

The Brock Township Hall, Sunderland ,Ontario

100 years of service to the community

1906-2006

Booklet provided by The Sunderland & District Historical Society



The Sunderland Town Hall south side
120 River St. By Lili Kennedy 1989

The Brock Township Hall, Sunderland, Ontario 1906-2006

In September of 1905, the Council of Brock Township made plans to replace the old town hall building (built in 1871) with a new facility.

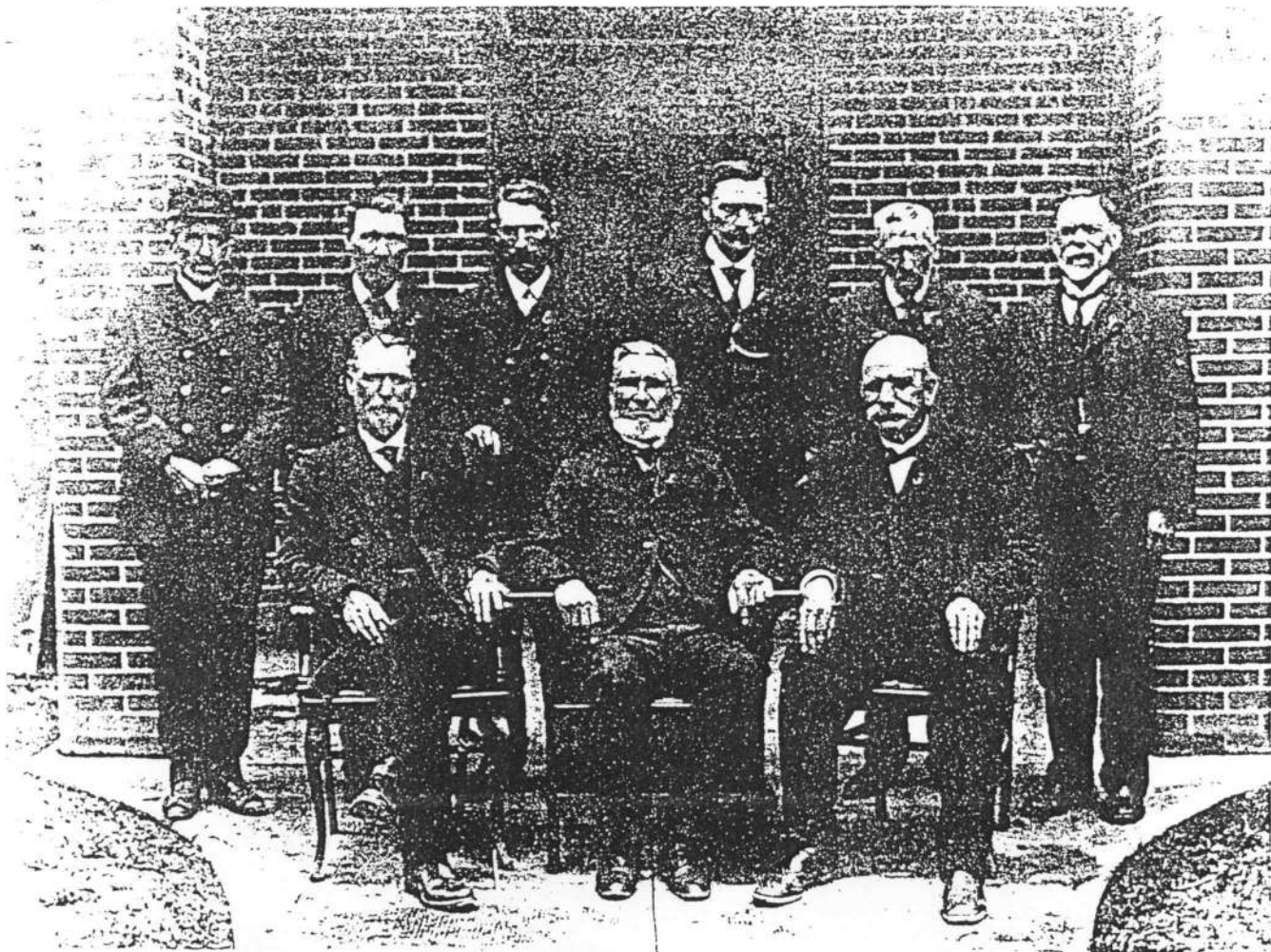
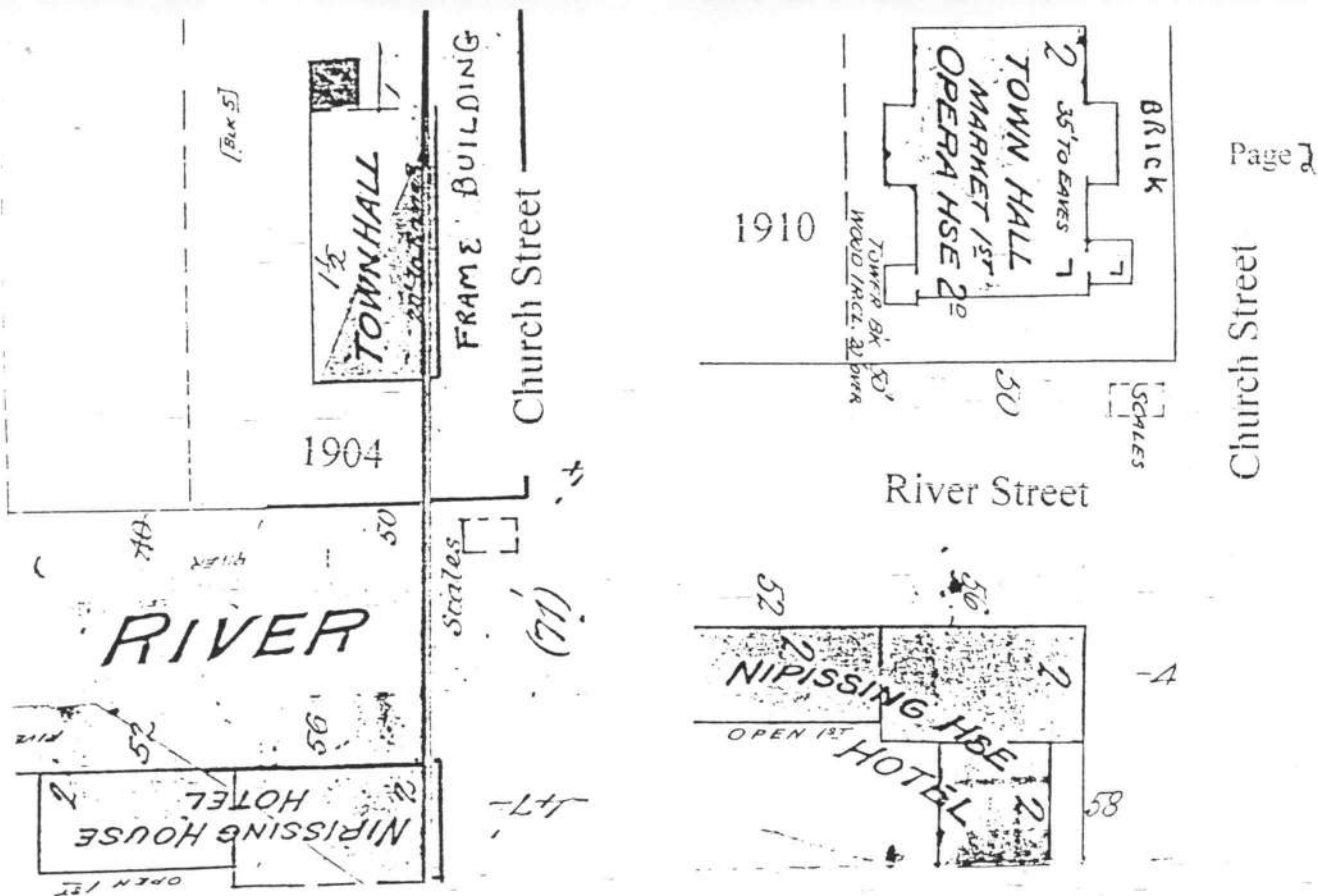
The original town hall was a wooden frame building and it was far too small for the needs of the growing community of Sunderland. George Turner was the architect and construction supervisor for the building of the new hall. The committee in charge of the planning included Reeve Dr J. Frank Lavery, Charles Junkin, George Turner, and the township treasurer. The cost of this hall was to be \$6000. The insurance map for 1904 shows the old town hall as a wooden frame building. The next map of the buildings in 1910 shows the new brick hall with a marketplace on the first floor and an opera house on the second floor.



