B.J. Hales Museum

"The purpose of the B.J. Hales Museum of Natural History is to collect, preserve and display artifacts of the natural history of Manitoba. The museum's collections encompass an almost complete collection of the birds and mammals found in Manitoba, an egg collection, a geological collection and a collection of archeological artifacts. The museum is open approximately 180 days a year and has an attendance of about 2,100 people per year. The museum is visited by university students, biologists, writers, local and visiting bird watchers and elementary school children. Admission to the museum is free."

Benjamin J. Hales (1868-1945) was the principal of the Brandon Normal School from 1911 to 1938.

History Timeline:

Origins:

1913: B.J. Hales acquired the George Atkinson naturalist collection. The Atkinson items formed the nucleus of what grew to become the B.J. Hales collection. This collection was stored/displayed at the Brandon Normal School.

1944(?): The Brandon Normal School was taken over by the military. The collection was transferred to Central School and Fleming School before ending up at the offices of the school board in 1948.

1964: Brandon College (predecessor to Brandon University) agreed to take over the collection. Conditions were agreed to as follows:

- The name 'B.J. Hales" to be displayed at all times.
- The museum to be made available for school children during the school year at no cost to the Brandon School Division.
- The museum to be dedicated to the people of Brandon and be a non-profit one.
- Brandon College (Brandon University) to be responsible for insuring same.

Recent Events:

May 2007: Dr. Michaels receives official notification from Scott Lamont, Vice-President (Administration and Finance), Brandon University, noting that the university has housed and managed the collection for 40 years "and now finds itself in the position of needing space for academic programming".
ACTION TAKEN: Presented to Board of Trustees under Communications for Information 3.02e) June 11, 2007 and referred to Facilities and Transportation Committee.

June 2007: Chairperson, Jim Murray receives letter from Bill Gallaway, Instructional Association, Brandon University B.J. Hales Museum Board of Trustees, noting the Brandon University should not be negotiating the donation and relocation of the Museum. They would like to see the Museum stay in tact and in the City of Brandon. ACTION TAKEN: Presented to Board of Trustees under Communications for Action 2.03 June 28, 2007. Letter written to Mr. Gallaway, July 9, 2007, noting

the Division will continue to work with the University to achieve a satisfactory solution for the B.J. Hales Museum.

Summer 2007: Sheri Bailey conducts an in-depth search on B.J. Hales Museum origin and how the Brandon University came to be in possession of the collection. Search also includes legal search of Probate Court to determine there are no family members of Mr. Hales that should be receiving collection is the BSD/BU can no longer maintain.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – September 18, 2007

"The information researched on this matter was presented to the Committee for discussion. The Committee agreed to continue to give custody of the museum to the university on the condition the museum remain on permanent display in Brandon. The Secretary Treasurer will continue to work with the University to find a permanent home for future display of the museum collection."

Sept. 2007: G. Barnes provides report regarding history of collection, and Probate Court search results of the Estate of B.J. Hales to determine that the collection is not to be returned to a family member.

October 2007: Mr. Barnes receives letter from Scott Lamont – Brandon University VP of Administration and Finance confirming the origins of the collection and noting the University continues to work to find appropriate accommodations for the collection at Brandon University. ACTION TAKEN: Received and filed.

May 2008: Dr. Michaels receives a letter from Dr. Steve Robinson, Acting Dean of Arts, Brandon University, requesting the B.J. Hales Natural History museum be temporarily relocated "for a number of years from the Brandon University campus to a suitable Brandon School Division facility." Dr. Robinson notes, the University would like to continue to staff and administer the Museum, but due to space issues cannot do so until the University has space in "close proximity to the Life Science facilities at BU". ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Facilities and Transportation Committee.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – June 23-08:

"Superintendent, Dr. Michaels reviewed a letter she had received from the University requesting the Division maintain the exhibit for a period time while a Life Sciences Centre is developed. Discussions were held regarding the possibility of moving the exhibit into the basement of Earl Oxford School which would need to be cleaned out and prepared prior to the exhibit moving in. It was noted that the exhibit must be treated properly in a climate controlled atmosphere. The Committee agreed that the Director of Facilities and Transportation would approach the University regarding relocating the exhibit and report back to the Committee with several options. The possibility of moving the exhibit to ACC or dividing the exhibit amongst several schools was also discussed."

