


- 
- 18 Faye Brown
 - 19 Jim Brown
 - 20 Mary Bell Cook.
 - 21 Dorothy Fletcher
 - 22 Campbell Fletcher
 - 23 Kathleen M Garty
 - 24 Bonnie Howe
 - 25 Carol Giles
 - 26 Frank m'Carthy
 - 27 Rose m'Carthy
 - 28 Lorne Carroll
 - 29 Georgina Livingstone
 - 30 Dadi Fox Alpine
 - 31 Laina Kuraszewicz
 - 32 Dore m'Kay
 - 33 Nancy m'Gregor
 - 34 Horrie Hepater
 - 35 John Hepater
 - 36 ~~Mavis Ed~~
 - 37 Smedley me.

~~37~~

38 Annie Isabel Tait

39 Jean Jamieson

40 Steve M. Murchy

41 Norma M. Millan

42 Lorne R. Carroll

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

“Grandmother’s Legacy”

The following account was prepared by Georgina Livingstone on the occasion of receiving the honour of being recognized as the oldest member of the Crinan Women’s Institute in the year 1999.

The wonderful organization known as the Women’s Institute was not only for older ladies, but you ¹²⁹people could join as well.

In by-gone days, not all people were privileged to attend college or university. Programs and short courses were provided through our Women’s Institute such as dressmaking, millinery, conducting meetings, cooking etc. to further our education.

I married a farmer and was able to help long hours caring for livestock and doing farm duties. Chores on the farm were numerous - my favourite was caring for a flock of sheep, numbering one hundred and fifty.

My husband and I were blessed with daughter, her husband and four grandchildren, and two great grandsons.

The school I attended as a child was purchased and is now known as the Crinan WI Community Centre. The meetings are held in this building and of course, some in the homes. I have now been a member for sixty-seven years. Due to an accident six years ago, I am unable to attend all meetings, but help in any way I can.

As a great grandmother and a member, I have fond memories of the W.I. as we all worked together in harmony preparing for special events such as the Winter Picnic, bus tours, an afternoon tea, sales, card parties, displays at local fairs, and last but not least - our Special Christmas Dinner.

April 29, 2001, 3:30 p.m.

Flames lick at history

Firefighters contain fire to upper levels of museum

By PAUL CLUFF
TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

The Elgin County Pioneer Museum sustained an estimated \$100,000 damage Sunday when flames ate through the roof of the Talbot Hill structure.

Neighbours alerted a staff worker at the museum of the fire.

"I was inside writing a note to the manager when some people knocked on

the door and said the roof was on fire," said Dr. Ray Knight, who was working inside at the time.

Ian Raven, manager of the adjacent Elgin Military Museum, said it was too early to comment on the severity of the damage and the cause.

Firefighters cut holes in the roof on the east side of the building, which houses the pioneer museum. After the blaze was contained, firefighters transferred items, most of which appeared to be in good shape, next door to the military museum.

Nila Roberts-Neef and David Neef were driving east on Talbot around 3 p.m. when they saw smoke and flames coming from the top of the building.

David Neef knocked on the door and talked to Knight while his wife asked a neighbour to call 911.

"There is so much history in that build-

ing, I just hope there isn't too much damage inside," said Joan Scott, the neighbour who called 911. I'm just glad this didn't happen at night, because no-one might have noticed."

The area underneath the ceiling is temporary exhibition space. Damage restoration contractors were called in and were still on site late last night.

It was estimated there was \$30,000 in structural damage, and \$70,000 in restoration damage, said Fire Insp. Pierre Marchand



St. Thomas firefighters work on the roof of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum. (T-J photo by Paul Cluff)



Linda Hetherington, left, and Cody Robinson catalogue vases for packing Tuesday at the Elgin County Pioneer Museum. (T-J photo)

Volunteers step up to help at museum

for as long as two months for repair.

Morrell and museum assistant Georgia Sifton will use the downtime to assist with restoration, and to catalogue contents of the museum's agricultural building.

The neighbouring military museum escaped the fire, and remains open.

County council said thanks to St. Thomas Fire Department for its care

fighting the fire, and to the military museum for helping save artifacts.

Council also said thanks to scores of St. Thomas and Elgin residents who have volunteered assistance following the fire.

■ After adopting resolutions against proposed increases in medical school tuition at the University of Western Ontario, councillors said Tuesday they don't be-

lieve the university's claim that the \$10,000 fee is affordable. They adopted a new resolution calling on UWO to be more scientific in its research. Council fears student debt is a factor in the shortage of rural doctors.

