



# Guelph Historical Society

www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

FEBRUARY 2006

## NEWSLETTER

### FEBRUARY LECTURE

At the February lecture, Professor Catharine Carstairs presented her talk on "Canadian Drug Policies 1908-1961: From Opium Dens to Overdoses". Professor Carstairs teaches in the Department of History at the University of Guelph. The February lecture is usually reserved for a member of the University to present his or her research. It is a great opportunity for the community to learn about academic research at the University. Professor Carstairs is a social and cultural historian whose research interests include legal and illegal drugs, health food, and international drug control.

### Early Days of Drug Legislation

Carstairs debunk the myth that drug use started in the 1960s. In fact, the use of opium and other drugs was fairly wide-spread in the 19th century. Opium was used for both medical and recreational purposes and there were no controls.

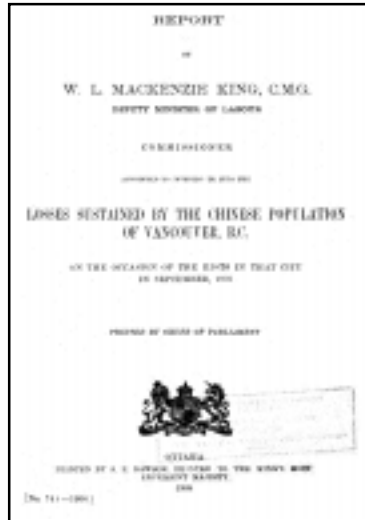
In 1908, the first drug law passed in Canada. The law was rooted in the anti-Asian sentiments of the time and it was an indirect result of the riots that broke out on the West Coast in 1907. In the riots, Chinese businesses were attacked. Deputy Minister of Labour William Lyon MacKenzie King was sent west to investigate the riots and claims for compensation. In King's report, he claimed that opium smoking had spread beyond the Chinese community to white women and girls. King introduced legislation that prohibited the manufacture, sale, and importation of opium for any purpose other than medicinal.

In 1911, the law was strengthened and the sale or possession of opium, morphine or cocaine was an offence that carried a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and a \$500 fine, however, there were no minimum penalties. These early laws passed with little debate.

### Panic in the 1920s

Several factors, including anti-Chinese agitation, fuelled the drug panic of the 1920s.

Drugs were regarded as a serious social problem and penalties were increased to a minimum of six months.



Cover of the report by W.L. MacKenzie King on the "Losses Sustained by the Chinese Population of Vancouver B.C." The report is available through Early Canadiana Online [www.canadiana.org](http://www.canadiana.org)

### Shifting Drug Population

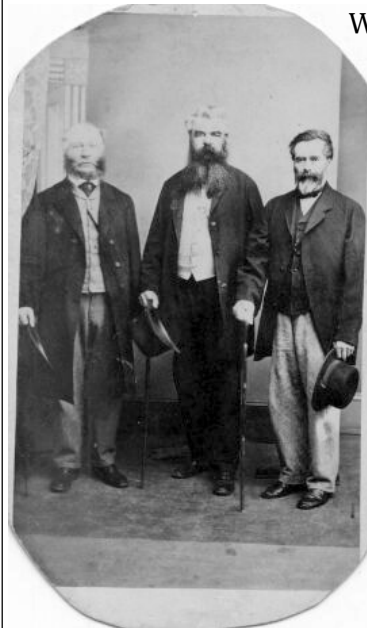
Carstairs demonstrated that over time the 'typical' addict and the drugs used changed. By the 1950s, heroin was the predominant drug used by addicts. In this period, drug users tended to marginalized people who formed their own community.

The State's role has also shifted from imposing increasingly harsh penalties in the 1920s to discussing its role in helping addicts. (It is interesting to note that a Vancouver Committee, in 1952, recommended that drug addicts required maintenance doses.) By 1969, the minimum penalties were removed from the law.

Carstairs finished her lecture with some comments about the application of past experiences to the contemporary situation.

— Catharine Carstairs' recent book *Jailed for Possession: Illegal Drug Use, Regulation and Power in Canada, 1920-1961.* (University of Toronto Press, 2005).

### MYSTERY: UNIDENTIFIED GUELPH PHOTOGRAPH



We would like help to identify the people in this photograph. The photograph is part of the Wellington County Museum and Archives collection.

The photograph was taken by Guelph photographer Williard Marshall. He is listed as a photographer in Guelph between 1861 and 1895 in Glen Phillips "Ontario Photographers List, 1851-1900".

If you have any information, please write to:

Guelph Historical Society  
c/o Newsletter Editor  
100 Crimea St., Unit A-102  
Guelph, ON N1H 2Y6

Photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives Image: ph 13016

## ACT QUICKLY: TICKETS ARE SELLING FAST

### GHS ANNUAL BUS TRIP: MAYHEM-MYSTERY-MURDER

**LUCAN: HOME OF THE INFAMOUS BLACK DONNELLYS**  
**DATE: MAY 9, 2006**  
**BUS LEAVES AT 8:30 A.M. FROM THE STONE RD. MALL,**  
**ARRIVING BACK AT 4:30 P.M.**  
**LUNCH AT NELLIE'S BISTRO IN LUCAN**

**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.

**Ticket price for members: \$60.00**  
**Ticket price for non-members: \$65.00**

*Tickets available at the Guelph Historical Society Meetings:  
Next Meeting March 7*

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



**GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### URGENT: GHS SECRETARY NEEDED

The GHS Board requires a secretary to fill this position on the Board. Responsibilities include taking and electronically distributing Board meeting minutes. There are six Board meetings a year.

*For more information, please contact Elysia DeLaurentis  
Tel.: (519) 846-8280 Email: elysia@studiospace.com*

### THANK YOU TO THE VOLUNTEERS

Moving the boxes of books, filing cabinets, shelving and archives to the new GHS office was a bigger job than we expected. Larry's Moving took care of most of the items, but it couldn't have been done without the time and work put in by Ken Irvine, Lyn Kannenberg, Andy Thomson, Charmian Christie, Ian Thomson, James Munroe, Michael Chambers, Emily Grey, and Ernie Kalwa. Thanks to all of you who helped to make this an easier transition!!!

### OFFICE MOVE

The GHS office has moved to a new location. It is Unit A-102, Crimea St. The new mailing address is:  
100 Crimea St., Unit A-102  
Guelph, ON N1H 2Y6

## UPCOMING LECTURE

**A Book: The Graduate Nurses of the Guelph General Hospital School of Nurses, 1888-1974**

*Mrs. Shirley Reed*

*March 7, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.*

*St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,  
161 Norfolk St., Guelph (refreshments  
will be served after the lecture)*

Mrs. Shirley Reed, RN and Alumna of the Guelph General School of Nurses, will provide an historical tribute to school that graduated generations of well-qualified health professionals for 86 years. Mrs. Reed has actively sought to keep the memory of the Guelph General School of Nurses alive. The lecture is based on her pictorial history of the nursing school published in 2001.