July 2008: Mr. Barnes received letter from Dr. Steve Robinson Acting Dean of Arts, Brandon University, advising that the University agrees in principle with the proposed re-location of the Museum – as a BU operation – the Earl Oxford School. ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Facilities and Transportation Committee as information.

September, 2008: M. Clark receives email from Brandon University noting two options regarding display of the collection. The University would prefer to set up collection in Earl Oxford with an estimated cost of $100,000. ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Facilities and Transportation Committee.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – September 22, 2008"

"Director of Facilities and Transportation, Mr. Mel Clark, provided details of his meetings and correspondence with the Brandon University regarding the possibility of moving the BJ Hales Museum to Earl Oxford School. He noted the Brandon University had two options: 1) to set up the Museum as an independent entity and; 2) to set up the Museum within the School, with identical hours of operation, a shared entrance and a shared public use of designated bathroom facilities. Mr. Clark noted the University would prefer the second option as it was at a lesser cost. Mr. Clark had presented this option to the school administration who had expressed concerns about the use of student washrooms, cleaning, emergency procedures and security. It was noted that a fire exit/primary opening should be the main objective of the University if the second option is utilized. It was also noted that adults would use the staff washrooms only under this option. Trustees asked questions for clarification and discussions were held regarding the current traffic flow to the museum, who would do the renovations, who would look after the maintenance of that portion of the building, who would provide utilities, if rent was to be collected, and what would happen to items currently stored by the Division in the space to be utilized by the museum. It was agreed the museum would be encouraged to use the south entrance and renovations would include a minimum number of walls. Mr. Barnes noted utility costs may be higher due to the need for temperature control and proper air circulation for the exhibits.

Recommendation:

That approval in principle be granted to undertake an agreement with the Brandon University to move the BJ Hales Museum to Earl Oxford School for operation within the School hours of operation subject to the renovations including a separate south entrance/fire exit with the space provided free of charge."

Excerpt from October 14, 2008 Board Minutes:

"That approval in principle be granted to undertake an agreement with the Brandon University to move the BJ Hales Museum to Earl Oxford School for operation within the school hours of operation subject to the renovations including a separate south entrance/fire exit, with the space provided free of charge

Trustee Jolly inquired about the archives of the WREA which had originally been stored in Earl Oxford and were now temporarily displayed at Fleming School. She noted the archival material belonged to the school division and felt they should also be displayed at Earl Oxford School. Trustee Karnes agreed to have the matter reviewed by the Facilities/Transportation Committee.

Carried."

October 2008: Letter sent to Brandon University noting motion approved at October 14 Board Meeting.

May 2009: Division receives Brandon University News Release regarding B.J. Hales Museum. ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Facilities and Transportation Committee as Information only.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – June 11, 2009:

"The Brandon University News Release regarding B.J. Hales Museum was addressed by the Superintendent and received by the Committee as information."

June, 2009: Request from Mr. Ken Jackson, to address the Board of Trustees at their Regular Meeting June 22, 2009 regarding the future of the Museum.

Excerpt from Board Minutes – June 22, 2009:

"Mr. Ken Jackson, Past Curator, B.J. Hales Museum spoke to the Board of Trustees regarding the future of the B.J. Hales Museum. He provided information on the history of the museum, the value of the specimens in the collection and the need to manage the collection properly, even while in storage. Mr. Jackson volunteered his experience with the collection and requested access to the collection in order to monitor its physical condition ensuring that the collection is not lost to water, temperature or invasive damage. He also asked the Board of Trustees to consider exploring exhibit possibilities for the collection and provided examples as to how the collection could be exhibited throughout the Division buildings.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Jackson for his presentation. Trustees asked questions for clarification purposes regarding the general museum, current arrangements with the Brandon University regarding staffing of the display, the cost of renovations at Earl Oxford School to display the exhibit, and a three-way partnership with Assiniboine Community College, the Brandon University and the Brandon School Division regarding the collection. It was agreed that given Mr. Jackson's familiarity with the collection, he would be included in any further discussions regarding future housing of the display."