George E. Turner (1848-1935) architect and chief construction supervisor of the Township of Brock Hall, Sunderland, completed in 1908. The building was one of his greatest achievements and is still admired today for its outstanding quality in terms of design and durability.

Mr. Turner was Reeve of Brock Township 1901-1902.



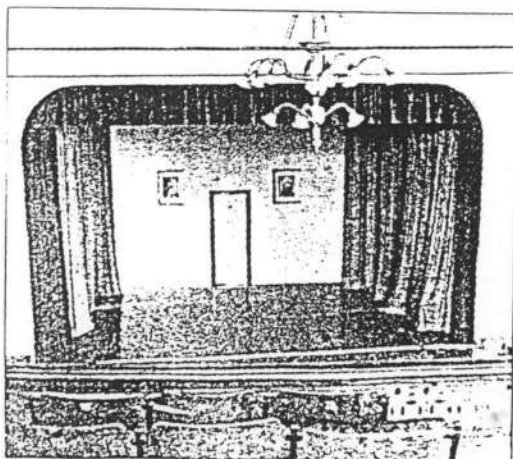


Brock Council 1908 in front of Sunderland Town Hall.

Standing Left to Right: "Chief" Robert Davidson, John Sackville, John Fallowdown, M.J. Fair, Moses Chambers (Assessor), Frank Doble (Clerk).

Seated Left to Right: Reeve Henry Purvis, T.H. Glendenning (Justice of Peace/Treasurer), James St. John (Deputy-Reeve).

The hall roof was made of steel shingles purchased from the Toronto Metallic Company. Joseph Thompson provided the black ash lumber for the building. Edward Payne was paid \$14.00 to draw the 28,000 bricks from the train station up River Street to the Town Hall. Robert Shields delivered 12 cords of stone, 60 loads of sand, and 100 yards of clean gravel to make the concrete and mortar. In 1906 James Dusto sold 40 loads of gravel and George St. John 214 loads of gravel at 10 cents a wagon load for the walls and foundation. The Town Hall originally used coal for a fuel source. The furnace was installed in March of 1907. The original wooden seats were provided by Robert Charter, the funeral director and a furniture supplier who worked where Pilgrim's Furniture Store is located on River Street. Some of these original seats are still in the balcony with a wire hat rack underneath.



The stage in the auditorium



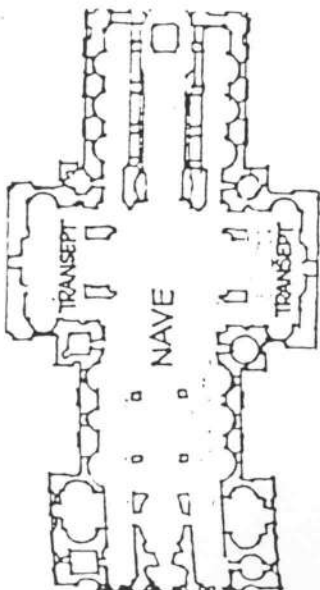
The original brass chandelier hanging from the ceiling in the main auditorium of the Brock Township Hall. Of Victorian design, it is just one of the building's many unique features. Note the medallion from which the light fixture is suspended - also, the metallic ceiling with detailed patterns.

The Hall was painted by Mr Potter. A designated heritage site, the Town Hall has Romanesque round brick arched windows, a style from the middle ages. The keystone at the top of the arch is a Baroque style developed in Europe in the seventeenth century. The stained glass rose window is Gothic in style with pointed arches and the building is a Gothic style with high steep roofs developed in the middle ages. The hall also contains a four-story bell tower capped with a pitched roof and Baroque (fancy) style dormers. The interior is similar to the architecture of a church, with two transepts on the east and west sides of a central north-south hallway or nave. The building is very similar to the Sunderland United Church, built in 1907.

