds from these sales were critical to the continuing prosperity of the Proctor family and maintained the big house on the hill for another few decades.

On a different note, let’s remember that it is 1910. We can see the nature of bank tellers at that time, in these clean-but young men. This one young fellow, was Arthur Jones. He probably had no inkling at this moment, that he would, in only a few years time, he would go off to Europe to fight in a long and brutal war. Many of his compatriots did not return, but Mr. Jones was one of the lucky ones. He enlisted at the same time as his cousin, Bill Nesbitt, and friend Keith Roblin, and all three would manager to return, with wounds and scars, physical and psychological, but with a life
back in Brighton.
Oh, speaking of Keith Roblin, here he is in the 1920s. Do you recall the story we told a few years ago, called “They Went Together”? Here is the front over of the book which was written by John Stephens, of Brighton. This is an account of the First World War, presented around the experiences of the two young Brighton recruits, Keith Roblin and Bill Nesbitt. It follows them through enlistment, training and deployment, and into the war. They both had their wounds and scares, but were able to return.

John Stephens is the husband of Eleanor Roblin, who was the daughter of Keith Roblin and Marie Becker, a daughter of Burton Becker.

It’s a small town, folks, there are lots of connections!
Every Picture Tells a Story
Featuring Pictures from the
Brighton Digital Archive Web Site
http://vitacollections.ca/brightonarchives/search

INTERMISSION

It’s time for a break. Let’s have a fifteen minute intermission and we’ll see you back here for more of Every Picture Tells a Story.
Brighton History Open House 2020

Saturday, February 22nd, 2020

10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Brighton Community Centre, King Edward Park

Before we get back to Every Picture Tells a Story, let me remind everyone that the Brighton History Open House 2020 will be held next Saturday, right here, from 10 to 4.

This is our 8th annual Open House and will be better than ever. The BDA will have an very active display area and they will provide several video stations around the room where you can see some of their videos.

I’m told there will be some interesting interactive displays this year, and demonstrations of heritage skills and tools.

Plus, the library will have some activities for the younger folks, with a heritage angle.

Of course there will be displays from local museums and historians, including The History Guy with the normal collection of boards and books.

Oh, yes, the Heritage Tea is back by popular demand, with the Women’s Institutes providing a delicious plate of goodies for $5 with tea and coffee.

I hope to see you at the Brighton History Open House. Come by and say hi – and maybe
bring a question or a special piece of information!

See you there next Saturday!
One of the barns that were photographed was selected for the front cover of the 2019 calendar. This north-side view of the distinctive three vents on the peak of the barn as well as the interesting visual of the aging additions, provides a charming and curious starting point for a story.

In fact, this barn is associated with one of the most well-known celebrities of the area, who grew up on this farm. The address of this farm is 638 County Road 26, north of the 401, on the west side.
Do you know this handsome fellow?
Yes, it is Peter McConnell. And here he is as a boy on the farm. Peter grew up on the farm where the red barn still stands today.
Here is another view of the McConnell farm, in the 1960s when Peter’s father, Hubert B. McConnell was still operating there. As you can see, the barn is in much better shape then.
Peter John McConnell

Aug. 23, 1938 – Feb. 10, 2010

Peter McConnell was born in Brighton Township in 1938 and had a very interesting life. He left the farm and moved to Toronto at 18, in 1956. He worked with the Metro Toronto Police Mounted Unit from 1959 to 1964. His acting career began in 1965 and would continue for thirty years in theatre, TV and film, here in Canada, in the USA and in Europe.

One very successful project Peter was involved in, was the founding and development of Smile Theatre, which today is a thriving charitable organization that utilizes professional actors to provide live performances for seniors in care. In the literature about the origins of this important community service, Peter McConnell is called “Smile Company’s Founding Artistic Director”.

When Peter retired in the 1990s, he came back home to Brighton and was active in the community, including events like the Ghost Walk at Proctor House. From 1997 he wrote a column in The Independent called “Over My Shoulder”, which was much anticipated by local residents. He wrote with humour and charm, using his direct experiences growing up in the community.
Peter McConnell passed away in 2010 and was buried at Carman Cemetery, and is remembered in this memorial.

