

Living in BROCKVILLE

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**Letters From
Afghanistan** Part 2

Going Green at Home

DOUG GRANT
Our Past is Still Present

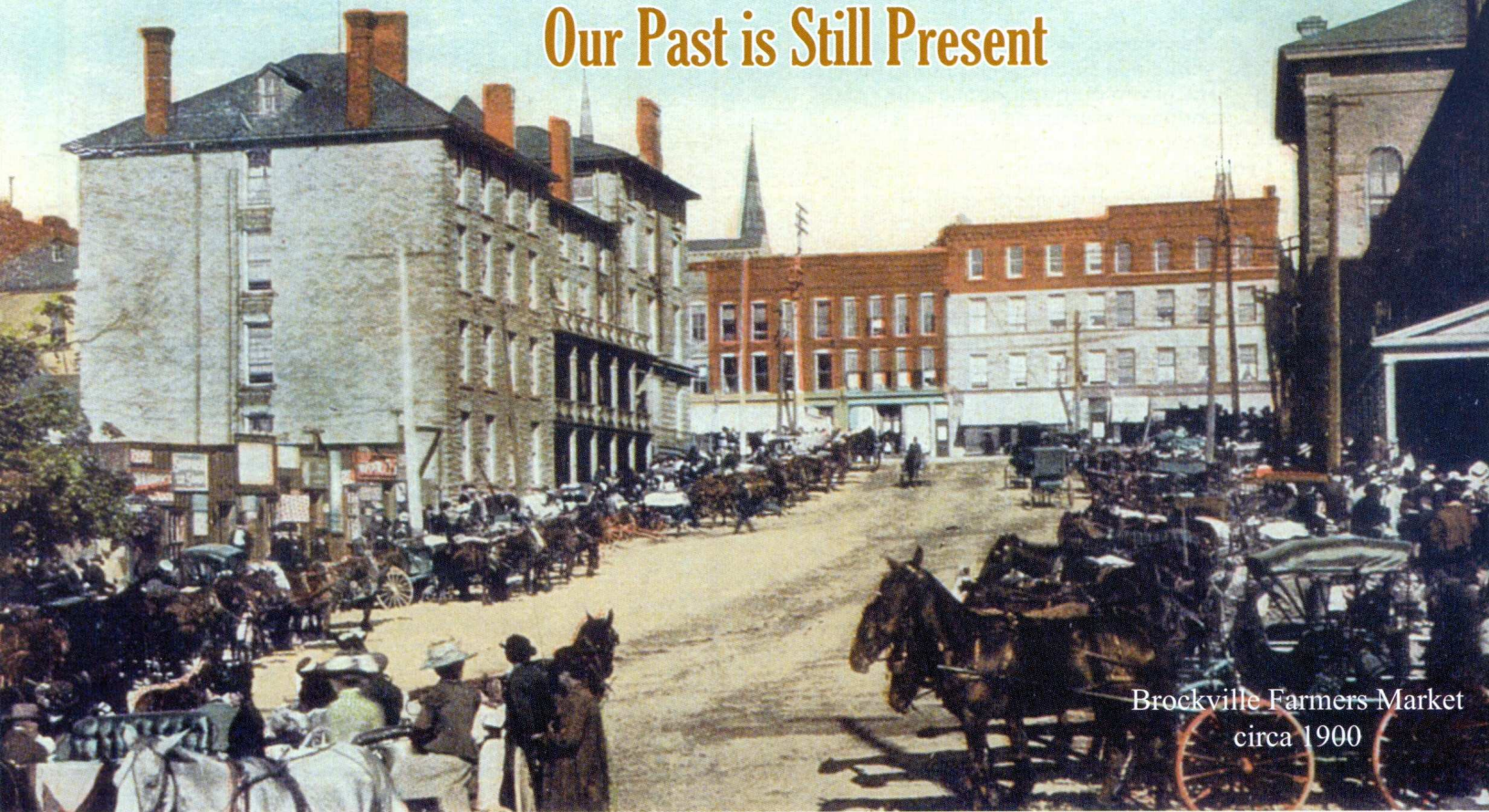
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BROCKVILLE'S HOMETOWN MAGAZINE

DOUG GRANT

Our Past is Still Present



Brockville Farmers Market
circa 1900

Brockville was first founded in the spring of 1785 with the arrival at this location of former ensign, William Buell, a 33-year old veteran of the British-American War of 1776-1783. He received a land grant as an United Empire Loyalist, for his service in one of the British militia units. William Buell had sold a number of town lots to new arrivals and was able to lay out a town plan by 1802. Soon there were a number of stone buildings erected here, using stone from local quarries. The new settlement may have been known as “Buell’s Bay” by some in those early days. Brockville became Ontario’s first incorporated town in 1832.

