

# Victoria Day spirit hits at Backus-Page

**BY MARG BERRY**  
TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF  
WALLACETOWN — Queen Victoria brought Victoria Day spirit to Dutton/Dunwich, when she alighted from her carriage at the historic Backus-Page House museum, south of here Saturday.

The crowd in attendance soon learned that proper royal protocol would be essential for

those wishing an audience with the queen in her tent, where she was partaking of afternoon tea.

After being escorted past rows of onlookers to the royal tent by Col. Thomas Talbot (Rev. Nick Wells), Victoria (Joanne Reynolds of Markham, Ont.), took her seat at the tea table, assisted by Lord Elgin (Dennis Johnson) and Lady Elgin (Ruthan Johnson). The colonel

then doffed his hat and led three rousing cheers for "Victoria Regina."

The West Elgin Secondary School brass quintet struck up God Save the Queen, and Henry Dryfhout, president of the Tyrconnel Historical Society, prayed for a blessing on the queen and her subjects.

MPP Steve Peters read official greetings from Hillary Weston, the queen's representative in Ontario.

"It is most appropriate that you have chosen the Backus-Page House to visit, since it was built during your reign," Peters said. He thought the timing of the visit was fitting because this year the Queen Mother marks her 100th birthday.

By now the crowd gathered at the Backus-Page House was beginning to believe the queen, whose birthday is celebrated Victoria Day weekend, had actually arrived.

But Wells reported that, in actual fact, Queen Victoria never came to Canada. The longest reigning British monarch to date (1839 - 1901) sent her son instead to Canada in 1860-1861, to visit Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Niagara Falls, Toronto and St. Thomas, where he attended a

dance.

Peters said the only reigning monarch ever to visit Elgin county was Queen Elizabeth, who spent the night at Red Tail Golf Club in June, 1997.

Festivities at Backus-Page House Saturday included tea on the lawn, announcements by Dutton town crier Dave Phillips, black history story telling by Shannon Prince, curator of the Buxton National Historical Site and Museum, located near Chatham, Ont., an art show by artist Jenny Phillips and music by flutist Michelle Anderson of Oakville, Ont., granddaughter of Morley Page, the last person to own the Backus-Page House as a private residence.

The occasion brought out some direct descendants of Morley Page. Bill Page of Toronto is the son of Morley.

"My dad bought this place in 1924. I was born in that house and raised here. I left when I joined the army in 1945. Morley Page's maple syrup was know all over southwestern Ontario. We had 96 acres of sugar bush. We used to sell it 65 years ago for a dollar a gallon. Mother cooked it on the stove. My father sold it at the market in St. Thomas."



**Michelle Anderson of Oakville, Ont., granddaughter of Morley Page, the last individual to own the historic Backus-Page House in Dutton/Dunwich, entertains with her flute during Victoria Day celebrations at the museum house. (T-J photo)**

Anderson, granddaughter of Morley Page, used to come to the house every summer as a child.

"I remember the tree and the swing, the pump, the barn, the woodpile and the cats. And my Grandmother Grace's beautiful gardens," she said.



**Queen Victoria (Joanne Reynolds) accepts a bouquet of flowers in her royal tea tent from Alyssa Holden during special Victoria Day celebrations at the Backus-Page House in Dutton/Dunwich. (T-J photo)**



*Queen Victoria, Alyssa Holden, Lady Elgin.*



*Col Thomas Talbot, Queen Victoria, Lady Elgin & Bonnie Rowae.*

Queen Victoria Tea.



Colonel Thomas Talbot  
(Nick Wells)

Majest Queen Victoria  
(Joanne Reynolds)

Hex

m.p.p. Steve Peters



Colonel Thomas Talbot.

Serving Tea.



Beatrice Hoglund & Ruth Wight, 3, Needy Littlejohn  
4 Iris Page.

# BIRTHDAY GIRL:



Col. Thomas Talbot (Rev. Nick Wells) escorts Queen Victoria (Joanne Reynolds) to her royal tea at the Backus-Page House during special Victoria Day celebrations at the museum house. More coverage on page 6. (T-J photo)



Ruby M'Fugan and back to us Marion Page. serving tea.



Kay Waite.

Making up fancy sandwiches was members of the Wallace town W.I.



Louie Salcey, Kay Waite, Sally McIntyre, Helen Van Buren