TOWN HALL, SUNDERLAND, ONT.



The Town Hall 1909 , Dr Oliver's Home to the left ,
Methodist Church 1907 to the right

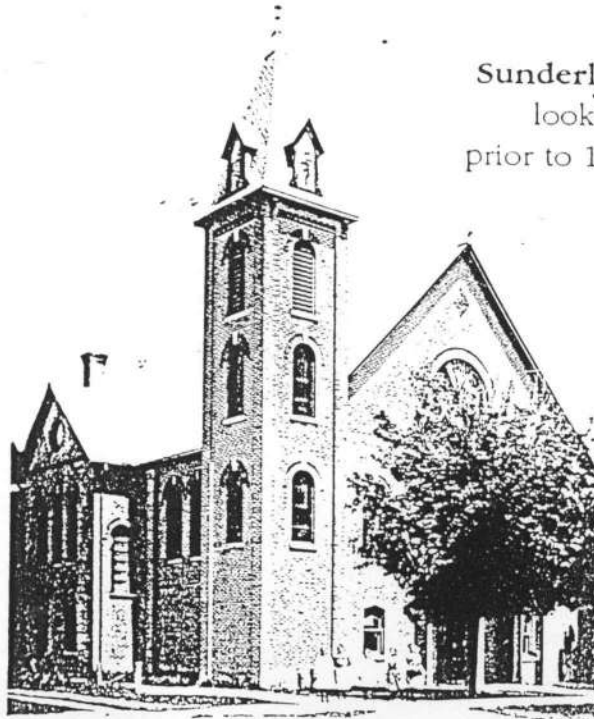


The second floor had a vaudevillian stage and large balcony trimmed with an antique brass railing or balustrade, a pressed print metal ceiling and an antique brass chandelier.

The Sunderland Town Hall had the cornerstone installed on June 19th, 1906 and it was the capital of the township from 1907 until 1996. The Dramatic Club held an open air concert at this event and a special engraved trowel was used for the laying of the cornerstone. On December 16, 1907, George Turner made the final payment for the work on the building. The building had clerk's offices and a jail. The two jail cells in the basement often served as an overnight home for poor travelers looking for a meal and a place to rest during the depression.



The spectacular stained-glass rose window on the south wall of the Township Hall, Sunderland is reminiscent of the Gothic style of architecture which flourished in Europe from the late 12th century to the Renaissance of the 14th century. The brass chandelier adds a touch of antiquity.

