



Different uniforms of the Royal American Regiment. See Page 4 for more information on the Regiment.

Dedicated to Preserving the History of Glengarry

Guest Speaker: Susan Robertson will speak on preserving community histories. In her own words ... "Ontario Women's Institutes started compiling local histories in the late 1940's and 1950's. Each Branch was encouraged to start History books to record the local histories of their village and rural community. These smaller centres wouldn't have their histories recorded if locals didn't do it. Where were the one room schools located? Where were the saw mills and who built them? What did farmers grow and where was their market? Who were the families that lived on these farms up to 200 years ago and are their descendants still in the area? Questions like these and many more need to be recorded. The Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories do just this."

Susan Robertson is the current Tweedsmuir Coordinator for the Bainsville Women's Institute and for the Glengarry District Women's Institute. The Glengarry books record only Women's Institute information. Local history is to be kept up in the Branch Books

Susan Robertson grew up in Southern Ontario, married Malcolm Robertson, and moved to his family farm in the early 1970's. They raised four children here - Dave, Meagan, Shawn and Ian. Susan is an active volunteer in the community with the Women's

Next Meeting

- ☑ **Date/Time: Thursday, Nov 4, 8pm**
- ☑ **Place: The Church on the Hill, Alexandria**
- ☑ **Speaker: Susan Robertson will speak on Preserving Community History**

Institute, the church, 'Opportunity Knox' the church store in Lancaster and the 'Quilt of Belonging' which is a huge quilted piece of art that travels all across Canada.

As Susan says "With a third grandson on the way, I spend lots of time baby sitting my boys."

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We encourage the use of electronic mail to help us control costs. Please submit your email address if you are comfortable with this format. You will also be able to enjoy the newsletter in full colour rather than just B&W.



Tweedsmuir History Books (or Tweedsmuir as they are commonly known) capture and preserve local community history in a unique way. They vary in form from a simple scrapbook to an elaborate series of volumes bound in leather, wood or the more formal blue-and-gold cover. Tweedsmuir's comprise a variety of information; for example, they usually include a history of the:

- local Women's Institute Branch
- earliest settlers in an area
- agricultural practices and individual farms
- industries that formed the basis of the local economy
- social institutions and public buildings, such as churches, schools and community centers
- local personalities, such as war veterans
- and much, much more!

Beginning in 1962, under the direction of the first provincial Tweedsmuir Curator, Mrs. R.C. Walker, the first Tweedsmuir Handbook was printed. The Handbook served as a guide for local curators and outlined how to go about compiling a local history book. This set of practical guidelines provided everything from the official first pages to the table of contents, to details on the type of paper, adhesives and covers to use. Tweedsmuir History Manuals are still compiled by the FWIO (Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario) Provincial Tweedsmuir Coordinator for use by Branch, District and Area Curators.

The History of Tweedsmuir Books

The idea of WI members writing the histories of farms, buildings and places of interest at the local level had begun in the mid-1920s. In 1925, a special standing committee of the FWIO was formed known as the Committee for Historical Research and Current Events. The Committee suggested that a little more time be given to the study of local history to gain a greater insight into the lives and thoughts of our ancestors.

By the mid-1930s, Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada, took a great interest in the Women's Institutes in this country. While at a meeting of the Athens Women's Institute, Lady Tweedsmuir stressed the need for preserving the history of our Canadian people. She suggested that Ontario Women's Institute Branches keep local history books as the WIs in England did, where she had been a devoted member.

In 1940, a recently widowed Lady Tweedsmuir was delighted to approve that these histories should be named after her late husband, and so originated "The Tweedsmuir Village History Books."

Because documenting local history was seen as a fitting project to mark the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the Women's Institute movement, a campaign was launched in 1945 encouraging every WI Branch in Ontario to prepare a history of their local community before the 1947 celebrations took place.

This proved a popular project, and these local histories were officially named Tweedsmuir History Books in 1947. A decade later the provincial Board reported that 989 Branches across the province were compiling Tweedsmuir History Books. A great boost to these histories was the appointment of FWIO's first provincial Tweedsmuir History Curator in 1957, Mrs. R.C. Walker. By 1964 she reported

that all levels of the organization had begun to take Tweedsmuir Books seriously, with well over 1,100 Branch histories recorded.

Mrs. Walker introduced Tweedsmuir Workshops to the volunteer curators across the province to teach the fundamentals of compiling local history books. To supplement these workshops, she released the first Tweedsmuir Handbook in 1962. "The Women's Institutes," writes Dr. Linda Ambrose in *For Home and Country: The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes in Ontario*, "were the undisputed authorities in matters of local history, and in 1967 there was a real appetite for all the history they could serve up."

The Institutes' expertise in compiling local history was central to the centennial celebrations in most rural communities in 1967. Ethel Chapman, Editor of the Women's Institute publication *Home and Country*, said: "They are having a wonderful time. And they are teaching the younger generations Canada's history in a painless and delightful way."