“Approaching Brockville...found it had a superior and even elegant appearance. There did not appear to be more than 40 to 50 houses, but many of them are very handsome with green Venetian blinds to the windows, and the church has a cupola top covered with bright shining tin, which rising above the wood has a pleasing effect. This little place is gay, found a large room in the inn preparing for a ball, being hung round with green boughs from the spruce fir. Understood that 30 couples would dance.”

Charles Fothergill - written as he proceeded from Montreal through Upper Canada in February 1817.

One hundred and ninety-two years ago Charles Fothergill, a visitor passing through the area, recognized the unique beauty of Brockville. Those of us who live here everyday may not see this beauty. One Brockville resident not only recognizing this beauty, but making a commitment to preserve our heritage is Doug Grant.

“It’s important to preserve our past and record the story of our community through photographs, records and memorabilia. The past is fleeting, if an effort isn’t made to collect and retain our history it soon becomes just that – ‘history’. I’ve been preserving Brockville’s history since 1972, and it’s an ongoing effort, history never ceases. It is constantly being created.”

Doug Grant was born and raised in Toronto; he graduated from Ryerson Polytechnic University in 1966 with a diploma in Architectural Technology. In 1972, Doug and his wife Jean relocated to Brockville where Doug began teaching Architectural Drafting at South Grenville District High School. Almost immediately he involved himself in all the local historical groups.

In 1997, Doug was honored for his longtime contribution and presented with a certificate from the Ontario Heritage Foundation. The program salutes the work of residents across Ontario who are actively involved in preserving heritage through building restoration, writing local histories, as well as other initiatives.

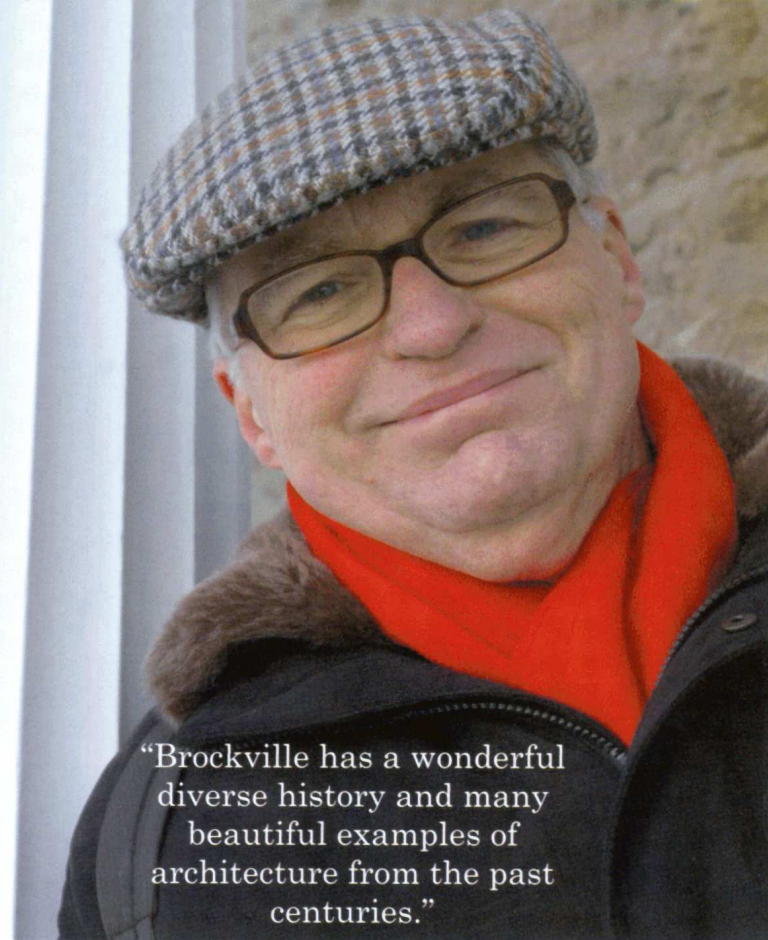
“For me it’s a hobby, but I’m always researching and collecting information. I have filing cabinets filled with historical data.” Doug’s passion for this hobby is evident in his voice, “I don’t think I’ll ever stop collecting information, history is never-ending.”

Doug has worked on many projects since his retirement from teaching in 2000; these projects include a series of columns published in the Recorder & Times entitled “Doug Grant’s History Album” which highlighted aspects of our city’s history, several booklets about our historic downtown including, “Brockville’s King Street East” and “Discovering Old Brockville” and working with The Brockville Museum on numerous projects.

“I’ve kept very busy working with many different clubs and groups; I find I can offer my graphic design skills and my collected historical data for the benefit of many of these groups and I just enjoy being able to stay busy and be involved in the thing I love the most.”

