



Guelph Historical Society

www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

January 2006

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER LECTURE

As part of the Guelph Historical Society's continuing celebration of the Year of the Veteran, Bev Dietrich, Curator of the Guelph Museums, presented her lecture "McCrae House and Keeping the Faith for Which They Died".

Her lecture was an engaging presentation that highlighted the historical significance of John McCrae, his international reputation, and the development of McCrae House as a National Historic Site.

McCrae's International Reputation

John McCrae died on January 20, 1918. He was buried in Wimereux Cemetery, north of Boulogne in Belgium. His memory is preserved in public memorials in both Canada and Europe.

Ms. Dietrich, who in 1995 was a special guest in Belgium for the 80th anniversary of the writing of McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields", spoke of the European memorials to McCrae. At the Essex Farm Cemetery, where it is thought McCrae received his inspiration for "In Flanders Fields", students have restored the Essex Field Dressing Station. At the cemetery in Wimereux, a ceremony is held

in which his poem is read in French and English and wreaths are laid at his grave. The legacy of McCrae is as relevant today as it was almost 90 years ago.



John McCrae's wooden grave marker in Wimereux Cemetery, Belgium.

John McCrae's Birthplace

The history behind the creation of McCrae House museum is one of community involvement. The McCrae family lived in the house from approximately 1870 to 1873. In 1965, the house became available for sale and it was feared that it would be torn down. The Guelph Historical Society and the Royal Canadian Legion joined together to save the house. A group of local citizens used their own mortgages to finance the purchase of the house. The group became the Lt. Col. John McCrae Birthplace Society and they raised money for its restoration. In 1966, the Canadian government designated McCrae House as a National Historic Site. A plaque acknowledging the designation of the house was unveiled

in 2004. McCrae House continues to attract visitors from around the world — 13,988 people visited it last year.

For those unable to attend the lecture, Ms. Dietrich will present her lecture as an essay in this year's issue of Historic Guelph.

Photo courtesy of Guelph Museums

RUTH FLORENCE POLLARD (1910 -2005)

Ruth Pollard, former GHS President, died on December 21, 2005 in Wellington, Ontario. The funeral was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Guelph. Dr. Terry Crowley and Dr. Gil Stelter read tributes to Mrs. Pollard.

As long-time members of the Society know, Mrs. Pollard's tenure as President had a profound influence on the activities of the GHS. Mrs. Pollard was President of the Society from 1973 to 1993. She was involved in many aspects of the Society, including the publication of the *History of Guelph, 1827-1927*.

Over the years, Mrs. Pollard received a number of awards for her contribution to the community, including:

1977: Award of Merit from the Guelph Chamber of Commerce for her work in publishing the *History of Guelph*

1986: 15 year Volunteer Service Award from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture

1992: Carnochan Award from the Ontario Historical Society

Mrs. Pollard will be remembered for her dedication to the Society, the local community, and heritage issues.

A tree will be planted in memory of Mrs. Pollard in the Wall-Custance Memorial Forest, University of Guelph Aboretum. Dedication service is September 24, 2006.

GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIPS 2005

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School
Recipient: Ian Porterfield

St. James Catholic High School
Recipient: Michael Jud

Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute
Recipient: Andrew McEwen

J.F. Ross Collegiate Vocational Institute
Recipient: Sydney Kruth

Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute
Recipient: John Hood

University of Guelph
Recipient: Ashley Fortier

Bishop MacDonnell Secondary School
Recipient: Annemarie Schadenberg

College Heights Secondary School
Recipient: Kayla Holmes

ESSAY CONTEST

*Topic of your choice pertaining to
Guelph's History — Any Era*

Essays relating to historical events, residents, architecture, etc. can be based on archival documents, personal experiences, interviews, etc.

CASH PRIZES

1st Prize: \$500 2nd Prize: \$350 3rd Prize: \$200

An extra \$50 is awarded to a first-time entrant prize winner.

Essays (approximately 3000 words) will be judged on their originality, literary style and research. Must include references to source materials and photos. Essays become the property of the Guelph Historical Society and may be published in its annual publication *Historic Guelph: The Royal City*. The Verne McIlwraith Award Contest is sponsored by the Guelph Historical Society and is open to all residents of Guelph and area.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2006

Mail one hard copy (double-spaced) and one disk to:
Guelph Historical Society "Essay Contest"
Unit B9, 100 Crimea St. Guelph, ON N1H 2Y6

Please note that members of the Guelph Historical Society Board are ineligible to receive cash prizes.



GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EVENTS: GHS ANNUAL BUS TRIP

LUCAN: HOME OF THE INFAMOUS BLACK DONNELLYS

DATE: MAY 9, 2006

BUS LEAVES AT 8:30 A.M. FROM THE STONE RD. MALL

LUNCH AT NELLIE'S BISTRO

Itinerary: In the morning we will visit the Lucan Heritage Museum, which includes a tour of a replica of the log cabin homestead of the Donnelly family and a tour of the route that the Vigilance Committee took on the night of the Donnelly Massacre, February 1880. (Coffee & muffins will be served at the Lucan Museum.)

In the afternoon, we will join Rob Salt at his museum located on the original land settled by the Donnellys. This tour starts with an oral presentation by Rob Salt beginning with the 1842 arrival of the Donnellys.

Estimated cost: \$60.00 for members.

For more information, please contact Betty-Anne Stammers at 822-4051 or Deb Nash-Chambers at 767-9895.

UPCOMING LECTURE: FEBRUARY

The Impact of Harsh Drug Legislation in the Lives of Users, 1908-1961

Dr. Catherine Carstairs,
Department of History, University of Guelph
February 7, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
161 Norfolk St., Guelph (refreshments will be served after the lecture)

Professor Carstairs will share her research from a newly published study of the legal, health and societal consequences of illegal drug use in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century. Her talk is titled "The Impact of Harsh Drug Legislation in the Lives of Users, 1908-1961".

Early in the last century Canada had some of the harshest drug laws in the world and, unfortunately, the effort to curb the smoking of opium led to the switch to injecting heroine and other patterns of drug addiction with a variety of tragic consequences.