After years of display, Elgin's history is being wrapped in paper and boxed up.

Following a fire April 29 at the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, employees of a damage-restoration company began Monday to pack hundreds of artifacts for safekeeping.

The items, ranging from furniture and books to buttons found

in Jumbo's stomach and a replica Victoria Cross awarded to Sgt. Ellis Sifton, are being moved offsite to secure, climate-controlled storage while the museum undergoes repair.

Acting museum manager Jill Morrell said Tuesday removal will protect artifacts from fluctuations in humidity while the building's roof is open under a tarp, and from construction dust.

"We thought it was best if we moved everything out."

And with smoke from the fire creating an acidic fallout, the artifacts also will be cleaned.

That's a huge job, said conservator Debra Seabrook.

"It's going to be days' worth of work — every item has to be wiped down.

"Some of the textiles are going to have to be washed."

Seabrook, a curator at the neighbouring Elgin Military Museum, has been contracted by the pioneer museum's insurance

company to oversee the job.

Cause of the mid-day fire which broke out in an attic over the museum's temporary exhibition space, may never be determined with absolute certainty, St. Thomas Fire Department Insp. Pierre Marchand said yesterday.

But fingers are being pointed at an electric ventilator which may have overheated.

County council heard Tuesday that the museum may be closed

Prized blue dress also escapes damage in museum fire

By TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

A letter from Sir John A. Macdonald to an aspiring local politician survived Sunday's fire at the Elgin County Pioneer Museum.

Other things, however, did not.

The museum's world was turned upside down this week as efforts began to restore it following the fire and get on with the business of welcoming visitors for the coming tourist season, which is less than a month away.

An 1858 letter from Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, to a Dr. Southwick in St. Thomas, consoling him on the loss of an election as a candidate, was one of the museum's most valuable documents. It was saved as was the prized blue ballroom dress, worn by Susan Paul of St. Thomas when she danced with the Prince of Wales. It had been stored in a freezer for safekeeping.

Other pieces of the collection, such as Bibles and portraits, were damaged by water used to fight the fire.

To preserve them, they are being frozen to avoid drying water out too slowly, said Georgia Sifton, assistant manager.

A conservator at the Elgin Military Museum is providing special advice on how to proceed with restoring documents and pieces of the collection damaged by smoke and water.

Sifton said one of the first precautions they were given was to avoid drying things in direct sunlight since it works too quickly.

"We want to dry things slowly," she said.

The museum's loss is covered by insurance. Monday and Tuesday, technicians were on hand, removing the soaked car-



Jill Morrell, left, acting manager of the Elgin Pioneer Museum, and Georgia Sifton, assistant manager, display a historic dress badly damaged in the recent fire. Experts who have examined the dress say it's doubtful it can be restored. (T-J photo)

pet from the main lobby, ejecting smoke and placing tarps over holes in the roof where the flames burned through. Repairs to the roof are scheduled to start this week when charred wood will be removed and holes patched.

"We're hoping we'll be able to open in two weeks," said Jill Morrell, acting manager.

The fire cut short the Agriculture in Elgin: Our Roots exhibit. Storing some of the artifacts in the agricultural museum,

which is located on the property, but not attached to the main building saved them from smoke and water damage, Sifton said.

Sifton said she worried when she heard about the fire about some of the exhibits being damaged.

"When you find something like that, you're all excited," she said. "Then, to find it in water ..."

