

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

March 2010 Newsletter

Newsletter Editors: Coral Lindsay and Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2010
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: The Carriage House on the Mill Square
Business: Regular Monthly Meeting
Topic: The Clapp House (below) on Clapp Lane near the Cenotaph



Speakers: *Barbara Humphreys, Winston Spratt*

Subject: *The Clapp House, the Undiscovered Gem of Dickinson Square*

Mark Jodoin will introduce Barbara Humphreys and Winston Spratt who will offer a retrospective on the architectural and social histories of this charming home.

Our Apologies.

Last month in thanking the outgoing board members we somehow overlooked Brian Earl. Please forgive us Brian. We recognize and thank you for your many contributions as a member of the board and are very appreciative that you will continue to represent us at DSHMI

150th Anniversary of the Mill

Watson's Mill celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2010.

Isabelle Geffrion and the Watson's Mill Team have announced a year-long celebration to commemorate this anniversary. Stay tuned to their e-news at www.watsonsmill.com and celebrate with them through out the year.



Organizing Committee Web Site
www.manotick150.ca/

Bring a friend

Light refreshments

For a ride call Brian Earl

This Month

1. The Next Meeting
2. The Women's Institute Story
3. RTHS committees for publications and the Dickinson House.
4. News from the Rideau Archives
5. The Women's Institutes credo and a brief local history.

Watson's Mill Coming Events

Monday, March 15, 9:30am
March Break Day Camp: Writing on Walls.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, a remarkable woman. (see page 2)

The RTHS February Meeting

The Women's Institute Story. Article by Lucy Martin

February happens to be Women's Institute month and last year the WI's Carleton district celebrated its 100th anniversary. That being the case, thirty-three members and guests gathered at St. Andrew's Church in Kars to hear Carleton District President Maritta Saharinen and Coral Lindsay recount the story of an organization dear to many in the audience.

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless and Erland Lee are credited as co-founders of the organization. A web page of the Canadian Museum of Civilization describes Hoodless as "a modest revolutionary":

"She believed that women had value as wives and mothers in the home. She fought for their



Coral Lindsay speaking about Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

right to education. Haunted by the death of her small son, she launched a twenty-year campaign to give women the knowledge and institutions they needed to serve and safeguard their families.

Hoodless's insistence on the value of domestic labour may sound hollow today, but it was radical in her day, as were the programs and institutions she founded to teach nutrition and hygiene, and to give Canadian women a national voice."

Lindsay said summarizing Hoodless' many accomplishments was a challenge.

Hoodless may have remained out of public limelight if she had not lost her youngest son to contaminated milk in 1889. Thereafter she campaigned in favor of pasteurized milk and opened the first school of domestic science in 1894. Hoodless wrote Canada's first textbook on domestic science and helped persuade Ontario to add the subject to the general school curriculum. She was an active

leader in the YWCA and collaborated with Lady Aberdeen to establish the first Canadian branch of the National



Carleton District President of the Women's Institute Maritta Saharinen, speaker for the evening.

Council of Women and the Victorian Order of Nurses.

As a guest speaker at a Farmer's Institute meeting at Stoney Creek in 1897, Hoodless remarked how on many farms wives and children seemed less valued than the livestock. She called for the formation of a women's group modeled after the Farmer's Institute. 101 women and Erland Lee came to the first meeting. Lee used his position in the already-established Farmer's Institute to successfully lobby for government recognition and support for the new organization.

Hoodless persuaded tobacco magnate and educational philanthropist Sir William Macdonald to donate funds which established Macdonald Institute in Guelph and McGill University's Macdonald College.

After financial setbacks, and some years of illness, Hoodless died in 1910, felled by a heart attack one day shy of her 54th birthday as she delivered a speech in Toronto.

The entry for "Hunter, Adelaide Sophia (Hoodless)" in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online presents a thorough assessment of her life, including some surprises. In an age marked by progressive movements Hoodless called advocates of prohibition "temperance cranks" and also opposed giving women the vote. One of her speeches declares that a girl or woman "who has been brought face to face with the great truths presented through a properly graded course in domestic science or Home Economics in its wider interpretation, will never be found in the ranks of the suffragettes."

Women's Institutes became the largest women's organization in the world, spreading to over 70 nations, with 9 million members.

Originally dedicated to improving lives through domestic science education, the WI focus expanded to encompass personal growth, and broad initiatives promoting health,

safety and community. The motto is a succinct summary: For Home and Country.