Fittingly, the symbol of the thespian is included, along with the quote “Satis quod sufficit” which means, simply, “Enough is Enough”.
An ongoing and developing legacy of Peter McConnell is Amy McConnell, his daughter, who is a singer, actor and director with amazing talents. She came from a theatrical family, both from her father and a very talented mother, and had her first TV appearance in a commercial at age nine months. Her BIO says that she is “Known for her beautiful voice, impeccable intonation and emotional approach, Amy’s style encompasses jazz, pop and musical theatre.”

What’s the old saying? The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree?
Over My Shoulder

Published in 1998
by Conolly Publishing Ltd.,
Brighton

Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO)

“... a peek into Brighton’s rich and colourful past.”

“I’m no historian (don’t have the qualifications),
merely a storyteller.”

One of Peter McConnell’s most tangible legacies is the book “Over My Shoulder”, which was published by Conolly Publishing Ltd. of Brighton, in 1998. This is a collection of forty-six of Peter’s columns that appeared in The Independent. They are humorous, charming and delightful. The book was sponsored by SOHO (Save Our Heritage Organization) which manages Proctor House. Roy Rittwage, the President of SOHO at that time, said in the Forward that the book was meant to provide “... a peek into Brighton’s rich and colourful past.” And that it certainly does.

Make no mistake, this is not a history book! Peter himself, at the beginning of the piece about Brighton High School, says “I’m no historian (don’t have the qualifications), merely a storyteller.” Well, “Merely a storyteller” is a pretty terrific thing, and we are the richer for it.

This book is not available for sale although various folks around the community have copies. You can borrow it from the library and I encourage you to do just that, if you have not read it yet. I think you will find it worth the time.

Well, all that from the picture of a barn!
Here is an example of the random events that can bring certain places or people to the surface for The History Guy. Butler House is 103 Main Street, south side, second house east of Centre Street. The property recently changed hands and the new owners were curious about its history. A question came to me, through the BDA web site.

Why is it called Butler House? Good question. Probably because Butlers lived there at some point. In my world, that’s like waving a red flag in front of a bull. It kicks off a research binge.
When we use the name Butler in reference to Brighton history, we most often refer to William Butler who was a very prosperous mill operator, and had a street named for him. However, he was prosperous enough to build this house in 1848. This was probably the biggest and most elaborate house in Brighton at that time. Today, it is called the Butler-Tobey House, and can be seen at 211 Prince Edward Street, to the east side of Brighton, near the intersection with Harbour Street.

This house was in the Butler family until 1976 when it was purchased by Gordon Tobey and it has been lovingly restored to create one of the most important heritage homes in the area.

One of William Butlers children, who grew up here, was William Charles Butler.
William Charles Butler carried on his father’s business activity as one of Brighton’s most active entrepreneurs. The best known building from W. C. Butler’s business enterprises still exists today, at the corner of Monck and Maplewood, across from the railway station and Memory Junction Museum. This structure looks rather sad these days, used for storage by Coles Building Supplies, but, when it was new, it was a phenomenal installation, designed to act as an apple storage facility in the west end and a grain elevator in the east end. You can see the tall grain elevator on the north side of the building, which has not survived.

My routine walks often take me down Monck Street, and now I can walk on nice new sidewalks. When I pass this building, I can’t help recall this picture, showing the railway siding, right up along the south side of the building, which allowed train cars to be loaded directly out of the building. At one time, this was an extremely busy place.

W. C. Butler purchased the house and property at 103 Main Street, in 1905, as a family residence. He was active in many businesses as well as real estate developments in Brighton, but one interesting involvement was with the Masonic Lodge.
History of United Lodge A.F. & A. M. No. 29

By
Edgar W. Pickford

“The description and history of Brighton Village
I have almost entirely obtained from Bro. W. C. Butler,
Bro. John Gunyo and Miss Elizabeth Winsor, niece
of the late W. Bro. Robert Barker.”

The Masonic Lodge archives contained two documents that describe the history of the lodge, right back to the original founding in 1818. One of the documents is called the Pickford History because, as we see from the title page, it was written by Edgar W. Pickford and published in 1922. In the preface, Mr. Pickford specifically states that “The description and history of Brighton Village I have almost entirely obtained from Bro. W. C. Butler, Bro. John Gunyo and Miss Elizabeth Winsor, niece of the late W. Bro. Robert Barker.”