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – March 11, 2010:

"Discussions were held regarding the possibility of a temporary display until a permanent home can be found for the B.J. Hales artifacts. It was noted the Superintendent was in the process of talking to management of the Town Centre regarding the possibility of displaying the artifacts at the Town Centre. It was noted this would involve someone to look after the display should arrangements be made. Discussions were also held regarding the possibility of approaching the Provincial Department of Culture and Recreation about funds available to renovate the basement of Earl Oxford School. Other discussions involved the possibility of a mobile display or locating portions of the museum in the City Library.

Agreed:

It was agreed that Mr. Ken Jackson would be contracted to meet with the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to explore the answers to questions the Committee had regarding display, maintenance and protection of the artifacts from the B.J. Hales Museum."

April, 2010: Meeting held with Mr. Jackson and Sr. Administration to determine the following:

1) What climate is needed for storage?
2) What type of items, and how many are there?
3) Is it alright to leave the items boxed until an appropriate location can be found?
4) Can the items be split up and rotated amongst locations?
5) Do we require a full-time curator to take care of the items?

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – April 8, 2010:

"Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, circulated minutes on a meeting he and the Superintendent had with Mr. Ken Jackson, the previous curator of the B.J. Hales Museum. Mr. Barnes reviewed the items discussed. He noted the next step was for the Director of Facilities and Transportation to contact Mr. Jackson and review the possible space available in the basement of Earl Oxford School to determine what would be required to make the space habitable for the museum artifacts. Mr. Clark, Director of Facilities and Transportation confirmed that he would need to talk to Brandon and Area Planning regarding requirements to bring the basement area up to code for such a display.

It was agreed that Mr. Clark would report back to the Committee at the next meeting with the renovations required, costs and options regarding the entrance to the exhibit before any further decisions regarding displaying the B.J. Hales Museum artifacts were made.

Trustee Murray noted the Brandon Shopper's Mall would be willing to take pieces of the exhibit to display behind the windows of closed stores.

Trustee Bartlette noted he had approached the City Library about the possibility of displaying pieces of the exhibit at the library and that any further discussions on the matter was now up to the City Library.

Mr. Barnes noted the University was getting a grant for the curator and he would be following up on the possibility of transferring this grant to the school division. He would also be looking into what other grants are available with respect to renovations and improvements in order to display the exhibit in the basement of Earl Oxford School."

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – May 13, 2010:

"Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, spoke to the matter, noting that it could be several years before the City had a museum with an area for the B.J. Hales Museum to be displayed. Therefore, the basement of Earl Oxford School was the most logical place to display the museum artifacts. Director of Facilities and Transportation, Mr. Mel Clark, noted he had met with Brandon and Area Planning to review the matter. He presented a list of proposed costs noting it would take the Maintenance Department approximately a month to complete and that the department would need to work the project around the other capital budget projects that have already been approved. Mr. Clark also cautioned the Committee that Fleming School is currently the holding site for the Division's used computers. Should that building be sold, the computers would need to be moved. He noted at one time it was assumed the used equipment would be moved to the basement of Earl Oxford, however, if the museum is placed in the basement, the Division will need another area to store its used computers. Mr. Barnes spoke about the grants

available noting he is trying to access grant money to cover off the curator's time. Discussions were held regarding how much education money would the Division be willing to put towards this project; clarification as to whether or not display cases will be required; the need for a separate public access for safety reasons and to allow the public access to the display after school hours; and the proposed timelines. It was noted that the renovations could be completed by June 2011 to allow the display to be set up during the months of July and August with the official opening to take place in September 2011."

Excerpt from Board Minutes – May 25, 2010:

"Trustee Mayes requested clarification regarding the references to possible grant money for the B.J. Hales Museum noted in the Committee minutes. It was noted that the Brandon University had received grant money to cover the wages of the curator and the Division hoped to be able to receive grant money for staffing wages. The Division was also looking into the possibility of other grant monies to assist in the renovations for the museum. It was noted that the renovation costs would otherwise be from Division funds. Discussions were held regarding the possibility of approaching the Brandon University again and asking for assistance with renovation costs. Superintendent, Dr. Michaels, noted she has spoken with Dr. Grills of Brandon University who had advised there are no funds available for this initiative.

