

TWEED MUIR

HISTORY

OF

Wallacetown W.I

This BOOK is NO 8.

This VOLUME START at
2004 to 2008.

THE TWEEDSMUIR HISTORY.

OF WALLACETOWN.

The history of Wallacetown is the property of the local
Women's Institute of Wallacetown.

This book Volume No. ~~8~~ of the Tweedsmuir History of
Wallacetown District.

This Volume starts in 200~~4~~⁴ to 200~~8~~⁸

The Curator Compling this book is Helen Van Brenk.

Photos taken by Helen Van Brenk

Nov 27th in The London Free Press
2001

Women's Institute logs 104 years working for community

Your kids' pyjamas are fire retardant because a heartsick Women's Institute member in Southwestern Ontario didn't want another mother to suffer the tragic loss she did.

The white lines running down the middle of highways: you can thank Women's Institute lobbyists for that safety feature.

Credit them also for making sure your loaf of bread comes to you wrapped, so the germs don't get in.

You drink safe, pasteurized milk because WI founder Adelaide Hunter Hoodless pushed it into law after the death of her infant son.

Today's members are urging the province to offer free live-stock vaccines in areas where rabies is rampant. They're promoting rural literacy and farm safety.

The volunteer helping out at your local hospital's night re-

DEBORA VAN BRENK



COUNTY VOICES

ception desk is apt to be a WI member. So is the group catering that rural funeral.

If community commitment is what you're looking for, these folks have been ahead of the pack for most of their lives.

But this mainstay of rural family life has changed since our grandmothers' day.

Back when they began 104 years ago, Women's Institute meetings were pretty much the only place outside of church where rural women could escape the isolation of farm life and educate each other about family health and current events.

These were all-in-one sup-

port and political forums, steeped in tea and home-baked cookies.

Their emphasis today on women's health and family information is as strong as ever. But there are fewer to hear — and to pass on — the message.

Cars have made physical isolation less of a problem, public information can be found at the click of a computer mouse and mothers racing home from work to ferry the young ones from hockey practice to music lessons aren't likely to attend a mid-week afternoon meeting with friends.

The London area has 70 Women's Institute groups totalling 1,114 members. The numbers were "probably double that" when Fran Hyatt first joined the group 28 years ago.

Hyatt is head of the Mt. Brydges branch and president of the London and Area WI, which includes Middlesex County and a sizable chunk of

the surrounding counties.

Their good works are prodigious — from April 2000 to April 2001, they logged 68,114 hours of volunteer time, up 8,000 from the year before.

"Women needed to be educated to make their homes and families educated and healthier."

Member Marg Eberle

They drive people to appointments, raise money to equip local hospitals and build wells in developing countries, run fitness programs for seniors and deliver meals to shut-ins.

They run day-long health and education sessions for women in their communities.

Women's Institutes thought globally and acted locally before environmental groups appropriated that phrase for

themselves.

"They're a wonderfully dedicated group of women," Hyatt says.

But fewer. And older.

Most members are 60-plus, Hyatt says. "I'm probably the second-youngest member in the branch and I'm no young chicken."

Although the district saw 29 new members join the ranks last year, they lost more than they gained.

So are these groups headed the way of the quilting bee and wringer washer?

"I think only time can tell that," she says.

Marg Eberle, of Highgate in Chatham-Kent, is more optimistic. Her branch gained four new members this year.

"The original goal was that women needed to be educated to make their homes and families educated and healthier and all that good stuff. And that's what we're still doing today," says Eberle, a director

for the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and a former president of the provincial body.

"We're still basically an educational organization," she says.

"Part of our job (to entice new members) is to show what we have done and show that we are relevant."

She says it's a struggle to get members just to record their volunteer hours because they just don't want to boast.

"They don't advertise themselves. We're the best-kept secret in the world."

Without a lot of fanfare, these women are making a difference to each other and their communities.