This illustrates that there were many different ways to be involved in the community, besides business.
The Butler tradition of doing business in Brighton was carried on by W. C. Butler’s son, Malcolm Lyons Butler, known commonly as M. L. or sometimes, Mac. He became very active on Main Street in Brighton, on the north side.

In 1899, he built a building at 14 A Main Street, in the area of Sobey’s store today, a few yards north of Main Street. This business focused on boats, including manufacturing, sales and maintenance. This picture is from 1940, so imagine back 40 years to picture the boat business back in behind, off Main Street, in the area where you see the Imperial sign.

Then, in 1906, M. L. Butler built the Butler Block, which is this building, here, at 20 Main Street. It had two stories and contained many different businesses, including the office of his father, W. C. Butler, who was acting as an insurance agent.
In 1913, M. L. Butler built a service station with gas pumps, at 14 Main Street, in front of his boat works. This was later taken over by Fred Wright, and became known as the Brighton Garage, as you can see here.
Later in the 1920s, M. L. Butler moved a little farther up the street, and built a new service station at 48 Main Street. This wonderful picture from 1940, shows a crew of men clearing snow from the north side of Main Street.

If we look in behind, we can see the tower of the Town Hall and the brand new Post Office, which had been built in 1938. Right between them, we can see Butler’s Garage.
The service station remained at this location well after M. L. Butler died in 1961, and we can see a good picture of it here, in the late 1960s, as a modern Esso station.
Of course, a while after this, the gas station was removed and the CIBC bank was built, as we see today at 48 Main Street.
I particularly enjoy researching people who were the movers and shakers in a community. The Butler’s are a perfect example of entrepreneurial spirit spread over three generations, each generation moving on to the business that provided facilities and products that were in demand in their time. William Butler provided mills to help get the community started. W. C. Butler provided facilities for storage and movement of apples and grain, as well as participating in a hot real estate market. M. L. Butler would concentrate on high-demand businesses on Main Street, like service stations and office rental space. You can see the town develop in their activities.

And all of that we get from looking into one house on Main Street.
In the summer of 2018 the United Lodge 29 of Brighton made arrangements to sell the property at 153 Main Street, including the Masonic Temple, which had been a very important event venue in the community since 1955.

When it was clear that the building would be sold, the lodge asked me about what might be done with the contents of the vault. Yes, they had a vault too. I contacted the Northumberland Count Archives and the Brighton Digital Archives and a project got underway in August.
Archival material had been stored for many decades in the vault, which you see here on the right, after it was emptied. The material was placed on tables in the hall and two members of the Northumberland County Archives set about the task of evaluating each item, categorizing everything, and preparing for moving the items that were to be taken to the archives in Cobourg. The Archivist in charge was Abigail, who you see here in the middle, with her back to us, and her assistant was Kate, here on the right. The gentleman talking to Abigail is Michael Hunter, a lodge member who handled the job from the lodge point of view, moving boxes and providing the archives folks with assistance, often in the form of identifying records and archival items. Senior members of the lodge also came in to offer information about items in the collection. After this work was done, several boxes of items were taken to Cobourg and now they reside on Brighton’s shelves in the Northumberland County Archives. These items are now protected and catalogued, ready to be accessed for research.

One other component of this project was dealing with the portraits. There were dozens of portraits hanging on the walls of the Masonic Temple, men who had become Worshipful Masters, or held other positions in the lodge through all of its history, from the 1850s. The BDA folks set up a studio and took pictures of all the portraits. Then, people from the community came and collected the original portraits that were
associated with their families. Also, a section was created on the BDA web site for these images, and the work is on-going to post them there, and to add more information as time goes by.