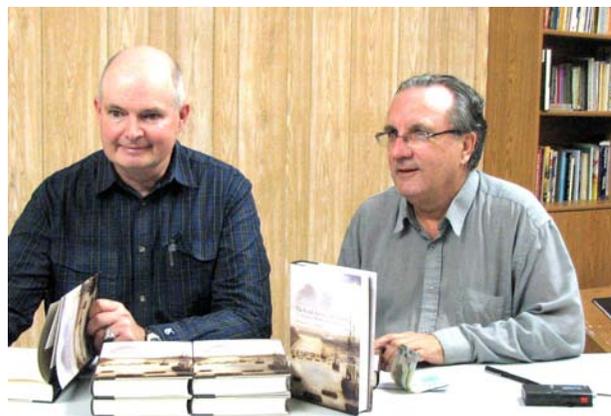
Today, the structure of the Women's Institute is such that Tweedsmuir History Curators at all levels – Branch, District, Area and province – continue to compile Tweedsmuir Books which document WI events and history particular to their community and area. In addition, Curators continue to provide Tweedsmuir workshops and to exhibit the Tweedsmuir History Books at opportune WI and community events for both members and the general public.

From the website of the FWIO (www.fwio.on.ca)

The Royal American Regiment: An Atlantic Microcosm, 1755-1772

Last month's guest speaker was Alexander (Sandy) V. Campbell who spoke about the Royal American Regiment: Glengarry County's Other Military Founder.

More information on this interesting and intriguing period is contained in Sandy's latest publication, shown below. This book is available from David G. Anderson Books in Williamstown, at 613-347-7192 or email: david@andersonbooks.net



Sandy Campbell and David Anderson

Brenda Kennedy gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the Nor'Westers & Loyalist Museum, as follows:

The 2010 season at the Museum was launched in May with the Rodney Brown concert. An acoustic musician from Thunder Bay whose lyrics tell the stories of the Fur trade. Though audience attendance was small, all ears were drawn to the quiet magic of his guitar, banjo and voice. It was fitting that he should perform next to the grand canoe and portrait of Simon Fraser.

Also in May, the Museum partnered with the manor House to hold an Education Day, a variety of workshops, games and displays reflecting Loyalist Pioneer life were held in both locations, involving about 70 students from 2 local public schools. This was the first of several groups from Williamstown, Alexandria, Maxville, Brockville and Kingston.

Even before the Museum officially opened to the public, a group of volunteers took part in a sewing circle, where they continued to work on several garments for children based on Loyalist patterns. It was incredible to see these skilled women with their high tech computerized sewing machines constructing the not-so-simple clothing from over 200 years ago.

June marked the opening of the first exhibit, 'From the Collection', in which recent acquisitions, selected items from the museum collection, and those borrowed from members of the community were featured. Some of the displays related to the historical period and events represented by the museum. For example, the recent donation of a 1916 edition of David Thompson's Narrative by the McDonell family. It is a highly-prized editor's copy signed by J.B. Tyrell and the museum is delighted to have it in the collection.

In July, Mohawk historian and activist Douglas George took to the podium and delivered an enlightening and challenging lecture to a large audience, on the history of his Akwesasne ancestors and their involvement with the War of 1812.

Also in July, Royce MacGillivray was present to sign copies of his recently-published Glengarry Dictionary of Biography. We have a copy of the book in the giftshop and it is much consulted by visitors to the museum, and some have purchased it.

Early in the season, John Woodrow re-designed the museum website, giving it an elegant look and a more dynamic quality that features recent events, visitors and news. There you can read about Rick Nash, famous canoe-builder who came to look at both canoes on display, or the King's Royal Regiment Beltplate that is featured in a recently published American book.

With August, came the 199th Williamstown Fair bringing lots of visitors in to view the Art and Photo Exhibit. This year, student curator, Laura Constantinescu organized a very profitable pie sale – the revival of a tradition that for many years was held by the Picnic Grove Women's Institute.

This year's very popular and well-attended Wine & Cheese Fundraiser also marked the opening of a second exhibit, The Old School, commemorating the more than 100 years history of the building as the Williamstown Public School. The exhibit was a collaborative effort between several volunteers and museum staff. Again, much of the material on display was loaned by members of the community, some of whom had

attended the school from the 30's to the 50's. This event brought people into the museum to share their memories and stories, a rich and touching experience. For the first time, the dedicated Wine and Cheese Committee headed by Mac Edwards, rented a large marquis for the backyard and experimented with grouping certain cheeses and wines together. Apart from a few mosquitoes and a slight drizzle, a good time was had by all and the event was deemed a financial success.

Sometime in midsummer, Porter Historical Restoration Co. began work on the building. The Township of South Glengarry had retained their services to do some urgently needed repairs. Thus far, they have done a superb re-building of the 3 chimneys using recycled bricks of the period, scraped and painted the soffits and windows as well as completing some interior repairs on the second floor. The museum is most grateful to both Township's Ewen MacDonald and Glen Porter for this wonderful work.