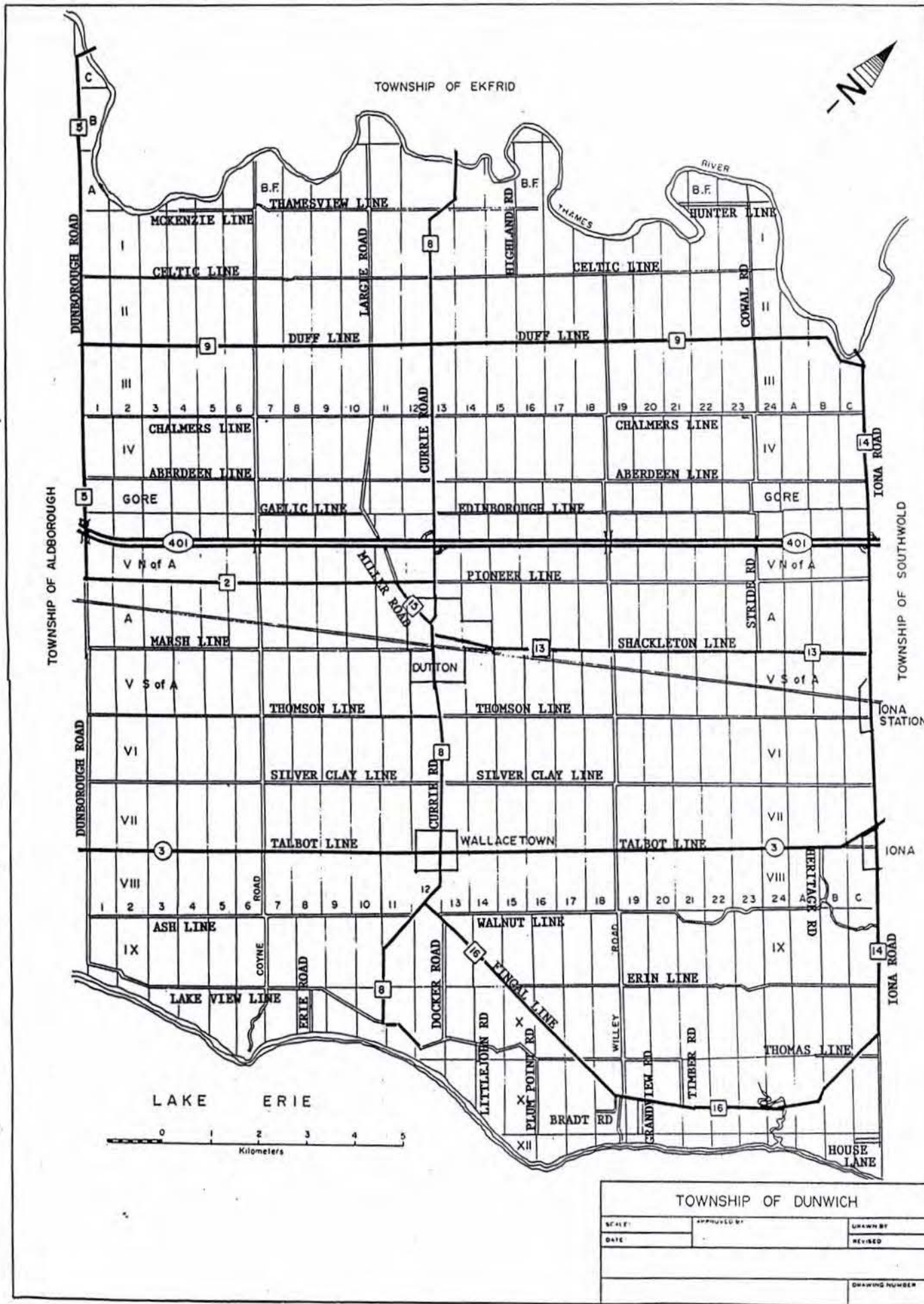
When an organization this crucial to rural life is struggling to find members and support, it's no time for misplaced modesty.

Women's Institutes have more than earned the right to blow their own horns.