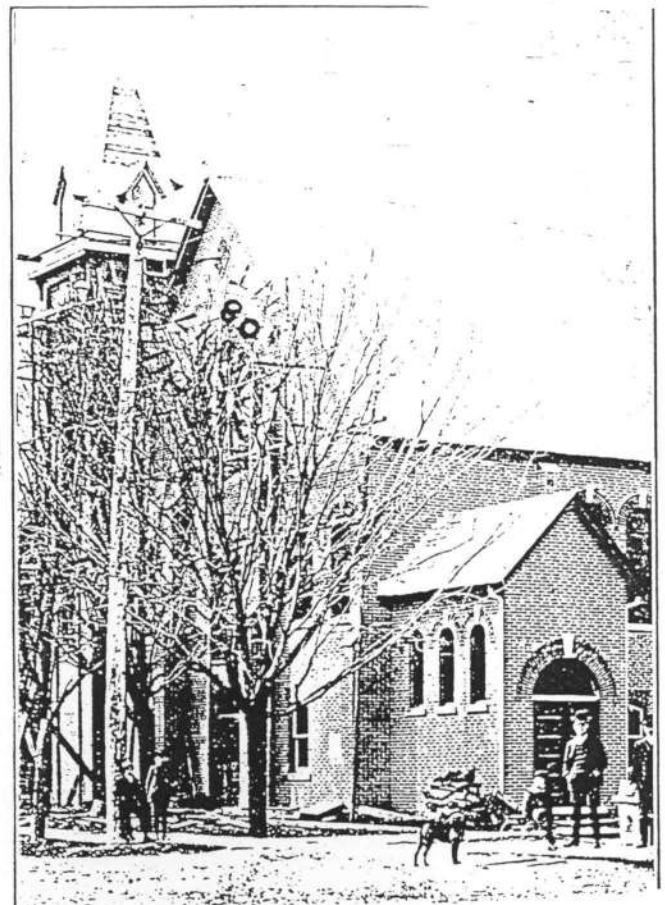


Sunderland Town Hall -
looking north east
prior to 1918 - World War 1

Keith Rynard, born in 1920, remembers as a small boy going with his mother on Tuesday nights with eggs, butter, and other farm goods to the market where a gentleman named John Bott purchased many items that he would resell. Here, you could pick up at Christmas, dressed chickens, geese, ducks, and a whole variety of products from the local farmers.

Sunderland, with this new building, was considered to be one of the leading villages in the township. Two of the outstanding features are the balcony and the stained glass windows. Over the years the numerous rooms have been used as for the council chambers, a library, a market a clerk's office and a banquet hall.

The Town Hall 1908.
South east corner. Note Postmark 08
Note hydro pole with power from
the grist mill of Thomas Welsh



In 1923 a library was set up in the east side of the Hall on the first floor.

A hall window was converted into the east doorway to the banquet room.

The library was well supported by the Sunderland Women's Institute.

They provided curtains ,furniture, and new books. Librarians were often

local women such as Mona St. John ,Bessie Oliver, Pearl Miller, and

Jean Christie. In 1972 the library was moved to the present site of

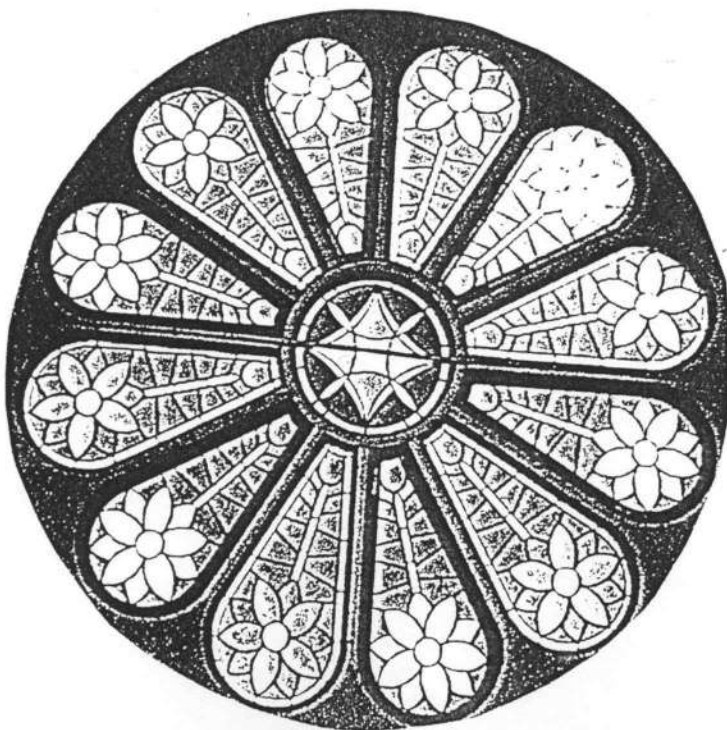
the Sunderland and District Museum just north of the Sunderland United

Church. The Sunderland Women's Institute, formed in 1926, made

several donations over the years to maintain and improve the Township

Hall. The Women's Institute promoted the annual school concerts which

were always performed in front of sell out crowds of proud parents.



Brock Township Hall, Sunderland
South Side
The Gothic Style Rose Petal Window
with Pointed Arches .