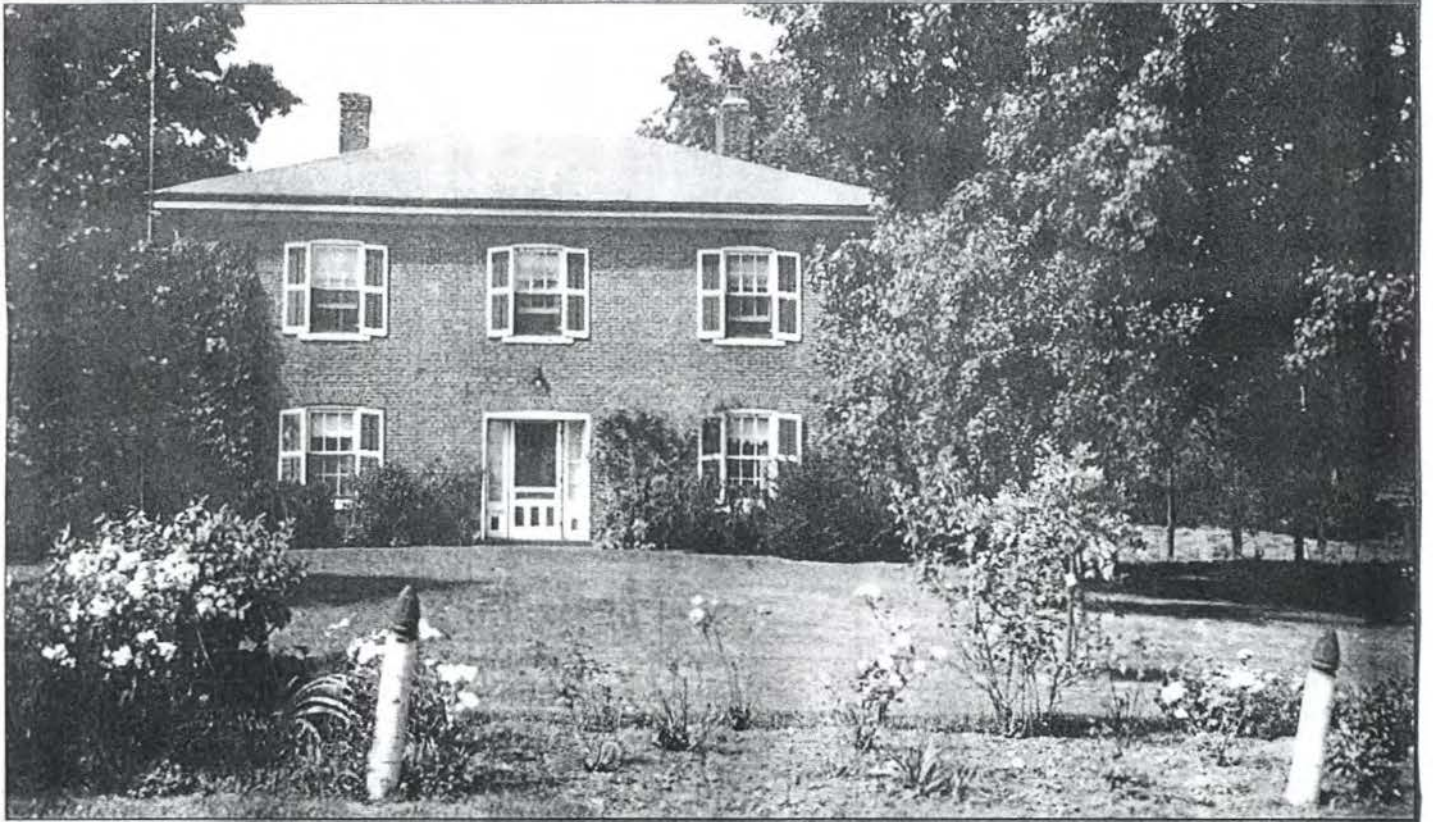
Technicians were busy working in the attic Tuesday, analyzing the damage. A specialized machine to complete eject the smoky smell from the building will be brought in soon, Morrell said. When it begins operating, no one can be inside for a short period, she added.

The adjoining Elgin Military Museum did not suffer any damage to its collection, except for odour.

Cause of the fire is still under investigation by the St. Thomas Fire Department.



Beneath the burned roof, Georgia Sifton, assistant manager at the Elgin Pioneer Museum, examines a pile of books in the attic of the building. (T-J photo)



Backus-Page House in Dunwich Township built in 1850.
Tryconnell Heritage Society are currently working to restore the home and open a museum and learning centre.



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Colonel Thomas Talbot was born in Castle Malahide, County of Dublin Ireland in the year 1771. As a young military officer, he had visited Upper Canada in the company of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. He made the decision to settle along the shore of Lake Erie and did so in 1803. Originally he received a grant of 5000 acres and established himself at Port Talbot with a house, a gristmill, and a sawmill. The business end of the Talbot Regime was Port Talbot where the "Baron" reigned, but the real heart of the settlement was St. Peter's Anglican Church and the hamlet of Port Tyrconnell. Here, four families arrived in 1809-10 from Pennsylvania.

These four families were John and Frances Pearce, Mary Storey, Leslie and Lydia Patterson, and Stephen and Anne Backus. As Talbot proteges, they were allowed to expand their holdings on easy terms. In return, they built large houses, barns, and St. Peter's besides luring other farmers and merchants to Tyrconnell.