Map 1
1877

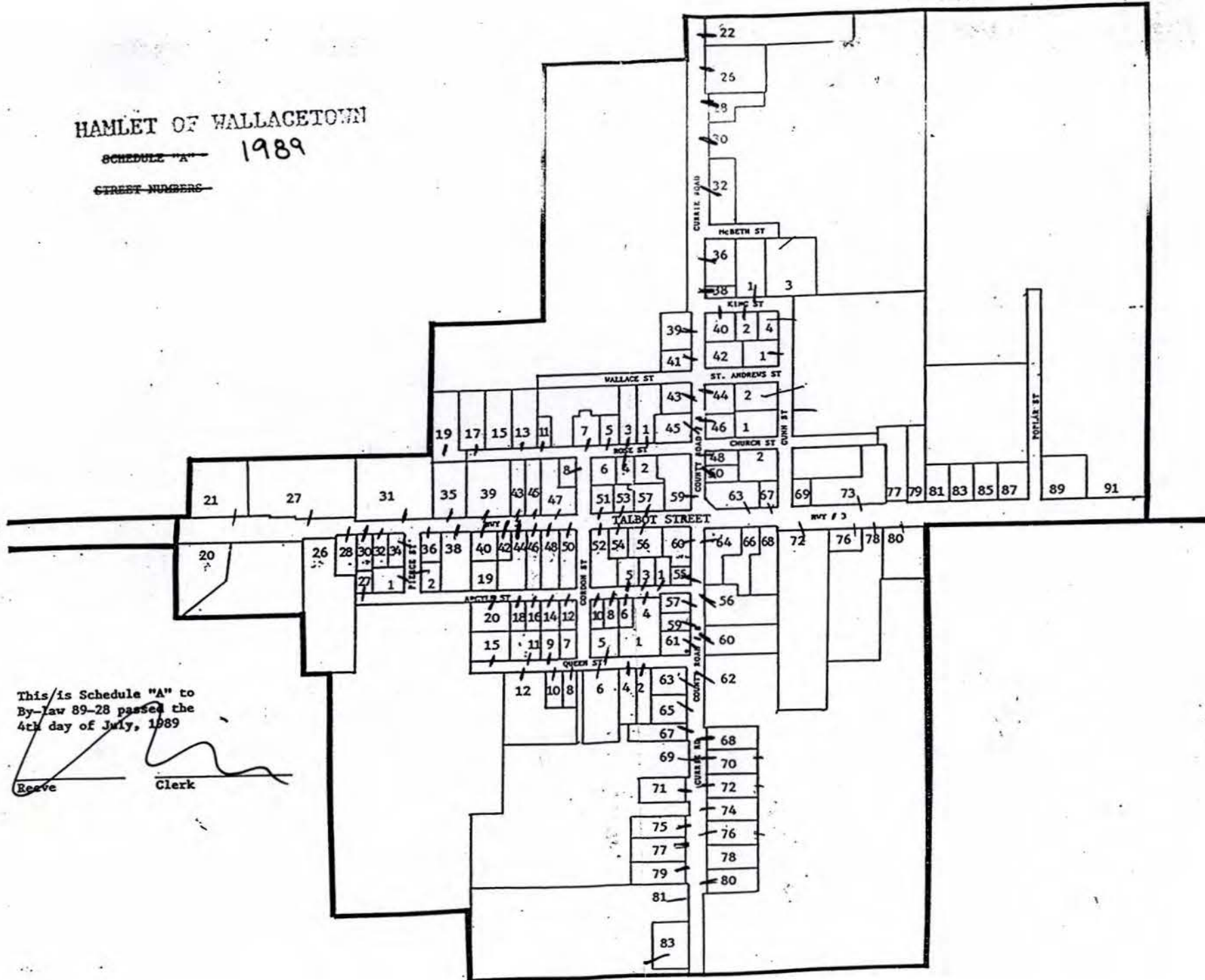
Reduced Copy of
MAP 002



HAMLET OF WALLACETOWN

SCHEDULE "A" 1989

STREET NUMBERS



This is Schedule "A" to
By-law 89-28 passed the
4th day of July, 1989

Reeve

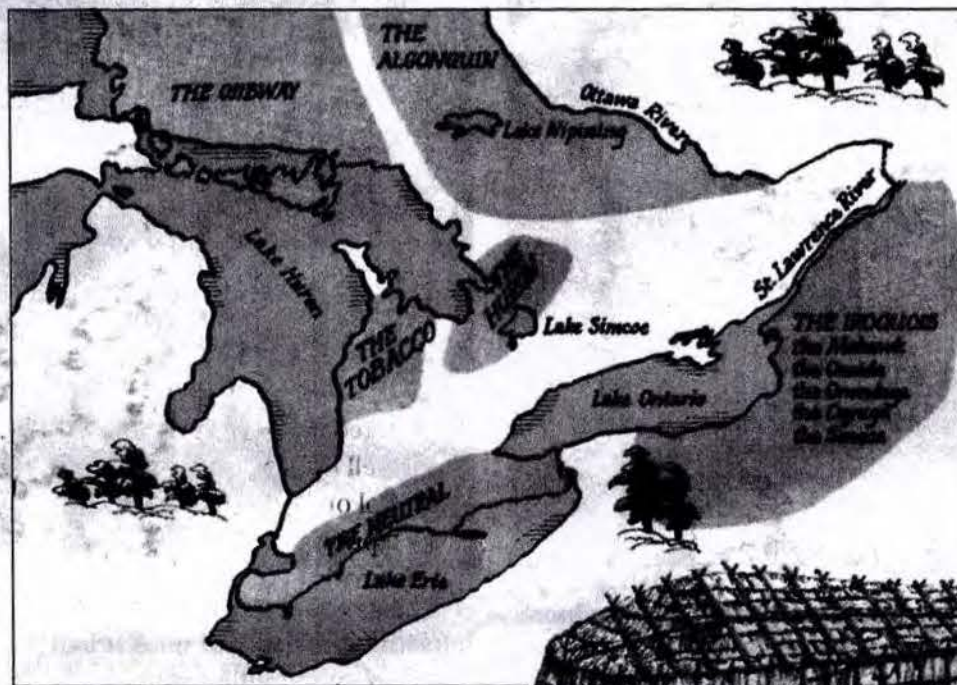
Clerk

The Neutral Indians of Southwold

By Al Kirk (Part 1 of two parts)

Southwold: Despite everything that has been written about the Neutral Indians over the years, they largely remain a mystery. This area's early inhabitants are surrounded by as much legend as they are fact. Yet what is known about the Neutrals is fascinating, not only for what we know but how we know it.

Extensive archaeological digs carried out across this part of Ontario have yielded much information. Although the *Southwold Earthworks*, near Iona, had been first surveyed in 1835, a 1976 excavation provided a real understanding of the population and the buildings that occupied the site before 1550. Archaeological surveys on Talbot Creek and Catfish Creek have resulted in the discovery and investigation of 169 sites with 7,500 artifacts recovered. Other discoveries have been made in the area around Long Point. First hand accounts of life at a Neutral Village survive as well. Correspondence between early Christian missionaries that visited the



Coloured areas show lands occupied by native tribes prior to European contact.