Friday, December 17th, 1915

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This building has always been a site for entertainment. There is a rich heritage of school concerts, fall fair concerts, and for 50 years the Sunderland Lions Club Music Festival. The Music Festival, now a three week event, offers a diversity of vocal and instrumental performances. Over the years local entertainers included Mrs Evelyn Johnson and her family Mack and Laura around the piano, and Iva Fallowdown reciting poems and rhymes. In the war years concerts were done to raise money for the British War Victory Fund and in 1943 for the Russian people. The Oliver sisters, Flossie and Emma, often made many attractive costumes for the concerts held at the Town Hall. Bessie Oliver, their niece, was a talented performer at the piano.



A superb entertainer, Iva Fallowdown was at her best performing in front of an audience. She was always one of the highlights of any programme.



Mrs. Evelyn Johnson playing the piano accompanied by her son Mack on the ukulele. They were popular entertainers, fulfilling engagements at various concerts, public gatherings, etc. Gifted with a natural ear for music, Mrs. Johnson could sit at the piano and play almost any tune on request without using music - the sign of real talent.



Elizabeth (Bessie) Oliver as a young woman. Devoting her life to music, Bessie often played at concerts and was organist at Sunderland United Church for many years. In later life, caring for her father and two aunts filled her days with care and compassion.

The Town Hall was a perfect place for dances. When you pushed back the chairs, you had an instant dance floor for round and square dancing. Some of the callers were Jack Snooks (1913), George McMullen, Hewitt Thompson (fiddler), and Jack Young. The King Edward Masonic Lodge of Sunderland, which was started in 1904, often ran dances and euchres in the Town Hall. The Sunderland United Church held it's annual Christmas concerts here. Many of the events are described in Jack Gordon's book "The Green Pastures of Old Brock". It is a rich source of historical information about the town of Sunderland.

The Cenotaph at the south east corner of the Township Hall property was unveiled in 1922 and another key Remembrance Day Service in 1945 was officiated by Col. George Arthur Welsh, a veteran of both wars. Afterwards the names of local veterans killed in WW II were added on the front centre stone.

Sons of Brock killed 1939-1945

Cliff Allen , William Armstrong, Harry Beatty, E M Coulter,

H V Coulter, Ken Fallowdown, H S Fawns, Cameron Glover,

Harold Johnson, George McClusky, Tom Meneely, Herb Miller,

Robert Murrell, Harry Parliament, Tom Pilkington, William Stainton



G. Arthur Welsh
soldier politician -
a native son of
Brock Township



Private Robert P. Jardine
died May 19, 1917 of
wounds at Camiers
Hospital, France.



Lt. W. K. Kift
of Cannington
(Died of wounds)

Cenotaph with veterans of WW I
Built in 1922



Once Vimy Ridge had been captured the 60th Battalion went forward into enemy territory under a heavy fall of snow. Shells were exploding in every direction and many soldiers lost their lives including Lt. John J. Doble of Sunderland. Three other Vimy casualties were Lt. W.K. Kift from Cannington, Pte. Robert P. Jardine of Derryville, and Pte. Norman Waddell. William (Bill) Martin of Sunderland was wounded at Vimy.

As the Town Hall building increased in age it became necessary to improve the facility to meet the various building and safety codes.

In the nineteen eighties, the Sunderland Town Hall Preservation and Restoration Committee was formed to help raise funds and to coordinate major upgrades in the Town Hall. This committee created a priority list and one of their major projects was the restoration of the stained glass windows. Later in 1996 , the Town Hall Board of Management continued the upgrades to the facility. The Management Board looked after the daily operation of the building and provided a link between the Township of Brock and the community. The mission statement of the Board was to ensure that the Sunderland Town Hall is preserved and continues to be the architectural, social, and entertainment focus of the community.