On the BDA site, you can go down this list of lodge members and experience a journey through Brighton History. Many of the movers and shakers in our history are there. Let’s look at a few.
On the left, Christopher English Bullock was a life-long member of the lodge and was also a son of the founder of the lodge, Col. Richard Bullock, seen here on the right, in a sketch that was available in the archives. He was a British soldier who was very active around Upper and Lower Canada from about 1800 until after the War of 1812-1814. He then received land grants and settled north-west of Carrying Place. He founded the first lodge there in 1818. His son, Christopher, would be involved in regenerating the lodge in Brighton in 1855.
Nathaniel Thayer was a member of the lodge in Brighton and his son, Ira, carried on the tradition. Nathaniel’s brother, Isaiah Thayer was engaged in the earliest nursery business in Brighton which played an important role in the beginnings of the apple industry in this area.
Dr. Amos Edward Fife was a member of the Lodge. Dr. Fife, or A. E. Fife as he was commonly known, practiced medicine in Brighton from 1852 to 1885. He had come from Boston, Massachusetts, and took his medical degree in Cincinnati. He was well-liked as a doctor in Brighton, and his practice did very well, which meant that he could build a significant home for his growing family. In 1874 he built this brick house, on the north side of the Kingston Road, at what is now 200 Main Street, across from The White House. This is now one of Brighton’s heritage homes, and is called Fife House.
John B. Young was a merchant who lived at the south end of Murray Township, although he had numerous connections with Brighton. He married Sarah Rachel Lawson, a cousin of Sarah Ann Lawson, the ill-fated wife of Dr. William Henry King. During the weeks leading up to Sarah’s death, John B. Young had visited several times and insisted that the family should remove her from the house. His experience as a coroner led him to believe that there was something fishy about the white powder. Unfortunately for Sarah, his warnings were not acted upon soon enough.
On a completely different front, John B. Young would provide a meeting place for the newly reconstituted Masonic Lodge in 1855. He owned this building at the north-west corner of Kingsley and Main, where Lola’s and the Beer Store are located today. For a number of years, the lodge met in the upstairs room of this building.
Isaac Maitland Wellington was born in 1821, at Presqu’ile, in the building that had been the court house and jail before the Speedy was lost in 1804. For many years, he ran a bakery at the south-west corner of Main and Division, and was an active local historian. In his time, Isaac M. Wellington was The History Guy of Brighton.

John Eyre was a barrister and would also be Northumberland County’s Member of Provincial Parliament from 1867 to 1871. He had a lucrative practice and was able to build a large Victorian style house at 199 Main Street, after purchasing the property from Isaac S. Proctor in 1877. This house would be taken over by Sam Nesbitt in 1899, expanded and enhanced to become what we know of today as The White House.

Mr. Eyre was also an entrepreneur in his time. For example, he was President of the short-lived Presqu’ile and Belmont Railway which was an exciting project for a few months in 1869. Very quickly, however, like many fly-by-night railway schemes of the time, the finances turned sour and the railway was never built.
Robert Barker was a druggist in Brighton from the early 1850s, later operating a drug store at 39 Main Street, in part of the Nesbitt Block – around where Presqu’ile Lanes are today. Here’s a bit of trivia: Mr. Barker was the druggist who found a proper lid for the pickle bottle that was used to carry Sarah King’s stomach to Toronto for investigation.

Isaac Oscar Proctor was a brother of the better-known John Edward Proctor and the two worked together on business deals and sometimes competed. At one time, each had a general store, one at each end of Main Street.

I. O. Proctor, as he was known, remained single and was a life-long member of the Lodge. The minutes of a lodge meeting in 1869 recorded this "The Lodge was unanimous on the necessity of new Lodge rooms. A motion was passed to accept Bro. I. O. Proctor's offer to provide and fix up a room for an annual rental fee of $30." The lodge would meet in the Proctor Block from 1869 to 1881. This was on the east side of Prince Edward Street, where the restaurant and Mrs. B’s are today.
Speaking of lodge meeting places, the archive collection also included this picture, taken in May of 1899, showing a meeting of United Lodge No. 29, just a few years after they had moved into the upstairs rooms of the Nesbitt Block, courtesy of Sam Nesbitt, a long-time member. This was No. 7 Main Street, south side, which today would be in the area of the west side of the PharmaPlus store.

The Lodge would meet here until 1954 when the new Masonic Lodge building was built at 153 Main Street.
Dr. Howard Rundle was a well-known physician in Brighton and was Worshipful Master of the Lodge in 1924. He is also shown here, on the right, beside his car, around 1930, in one of the Latimer Photos.