In contrast to hoe-farmers and shepherds, the Pearce-Patterson Family farmed Yankee style. Oxen followed by horses supplied the power; scrub cattle were replaced by milking shorthorns for butter, cheese, and beef; sheep provided lamb's wool and lanolin. For fowl, hens and eggs, turkeys, geese and ducks were kept. Crops included marsh hay, oats, barley, and corn for grains. Money was scarce but little was needed.

The Pearce, Patterson, and Backus Families soon discarded their primitive log houses for modern frame and brick houses. Andrew Backus inherited the Storey holdings and in 1850 constructed the lovely brick home on Lakeview Line. This was the home to his wife, Mary Jane, and a dozen children.

The house of Georgian design was the first brick dwelling in Dunwich Township. It required 72,000 bricks, which were made and fired on the farm. The home was constructed of virgin oak and black ash beams and joists. Three original fireplaces were hand-worked, with paneling and mantels of black walnut. The living room was finished completely with black walnut trim and doors. Floors were built with one and one-half inch black ash and Georgian pine; tongue and grooved by hand. The family enjoyed their first meal in the house on the 13th of June 1851.

Morley and Grace Page, the last residents of the home, were both descendants of pioneer families and had a keen appreciation of this farm and of the Talbot Settlement. Many Dunwich residents fondly recall the house and gardens lovingly cared for by Morley and Grace. The Ministry of Natural Resources is the present owner, having acquired the property from the Pages in 1965.

The Tyrconnell Heritage Society aims to obtain ownership of the house from the Ministry for the purposes of preserving the natural history and culture of the heart of the Talbot Settlement. This site will become a center for research, passive recreation, tourism, education, and a venue for local artisans. It will be accomplished in stages through widespread partnership of members and community organizations. We all have much to learn from the past. By sharing our historical and environmental community, we seek to enrich the lives and to pass on to our children an appreciation of the value of history.



Five trailblazers fought to have women called persons

On Oct. 18, 1929, women were declared "persons" under the law thanks to the trailblazing efforts of the Famous Five — Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung and Henrietta Muir Edwards.

These renegade women, all from Alberta, successfully petitioned the British Privy Council to grant Canadian women constitutional status under the British North America Act. The landmark achievement is known as the Persons Case.

The legal victory, however, came after a long fight.

It all began in 1917 when a male lawyer objected to appearing in Judge Emily Murphy's court. He pointed to a clause in the British North America Act that said only "qualified persons" were eligible for the Senate. Such persons, he argued, had always been male.

His point: If a woman was ineligible for the Senate, how could she sit as a judge?

In Ottawa, five successive governments refused to change the law. Undeterred by political apathy, the Famous Five took their fight to the Supreme Court of Canada. However, on April 24, 1928, the Supreme Court turned them down.

Their only remaining option was to persuade the British Privy Council, the highest court in the British Empire, that women should be allowed to serve in Canada's Senate.

On Oct. 18, 1929, the five male members of the Privy Council declared that Canadian women were indeed "persons" and eligible to sit in the Senate — thereby paving the way for women's participation in every aspect of public life.

FAMOUS FIVE AT A GLANCE

Emily Murphy (1868-1933)

In 1916, Emily Murphy became Canada's first female judge — and the first woman appointed to the bench anywhere in the British Empire. Born in Cooskstown, Ont., and later settling in Edmonton, she was also a noted author, writing under the pen name Janey Canuck.



"Whenever I don't know whether to fight or not, I fight."

Louise McKinney (1868-1931)

Born in Frankville, Ont., Louise (Crummy) McKinney was the first woman to sit in the Alberta legislature in 1917 — and the first female elected official in the British Empire.



"The purpose of a woman's life is just the same as the purpose of a man's life: that she may make the best possible contribution to her generation."

Irene Parlby (1868-1965)

Irene Parlby immigrated to Alberta from London, England, in 1896. Elected to the Alberta legislature in 1921, she helped push through 18 bills to improve the plight of women and children.



"Evolution cannot be brought about by the use of dynamite."

Nellie McClung (1873-1951)

Nellie (Mooney) McClung helped Manitoba women win the right to vote in 1916. Originally a teacher from Chatsworth, Ont., she was elected to the Alberta legislature in 1921.



"Never retract, never explain, never apologize — get things done and let them howl."