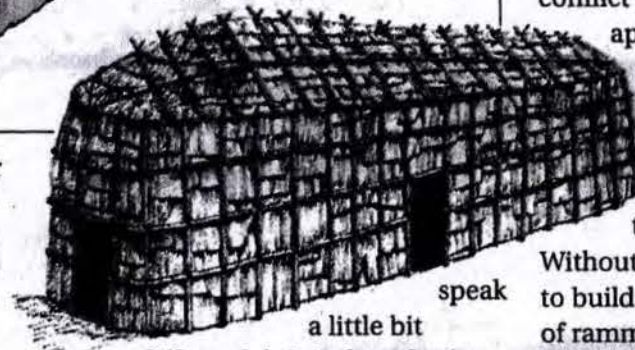
The Neutrals were definitely not the peaceful people that their name would suggest. They received the moniker from Samuel de Champlain. While traveling to Georgian Bay in 1615, he met the Neutrals on one of the rare occasions that they were not at war. At the time, the Huron and Iroquois had been engaging in a long-standing conflict that the Neutrals had successfully managed to avoid. Yet, proof that the Neutrals were often in conflict with other groups is readily apparent when visiting the *Southwold Earthworks*.

The inhabitants of the Southwold community went to a lot of trouble to protect themselves from attack.

Without modern tools, they managed to build a series of elaborate defenses of rammed earth and wood. Just whom the Neutrals were protecting themselves against is not altogether clear. But Professor Robert Pearce,

Neutrals and sent reports back to their superiors in Europe reveal things that archaeology alone never could.

So who were the Neutral Indians? Well, they were similar to the Huron Indians in many ways and were known as the Attawandaron by their Indian neighbours. The word Attawandaron means 'people who



speak a little bit differently'. It is thought the Neutrals got this name because the Hurons and the Neutrals spoke a different dialect of the same language.