Doc Rundle seems to have liked his cars, as we see here ......
... in this wonderful photograph from 1915. These new Ford cars are parked in front of what we call the Morrow Block, at 23 Prince Edward Street. James H. Morrow had one of the first Ford dealerships in Ontario, which is also linked to the car shed at the railway station, where they stored the cars after rolling them off the train.

Here we can see how different it looked in 1915, with a house to the south and no building on the north side, where the Bank of Commerce would be built in 1921.

Right here, second car from the left, in the black hat, is Dr. Rundle. This photograph is a perfect example of the technical expertise of the volunteers of the BDA. This was an old, fuzzy photo which they were able to bring to life.

Great work folks!
In the early 1950s, the Masonic Lodge began to feel the need for a building of their own. Besides, the centennial year was coming up in 1955, to mark one hundred years since the establishment of Lodge 29 in Brighton. So, in 1954, a Building Committee was struck, along with a Finance Committee, as we can see here on the plaque that was attached to the building. There are some very notable gentlemen mentioned here, but, I will concentrate on this fellow, Very Worshipful Brother C. L. Ames. This was Lloyd Ames, of Codrington, my grandfather. He was asked to head the Building Committee and, under his leadership, and with much hard work by many folks, and many donations from the community, the new lodge building was completed very quickly. A dedication banquet was held on April 22, 1955, in the new facility.
In 1973, a banquet was held to honour Lloyd Ames and this portrait was presented to him in recognition of his life-long service to the lodge and his efforts in building the Masonic Temple.

This was one of dozens of portraits that were hanging on the walls of the Masonic Temple. After digital pictures were created for the portraits by the BDA, many of the original portraits were passed on to families of the subject in the portrait. For example, this portrait now hangs in my home, for which I am very grateful.

The archive collection at the lodge also offered up this item on the right, which was Lloyd Ames’ apron, with its carrying case. If you flip the lid over, you see his name. After I took some pictures, this item was part of the material that went to Cobourg and is now protected and cataloged at the Northumberland County Archives.

The archives project at the Masonic Temple in 2018 was characterized by collaboration between members of the lodge, the Northumberland County Archives and the Brighton Digital Archives, all working together to preserve Brighton’s history. Check out some of the results on the BDA web site.
The portraits are wonderful legacies of the lodge, but some very important developments have resulted in a much larger legacy that will be felt in the community of Brighton for years to come. United Lodge No. 29 has sold the property at 153 Main St., and they are in negotiation with another lodge to merge and continue their work. However, members of the lodge insisted that the legacy of the lodge, in tangible financial form, should stay in Brighton, in order to continue the good works of the lodge in the place where it lived for 160 years.

Initially, there was a $30,000 donation to the Legion roof fun, what was significant in reaching their goals. Also, in this same spirit, United Lodge No. 29 donated $300,000 to the Brian Todd Memorial Community Fund.

Brian Todd may be known for his leadership in creating the Brighton Health Services Centre, but he was a very active member of the lodge, as you can see here.

The outcome is a wonderful combination of the strong legacy of United Lodge No. 29 in public service, with the future benefits that the Brian Todd Memorial Community Fund will bring to the residents of Brighton for decades to come.
Change is hard, but it can also be invigorating to the community. Sometimes, it can provide an optimistic vision for the future. Even if the masonic lodge is not meeting here, their legacy remains in the community.

We can thank the masonic lodge for their generosity.
Today you have seen only a taste of what is available on the Brighton Digital Archives web site. So, please, join us in enjoying this amazing resource.

Researching Brighton’s history is a lot of fun, partly because we have all these different collections. Better yet, lots of work has been done to protect these collections and to make the contents available for easy access.

As a historian, I’m like a kid in a candy store, scrounging and finding related information in all sorts of different places, and using them to tell our history stories.

So, thanks to the Brighton Digital Archives for all the great work you have already done, and ... keep it coming!

That is “Every Picture Tells a Story”. Please come to the Open House on Saturday – there will be lots more for you there.

Thanks so much for your attention.