Motion:
That the proposed renovations to convert the space in the Earl Oxford Basement in order to display the B.J. Hales Museum collection at an estimated cost of $17,000 be approved with funds to be acquired from Provincial Grants and Divisional funding sources.

Trustee Mayes noted it was not clear yet whether or not the Division would be receiving any funding for this project. He also noted that the Board was led to believe there would be some financial assistance from Brandon University to complete the renovations. Discussions were held and it was agreed that a subsequent motion be considered in this regard.

Carried.

Motion:
That correspondence be forwarded to the Brandon University requesting support for renovations to convert space in the Earl Oxford School basement to display the B.J. Hales Museum collection.

Carried."

May, 2010: Correspondence to Brandon University Board of Governors regarding approval of above noted motion.

June, 2010: Correspondence from Brandon University President, Dr. Poff, noting she has requested the history and circumstances on this matter from her two senior Vice-Presidents. ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Board Meeting July, 2010 as Communications for Information 3.02f).

September, 2010: Correspondence from Richard Lonstrup, noting the University is now prepared to resume discussions. ACTION TAKEN: Referred to Board Meeting September 27, 2010 as Communications For Action 2.04c).

Excerpt from Board Minutes - September 27, 2010

"Richard Lonstrup, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Brandon University, September 14, 2010, thanking the Board for their letter of May 31, 2010 regarding the B.J. Hales Museum collection currently housed in Earl Oxford School and noting the University is now ready to begin discussions towards the re-establishment of the B.J. Hales Museum. The University is pleased the Division has been able to find a way to allow the collection to be displayed and that the Division is still interested in maintaining the long-standing partnership to manage the collection. He notes it is important to address a perception that has arisen that the University is unable or unwilling to support the $100,000 of renovations and has therefore broken its word to the Division, as stated in the Brandon Sun by a Trustee. He notes the Brandon University estimated the option to set up the Museum within a School, with identical hours of operation, a shared entrance, and shared public use of bathroom facilities would be approximately $100,000 which spread over a ten-year occupancy would equal about $10,000 per year and they are willing to accept that level of investment. However, the University was told that a shared entrance and shared washroom facilities would not be acceptable to the Division and a separate entrance, a shed for the snow blower etc. would cost between $200,000 and $300,000. This is well above the $100,000 commitment of the University. He notes there appeared to be no way to get the cost to set up the Museum close to a level the University could accept which then led to the agreement to box up the collection and store it temporarily at Earl Oxford School. With this clarification, the University is prepared to resume discussions and understands the Division now proposes to allow the re-establishment of the Museum within the resources the University originally committed. He suggests the Senior Administration and facilities managers of the Division and University meet to explore the options for this important community resource.

Referred Business Arising."

The correspondence from Richard Lonstrup, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Brandon University, from Communications for Action 2.04c) noting the University is prepared to resume discussions regarding B.J. Hales Museum was discussed in detail. The Board directed that a meeting be arranged between the Senior Administration and Facilities managers of the Division and University as requested by the University.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – October 14, 2010:

"Mr. Clark, Director of Facilities and Transportation, provided a verbal report regarding the renovations to B.J. Hales Museum to be located at Earl Oxford School. It was noted that due to extended illness on the carpentry crew and outstanding projects that need to be completed from the current budget, he could not guarantee the renovations would be completed by the end of June. Discussions were held regarding the possibility of out-sourcing the project if needed. Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, confirmed that Senior Administration would be meeting with the Brandon University on October 21, 2010 to discuss the establishment and possible partnership of the museum display at Earl Oxford School."

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – November 15, 2010

"Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, circulated additional information to be discussed by the Committee with respect to the B.J. Hales Museum. He provided the Committee with background information and a brief history of the various

conversations which have taken place with Brandon University regarding the renovations to the museum to locate it in the basement of Earl Oxford School. He suggested the Board request the Brandon University honour the commitments made in their letter of September 14, 2010 wherein they would be willing to support $100,000 for renovations spread over a ten-year period at $10,000 per year, in addition to the costs for maintaining and curating the Museum. He noted locating the museum in the basement of Earl Oxford School was on a temporary basis only until such time as the City of Brandon had a General Museum. He suggested the renovations be increased to $50,000 which the Division would fund up front and then be recovered as a receivable from the University. Discussions were held regarding clarification of ownership of the museum artifacts; the Division's relationship with the University; the location of the museum at Earl Oxford School; access to public washrooms and a separate entrance; staffing of the museum; the current state of the artifacts and preservation of the artifacts; as well as where the display cases are that the artifacts were displayed in at the University.