Keeping busy doesn’t seem to be an issue for Doug, he shared just a few of his current projects with me. “I would really like to see the Brock Trail more clearly defined. We don’t have any signage which indicates where the trail continues when it crosses over a street. So many people walk these trails throughout the year, but often it’s difficult to be sure you are following a set course – marking the trail with signage would define the pathways. It would just make a nice ‘finishing touch’ and complete the Brock Trail. As editor of The Probus Club of Brockville’s monthly newsletter, I stay very busy ensuring the club members are kept up-to-date on all the events and news. Of course, I also have my own web-site – “Brockville History Album” which highlights the history of Brockville with editorial and a multitude of pictures.”

Doug’s website is absolutely fascinating, you can travel back in time through the collection of photographs Doug has spent years collecting and researching. Images of Brockville from as early as the late 1800’s through to the present can be viewed through (<http://dmgrant.wordpress.com>) and from there you can link to additional websites featuring Historic Brockville.



“Brockville has a wonderful diverse history and many beautiful examples of architecture from the past centuries.”

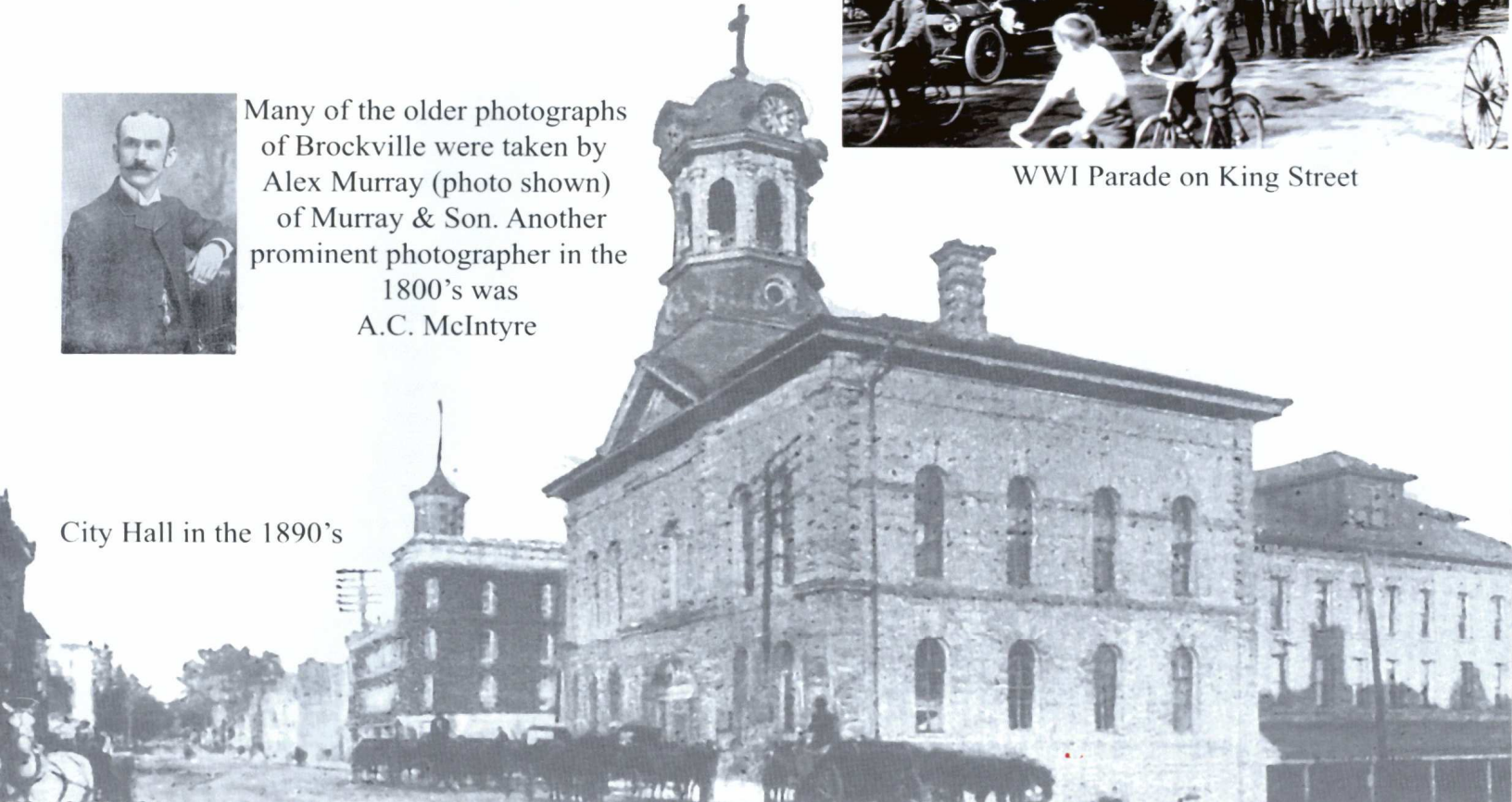


WWI Parade on King Street



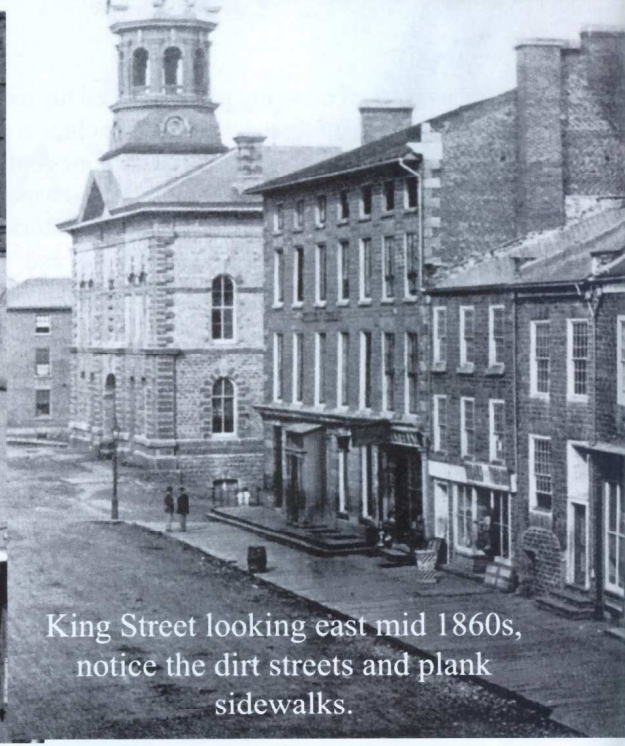
Many of the older photographs of Brockville were taken by Alex Murray (photo shown) of Murray & Son. Another prominent photographer in the 1800’s was A.C. McIntyre

City Hall in the 1890’s





King Street on the day of the "On to Ottawa" Trek - 1935



King Street looking east mid 1860s, notice the dirt streets and plank sidewalks.

Doug is working on many projects in an effort to document and preserve the history of Brockville as well as encourage residents and visitors to take full advantage of our rich heritage.