Henrietta Muir Edwards (1849-1931)

Montreal-born Henrietta Muir Edwards founded the forerunner to the YWCA in 1875 and helped establish the National Council of Women in 1893. Passionate about women's rights, she also published Canada's first magazine for working women.



"We sought to establish the individuality of women. It was an uphill fight."

MILESTONES IN CANADIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY

- ▶ **1867:** Dr. Emily Stowe of Toronto becomes first woman doctor to practise in Canada.
- ▶ **1916:** Emily Murphy of Edmonton becomes the country's first female judge.
- ▶ **1918:** Women, excluding aboriginals, are given the federal vote.
- ▶ **1921:** Agnes Macphail is the first woman elected as a Member of Parliament.
- ▶ **1929:** British Privy Council rules that women are persons.
- ▶ **1960:** Aboriginal women given right to vote.
- ▶ **1982:** Bertha Wilson is appointed as the first female judge on the Supreme Court of Canada.
- ▶ **1993:** Kim Campbell becomes Canada's first female prime minister.
- ▶ **2000:** Famous Five monument unveiled in Ottawa.

January 9, 2003

Women's Institute declining.

The organization, more than 100 years old, has done a lot of good, but, relentlessly, its membership is shrinking and aging.

BY SANDRA COULSON
Free Press Lifestyles Reporter

The pasteurizing of milk is so routine these days that many people have forgotten why it's important.

White lines down the centre of provincial highways are just one of those things that have always been there, right?

Music on the school curriculum is just a regular part of growing up.

But to the Women's Institute, these are markers not only of social progress, but also of its history.

The Women's Institute is a rural organization now in its second century.

Its membership is shrinking and aging along with the shrinking and aging rural population in Canada.

But it claims a proud history of making a difference to the everyday lives of people across Canada and overseas.

The Women's Institute story begins in 1897 in what is now Stoney Creek, southeast of Hamilton.

A broad-minded farmer named Erland Lee invited the social reformer Adelaide

Hoodless to come from Hamilton to speak about the need for an educational society for poorly educated rural women.

After the speech, Hoodless and Lee sat in the Lees' dining room, drawing up the constitution and bylaws for this new organization while Lee's wife Janet wrote it out in longhand. Erland Lee was treasurer of the Farmers' Institute and the new group took the parallel name of Women's Institute.

Branches sprang up quickly after the founding.

Their aim was to improve living conditions of families and communities. Women were informed about sanitation, child-raising techniques and other matters of "domestic economy."

Pasteurization was high on the agenda because Hoodless's infant son had died from drinking infected milk.

Johns joined the branch in Elimville near Exeter in 1949, the year after it was formed, because of the opportunity to learn, enjoy fellowship with other women and pick up homemaking skills.

Recently, she travelled to England and Scotland, where she visited branches. It gave her a sense of the worldwide ties. "You kind of feel part of something bigger."

Jane Dearing joined the Crediton branch 38 years ago to get to know her neighbours.

"My mother belonged when I was a teenager. I changed townships and wanted to get to know the rest of the women in the area and thought that was a good way."

She likes the social aspect of the group and learning old skills updated to new times or hearing speakers on modern issues such as phone scams.

"We try and keep abreast of the times because the times surely are changing and it's hard to keep up with it."

When she joined the Crediton branch, it had 35 members, but only 14 are active today.

"We're having a hard job finding younger members because younger mothers are so busy. I have a daughter busy with dance and hockey

and they just don't have the time to come out.

"What the future brings, I'm just not sure. There are so many other things out there you can join. I just know I'm going to keep going as long as it's going, because it's done me a lot of good."

As lobbying grew for this and other causes, provincial and national bodies were formed. Branches spread to Scotland and England and the Women's Institute joined the Associated Country Women of the World, based in Britain.

But accomplishments are tinged with some sadness.

"We're getting to celebrate something we're never going

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CAUSES

Since 1897, the Women's Institute has advocated to have:

- ▶ bread wrapped
- ▶ white lines painted down the centre of provincial highways
- ▶ fluorescent paint on the sides of rail cars
- ▶ garments labelled for quality
- ▶ music on the school curriculum
- ▶ a law forcing traffic to stop when a school bus is stopped
- ▶ breathalyser and blood tests for drivers
- ▶ poison containers marked
- ▶ milk pasteurized
- ▶ dental and medical inspections in schools
- ▶ war memorials set up