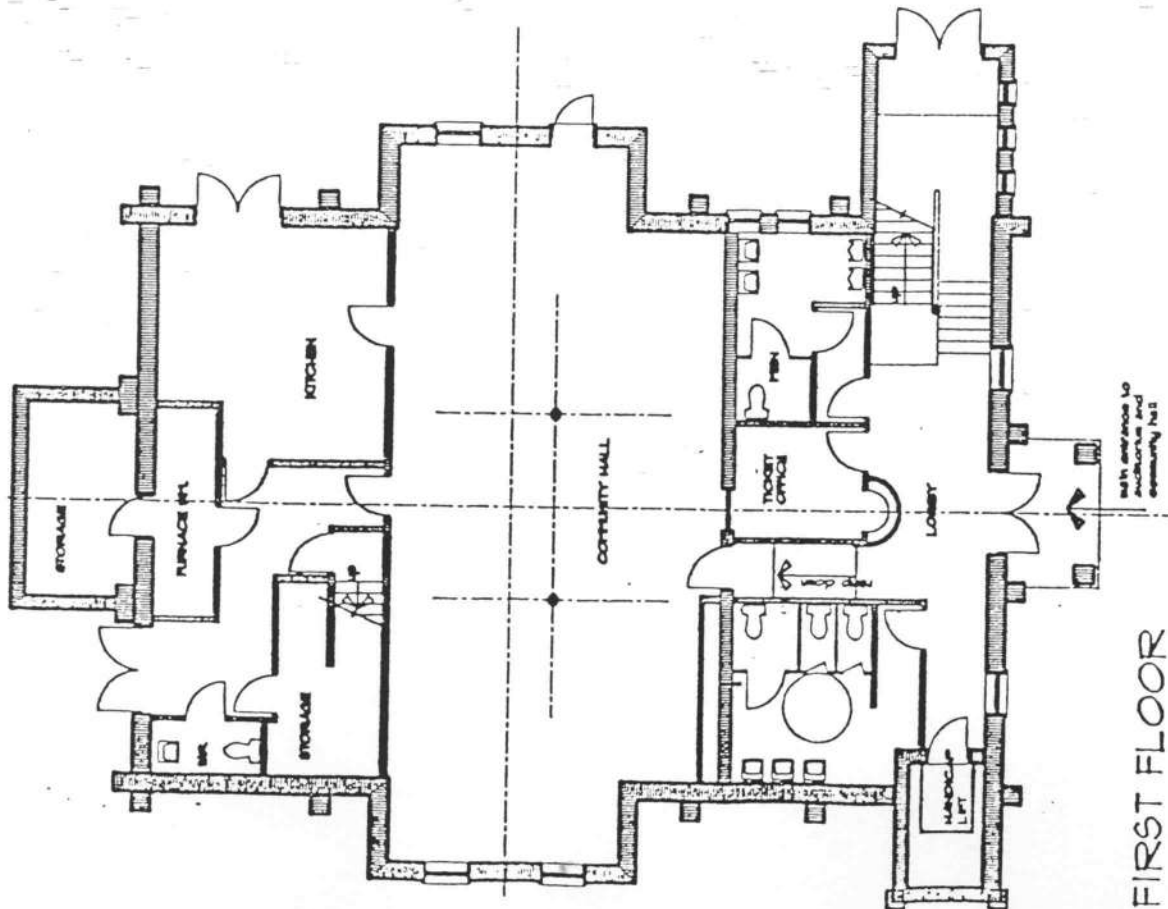
The Sunderland Lions Club, chartered in 1955, have played a major role in helping to renovate, furnish, and provide equipment for the Hall. In the fifties , they redesigned the stage area and put in new hardwood

floors. They provided a new sound system for the auditorium. They helped to renovate the banquet room. A committee of the Sunderland Lions Club provided funding and did most of the work to bring the building up to the fire and safety code. Finally, the entire auditorium was painted and the floors completely refinished .