"Brockville has a wonderful diverse history and many beautiful examples of architecture from the past centuries. Be a tourist

Just an example of some of the booklets Doug has worked on to document our heritage.

in your hometown – take a walk, or hop on your bike and really look our city! You may be surprised at what you see, and don't forget your camera, today is tomorrow's history!"

On Saturday, May 23, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the general public can access, free of charge, many of the historic site, commercial buildings, churches, museums, parks and gardens in Brockville and area. Check out the Doors Open 2009 for the Brockville link at www.doorsopenontario.on.ca. This is a perfect opportunity to explore our city!

Watch for Doug's new column "Built in Brockville" in April!

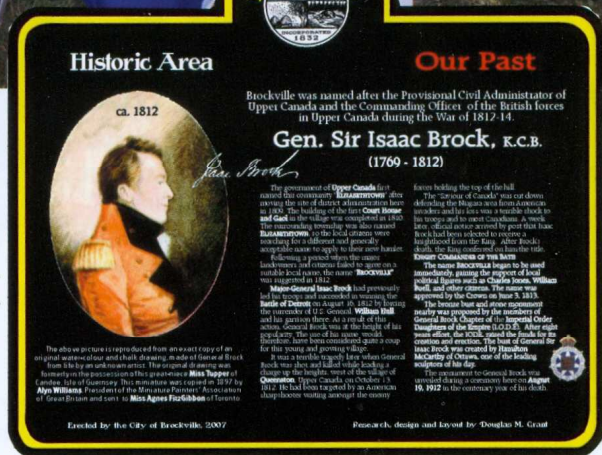


This is a beautiful picture of the corner of King Street East and Park Street at the turn of the century.

Brockville - "Our Past is Still Present"



Linda Eyre, Doug Grant & Marsha Lindsay unveiling one of the Brockville Historic Plaques - August 2006 (Photo by Ian Stephenson)



The graves of War Veterans in the Brockville Cemeteries are identified with this marker.

Brockville's historic plaques can be found throughout the downtown area allowing residents and visitors to learn about different aspects of our community's history.

The above picture is reproduced from an exact copy of an original watercolor and black drawing, made in honor of Brock from his by an unknown artist. The original drawing was found by the preservationist and genealogist Miss Popple of London, July of 1849. This miniature was copied in 1879 by Mrs. Williams, President of the Seneca Farmers' Association of Great Britain and sent to Miss Agnes FitzGibbon of Toronto.

Erected by the City of Brockville, 2007

Research, design and layout by Douglas M. Grant