Continued On Page 7

Neutral Indians Southwold

Continued From Page 3

ive Director of the London
m of Archaeology, says there is
ce to show that the Neutrals,
iving in the area, were engaged
ngoing conflict with native
s that lived in what is now Ohio
ichigan.

is still a mystery why the
ds would be traveling such long
ces just to attack one another
arce suggests that trade,
cally in a type of flint known as
may have been one reason. The
als were known for being adept
ing chert into tools, weapons
ecorative objects. Many of the
eads found in Elgin County
re years are capable of being
back to a chert out cropping
near Long Point. Perhaps the
als were attempting to keep this
ble resource for themselves and
ed on trading only finished
cts.

Whatever the reason for the
ct, around the year 1550, the
als were forced to abandon the
The archaeological evidence
s that the last few years the
als inhabited in what is now
County was not a happy one.
in remains found at both the

Southwold and Lawson sites suggest
that some of the Neutrals had been
wounded in battle. Other skeletal
remains suggest that the prisoners
taken by the Neutrals were tortured
before being killed.

By 1615, it appears that all the
Neutrals had departed for what is now
called Niagara and western Lake
Ontario. At this point, the first written
descriptions of how the Neutrals lived
their daily lives becomes apparent.
One missionary describes, in
gruesome detail, how prisoners were
tortured. The torture he describes
seems to roughly match the
archaeological evidence. There are
other points where the archaeological
finds and the historical record seem to
agree as well. Missionaries describe
the reverence that Neutrals had for
bears. There's even an account of the
Neutrals keeping a bear in a cage in
their village.

Archaeological evidence confirms
that respect was given to bears.
Normally the bones of a captured
animal would be smashed open so the
marrow could be eaten. But bear
bones were never treated in this
fashion. So while it is known that the
Neutrals believed the bear held special
significance, it may never be known
what part it played in their religion.

Both the archaeological and
written records show that the Neutrals
were very efficient when it came to
finding food. Shells and nuts show

that they were expert at foraging for
whatever was in season. There is
ample evidence that the Neutrals had
the ability to store some types of food.
Clay pots would be fashioned and
placed in a hole in the ground. They
also farmed, with evidence of the
cultivation of squash corn and beans.
But perhaps the Neutrals owed much
of their health to the presence of
readily available game. Missionaries
noted the excellent hunting
opportunities available to the
Neutrals. Wild turkey was plentiful as
well as migrating birds. The
missionaries also noted that the
Neutrals, instead of taking one deer at
a time, would build an elaborate
enclosure and herd animals into it.

As for the burial of the dead, the
Neutrals believed that the spirit stayed
with the dead person's body in death
as in life. In the wintertime, the body
may have been left in the longhouse
with its relatives until spring. While
some bodies are buried individually,
others were buried together at special
sites. After decomposition had fully
taken place, the bones would
sometimes be brought back into the
living quarters. It seems that every few

years the Neutrals would gather up all
the bones that had accumulated and
place them in special burial pits. One
exception seems to be with young
children. These were buried directly
underneath the living quarters. Some
archaeologists believe that this may
have been an attempt to transfer the
spirit of a dead child into a child that
was not yet born.

The Ontario Historical Society

presents the

Scadding Award of Excellence

to the

*Curators of the Women's Institutes Tweedsmuir
History*

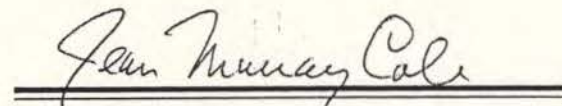
in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of history

Willowdale, Ontario - June 13, 2004



President





Honours and Awards Committee



Scadding Award of Excellence

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario congratulates the past and present Branch Tweedsmuir Curators on being awarded the Scadding Award of Excellence by the Ontario Historical Society.

The Scadding Award of Excellence recognizes a historical society or heritage group that has made an outstanding contribution to the field of history.

A copy of the certificate presented at the Provincial Conference 2004 and accepted by Peggy McLeod, Provincial Tweedsmuir Curator on behalf of FWIO Branch Curators is attached.

The task of preserving the history of your community enriches the lives of current and future generations.

FWIO applauds the Branch Curators on winning this prestigious award.

Congratulations!

*Elsie Stephenson
FWIO President*