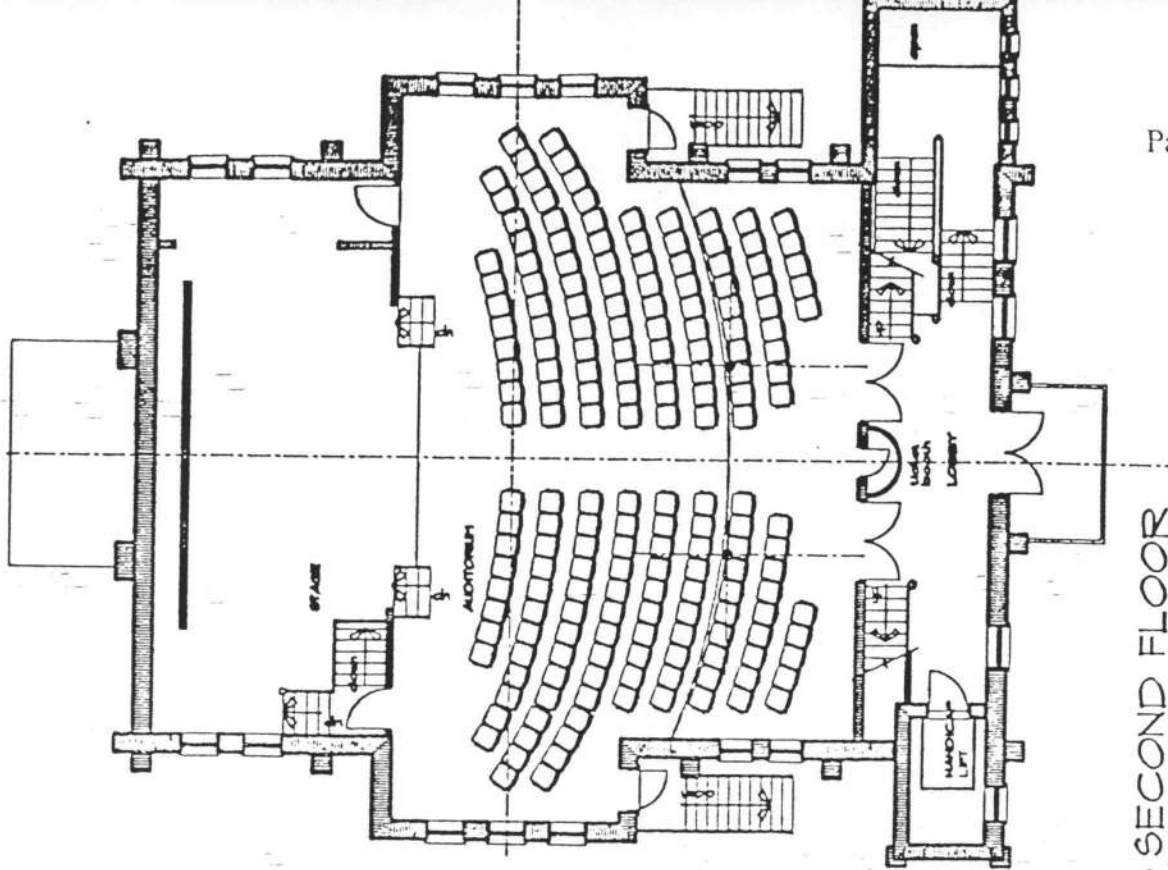
On January 26, 2000 a by law was passed by the township of Brock to designate the Sunderland Town Hall as a building of architectural and historical value. Weekly activities include play school, a toy library, and a meeting place for a variety of local organizations.

Plans to make the facility wheelchair accessible began in 2003 and an elevator and newer washrooms were added. As a part of a "super bill project" many upgrades were done to the hall. The following page shows the floor plan with the renovations completed.

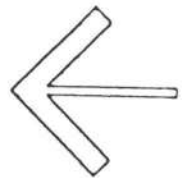
In the auditorium are six wonderful original paintings of local historical buildings that were donated by the artists to the Sunderland and District Historical Society . They have been displayed here to celebrate our



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



BROCK TOWNSHIP HALL

SUNDERLAND ONTARIO

CIRCA 1906

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

heritage. In January 2006, the Township of Brock and the Sunderland Historical Society presented the Town Hall Board with a Heritage Plaque to celebrate the 100 years of community service.

As late as October 2006, further painting and plastering of the walls and polishing of the floors are being completed at the Sunderland Town Hall to prepare this historical site for the 100 th year celebration on November 26, 2006. In honor of this historic anniversary this document has been prepared as a "gift of memories" from the Sunderland and District Historical Society to all those connected to this wonderful building.

Town Hall after 1922