In between events and throughout the 2 months of Laura's grant, we managed to clean and organize the workroom, catalogue some photographs and upgrade some of the signage for the permanent exhibits. On September 2nd, Laura's last day, we were treated to a visit and informal tour of the museum by Canada's Auditor-General, Sheila Fraser.

Also in September, thanks to Wendy Wert, the Bainsville and Picnic Grove Women's Institute held their meeting in the temporary exhibit room. Five speakers shared their stories of growing up in Williamstown including school days – so the exhibit formed an appropriate backdrop.

This past year, the Museum has seen an expansion of new volunteers with great ideas and great energy for future projects and events. Under the watchful eye of Gay Hamilton who brings a wealth of experience in fundraising to the position of Chair, and the vigorous interest and active involvement in museum operations by Allan Macdonell, we look forward to next year's Bicentennial celebrations.

Brenda Kennedy, Curator

(Editors Note: At a previous meeting of the GHS Executive there was a decision to forego the reading of the minutes during the General Meeting, but instead, make them available via email and the newsletter. In order for these minutes to be entered into the formal record, they still need approval at the next General Meeting.)

Minutes of October 7, 2010 GHS Meeting
(held at the Church on the Hill in Alexandria)

The president, Allan Macdonell of the GHS opens the meeting by presenting the agenda.

Richard Bleile, the recording secretary, refers only to the highlights of the last meeting on September 3rd which featured Sheila Fraser. It is noted that the GHS Executive has passed a decision to no longer read the entire minutes of previous meetings. A few copies of the previous meeting are made available. It is also noted that the GHS Newsletter (circulated to all membership) reviews the events and minutes of each forgoing meeting.

David Anderson welcomes all and introduces the newer faces among which are Harry Stevenson and Julie who have driven in from Iroquois Falls.

Onaugh Ross makes another forty two dollar gift to the GHS – from book sales.

Les Wert reports on the satisfaction felt by the participants in the Mohawk Valley tour of the past summer.

No treasurer's statement because of the absence of the GHS treasurer.

Brenda Kennedy reports on behalf of the Nor'Westers & Loyalists Museum. Rodney Brown livened May events with his musical interpretative stories of the fur trade. The summer also saw the school theme exhibition, the work of the sewing group, and the June 1st exhibit. Royce MacGillivray came in July to sign copies of his book. The wine & cheese event escalated to largely attended high point. And there is great appreciation for the redesigned web site done by John Woodrow.

Jennifer Black is on hand to highlight the extraordinary successes of the active summer events at the Pioneer Museum. Things reached a climax with the large attendance at the Fall Harvest Festival the week prior to the re-enactment of the 1812 war. Jennifer and five students spent a busy season codifying the museum's holdings.

Bruce McPherson is on hand to report on the membership portfolio and the benefits of aligning one's attentions with those of the GHS.

In his introduction of the featured speaker for the evening, David Anderson points out the genuine detailed research that Alexander Sandy Campbell has done to discover new knowledge about the subject of his book on the Royal American Regiment.

Alexander Campbell captivates the membership with his enthusiastic dissertation. He convinces us of the significant role played by the Royal American Regiment in North American history and the history of Glengarry. The Swiss founder of the Regiment, James Prevost, in 1755 persuaded the British powers of the need to defend the settlers of the regions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, many

of whom were German speaking, with a force of 1800 that would involve fifty German speaking officers. In a bureaucratic compromise the target actually became 4000 and within three years 3,858 men were serving in the Regiment.



Prevost brought 778 veterans into the group and was further aided by his brother Augustine who raised men from throughout the colonies. Of interest is the fact that in 1757 36% of the Regiment were foreign Protestants, while the remainder were English (24%), Irish (24%), American (10%), and Scot (6%). Officers, however, were predominantly Scot (38%)

The soldiers did more than just fighting. They built Fort Edward, Ontario, Ligonier, Pitt, Presque Ilse, and Erie. They cared for livestock, gardens and orchards. And so learned all the crucial survival skills which became very useful when they eventually settled on land grants as benefactors of "the King's Bounty". These Regiment veterans often settled in bands together for mutual assistance, many in the areas such as Albany and Charlotte in New York which became "hotbeds" for loyalists. Michael Grass, for example, led many refugees from New York to Kingston in 1784. Frederick Haldimand, the Governor of Quebec (1778 – 1786) purposely placed Highland Scots closest to Montreal because of their political reliability. The Royal American Regiment with officers such as George Prevost and Charles de Salaberry defended Canada during the 1812 war. The point is made that the Regiment did much to both settle and protect the eastern part of Upper Canada.

Hugh Grice is called upon to thank the speaker for his animated and relevant discourse.

Robert Gale adjourns the meeting with his motion.

Richard Bleile (recording secretary)

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