Suggestions were made to give the collection to a historical society to maintain and to refer the matter to the Joint City Task Force Ad-Hoc Committee; and compromising on the University's proposals.

It was agreed that the Division would follow-up with the University in regards to their latest letter and their previous correspondence regarding the relocation of the B.J. Hales Museum as noted in their September 14, 2010 correspondence. It was further agreed that the matter would be referred to the Joint City Task Force Ad-Hoc Committee for discussion with the Historical Society/General Museum Committee.

Recommendation:
That the Senior Administration respond to the Brandon University November 5, 2010 letter regarding arrangements for the operation of the B.J Hales Museum Collection; and further that the matter be referred to the Joint City Task Force Ad-Hoc Committee for follow-up discussion with the Historical Society/General Museum Committee."

November 2010: Correspondence to Dr. Poff, President, Brandon University, noting approval of above motion.

April 2011: Follow correspondence noting the Division is still awaiting reply from the University regarding November, 2010 letter.

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – April 12, 2011:

"Mr. Clark, Director of Facilities and Transportation, noted his department would not meet the deadlines for renovations to Earl Oxford School's basement in order to display the B.J. Hales Museum artifacts. He confirmed staffing issues had placed his department behind on their work orders. Mr. Clark noted the department's priority was to complete all budget items before the end of the fiscal year and then begin on the budget items for the next fiscal year. The Committee agreed to look at the possibility of outsourcing the project. The Secretary-Treasurer directed Mr. Clark to revise his costing for the Earl Oxford project and obtain some preliminary costs on the basic sketch drawings. It was also noted that a unisex washroom was required which would add to the cost of the project. Mr. Barnes updated the Committee on his communication with Brandon University."

Excerpt from Board Minutes - April 25, 2011

"Facilities & Transportation Committee Minutes

The written report of the Transportation Committee meeting held April 12, 2011 was circulated.

Inquiries were made regarding inclusion of the Division archives and the B.J. Hales artifacts in the general museum. Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, noted he has had discussions with the Director of Facilities and Transportation regarding these items and will follow-up with the General Museum Committee.

Mr. Karnes – Mr. Murray
That the Minutes be received.
Carried."

Excerpt from F/T Minutes – May 10, 2011:

"Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, reviewed the revised proposed expenses to renovate the basement of Earl Oxford School to temporarily house the B.J. Hales Collection. It was noted the total cost of the renovations had increased to $73,400 as our crews were no longer able to undertake the work. Mr. Barnes referenced the letters he had forwarded to the University noting to date he had yet to receive a reply regarding their original offer to assist financially with the relocation of the museum. Mr. Barnes confirmed he will contact Mr. Scott Lamont, Vice-President Administration and Finance. Trustees inquired as to whether or not funds had been set aside in budget for these renovations. It was noted the renovations were to be funded from accumulated surplus. It was agreed to postpone further discussions regarding renovation of the basement to Earl Oxford School until the end of June when the Board of Trustees would be discussing disposal of the accumulated surplus

Excerpt from Board Minutes - June 13, 2011 regarding Accumulated Surplus:

"Trustee Murray noted the Board could afford to give each of the nine schools requesting funds for playgrounds the sum of $10,000 from accumulated surplus. He also felt the Board could afford to give $75,000 for renovations to Earl Oxford School to house the B.J. Hales Museum. He confirmed this would still leave plenty of money in the accumulated surplus."

Bibliography:

http://flinflon.brandonu.ca/bjhales/history.html

"Hales collection on the move?" The Brandon Sun, Tuesday, June 5, 2007.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Brandon College Board of Directors – May 13, 1964.
Various correspondences between School District of Brandon No. 129 and Brandon College Inc. (April and May, 1964).

Manitoba Probate Court Search Results: Last Will and Testament of Benjamin Jones Hales, December 3, 1928.

Numerous correspondence found in file between 2007 and 2011.