New RTHS Committees

The following committees have been struck for two of the major projects the RTHS has underway this year.

Publications Committee

Chairman: Mark Jodoin

The responsibilities of the committee are to guide the publication of “*Kars on the Rideau*” and to prepare a plan for RTHS publications for the next 2 to 3 years.

Members

The members of the committee are:

Ellen Adamsons,
Coral Lindsay,
Susan McKellar
Ron Wilson

Dickinson House Committee

Chairman: Bill Tupper

The responsibilities of the committee are to:

- guide the operation of the Dickinson House during the summer season, and
- support the RTHS initiative to develop it as a period house important to the history of Manotick.

Members

The members of the committee are:

Brian Earl,
Gerry Reasback,
Cam Trueman
Ellen Adamsons
Coral Lindsay, and
Brian Sawyer

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: The Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).

Last month we marked Heritage Day with a Rideau Archives/ Historical Society booth at City Hall. Coral Lindsay and Maureen McPhee attended in costume, took part in the City’s heritage parade and manned the Heritage Fair booth. The booth featured the many activities of the Society, including the monthly meetings, special events, such as Manotick Saturday Night and operation of a living museum at Dickinson House in Manotick. Participants in the Heritage Fair were very interested in the RTHS publications on display and we sold several books.

Over the period since Christmas, Rideau Archives has retired its microfilm camera into storage to make room for a new (to us, at least) large digital scanner. We can now scan material up to 11 x 17 inches. We haven’t yet conducted any major experiment using this scanner.

We have continued to collect archival and library materials from the community, including several vintage cookbooks over the last month.

Kars Public School Annual Community Used Book Sale

April 16, 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and April 17, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

We are looking for good quality used children and adult books, VHS and DVD movies, talking books, etc. for our sale. If you would like the chance to clear out your home collection to make room for more, please drop off your books at Kars Public School, 6692 Rideau Valley Drive South during school hours (8:00 am – 3:30 pm). Donations can be made until April 12, 2010. If you have questions, or need your books picked up, please call Megan Dodge at 489-0631.

Please note, a portion of the proceeds from the book sale will be donated to “Help Lesotho”, a Canadian-based charitable organization which helps families in the impoverished country of Lesotho, Africa. For more information, please check out helplesotho.ca

The Local Women's Institutes Then and Now

by Lucy Martin

During the presentation Maritta Saharinen provided much more information about the WI then and now, supplemented by abundant facts and fun photos. As branches proliferated, the Carleton District split back in 1938. By 1998, numbers became more manageable and East and West could re-amalgamate. There are 10 WI branches in this district today.

Over these many decades, WI has literally "been there", as members conducted bake and craft sales, raised funds for worthy causes, sponsored speaking contests, and enlivened fairs, parades, suppers and garden parties.

Back in time, WI offered something called short courses. Knowing rural woman had many responsibilities and little free time, home economists employed by the Department of Agriculture would offer instruction on diverse practical skills. Linda Reasbeck was singled out of the audience to recall past county home economists Ruth Shaver and Anne Lindsay. Shaver went on to head Kemptville Col-

lege's Home Economics program and hired Reasbeck to come to Kemptville from Alberta some 45 years ago.

WI members still typically enjoy monthly meetings with an educational theme. Short courses have been replaced by ROSE (Rural Ontario Sharing Education) which presents longer seminars on diverse topics, such as cancer awareness, coping with Alzheimer disease, or financial planning.

WI branches were (and are) encouraged to collect and publish local histories, cookbooks and similar publications that promote community life.

Activism has always been part of the agenda. WI works to improve literacy throughout Canada. In addition they have successfully lobbied for safety measures now taken for granted: mandatory stopping for loading and unloading of school busses; railway crossing signs; yellow lines on highways ; clear labeling of food products and warnings to mark poisonous items.

The Traditional Opening Credo for WI Meetings, the Mary Stewart Collect

The Mary Stewart Collect is recited at the opening of WI meetings. It certainly provides words of wisdom to remind us of our responsibilities as adult human beings.

Keep us, O Lord, from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.

Let us be done with faultfinding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretence and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgement and always generous.

Let us take time for all things; make us grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences; that in the big things in life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all, and O Lord God let us not forget to be kind.



The Women's Institute Members, who attended the meeting, recited the above credo to close the February RTHS meeting.

The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa